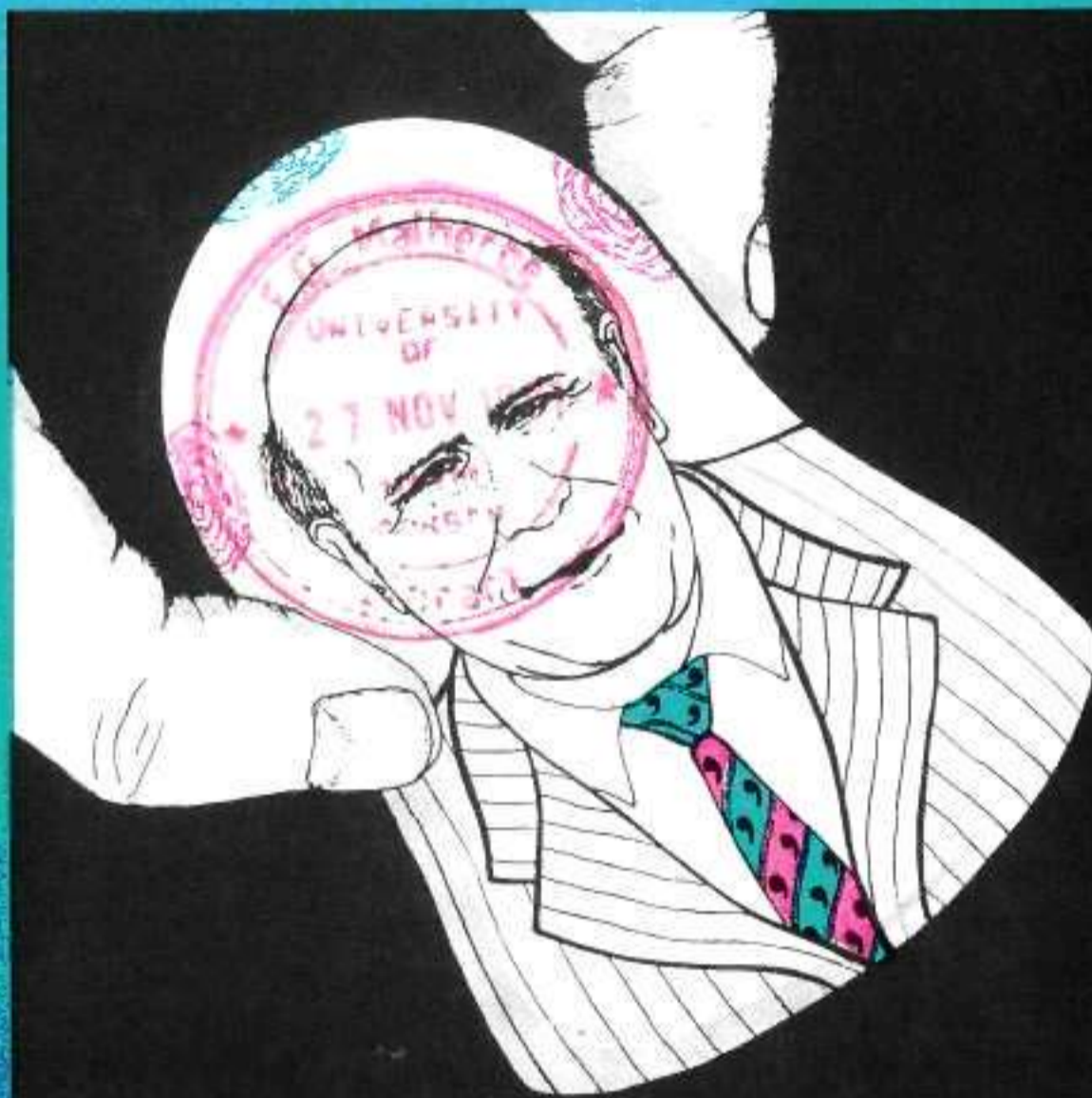


PROGRESS



ALSO INSIDE:

- * WEALTH TAX
- * VAT STRIKE
- * SACP MANIFESTO

**EXPOSED!!
DE KLERK'S
DOUBLE
AGENDA**



WORK IN **PROGRESS**

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Crosshatch: Page 8

EDITORIAL

Nico Basson, former member of military intelligence, has, since resigning from the SADF early this year, exposed startling information on the secret activities of this government. He exposed attempts to destabilise Swapo in Namibia, and he exposed the Inkathagate scandal, and SADF involvement in township violence. In this issue of *WIP*, he goes much further.

Up to now the horrendous township violence has been either blamed on Inkatha-ANC infighting, or on a mysterious 'third force' located within white rightwing forces. If this force had any link to the present security apparatus, then it lay amongst renegade operatives acting without sanction from above.

Basson, on the basis of his extensive experience as a state propagandist, working very close to the centres of power, says emphatically, and without qualification, that all this is part of a well-planned propaganda ploy.

The cabinet, and FW de Klerk in particular, is fully aware of who the 'third force' is. But not only that. Basson asserts, with deep conviction, and based on his intimate knowledge of how the government operates, that the state president is the leader of this 'third force'.

An important aspect of this 'new total strategy' is to spread disinformation about the opposition. Last year's Vula 'communist plot' was a blatant example, which the mass media fell for. Basson says that the security forces have infiltrated agents in virtually all the mass media.

The sinister manner in which the wealth tax issue was blown way out of proportion by a *Sunday Times* journalist, causing a major public outcry which can still be heard, bears all the trademarks of a deliberate ploy to emphasise the 'communist' affinities of the ANC.

Basson's allegations have serious implications for the whole transition process. He says that what he has revealed so far is less than a quarter of what he knows, but is too afraid to reveal just yet.

The ANC, and other opposition organisations, have been aware of Basson's information. But so far none of them have seen it fit to approach him to find out more.

But what is striking is that Basson has not been sitting back waiting to be approached. He has made several attempts since June to meet with the ANC — without success!

In what can only be described as gross incompetence, the ANC has failed to grasp at an opportunity to arm itself with detailed information about how its chief adversary is running rings around it!

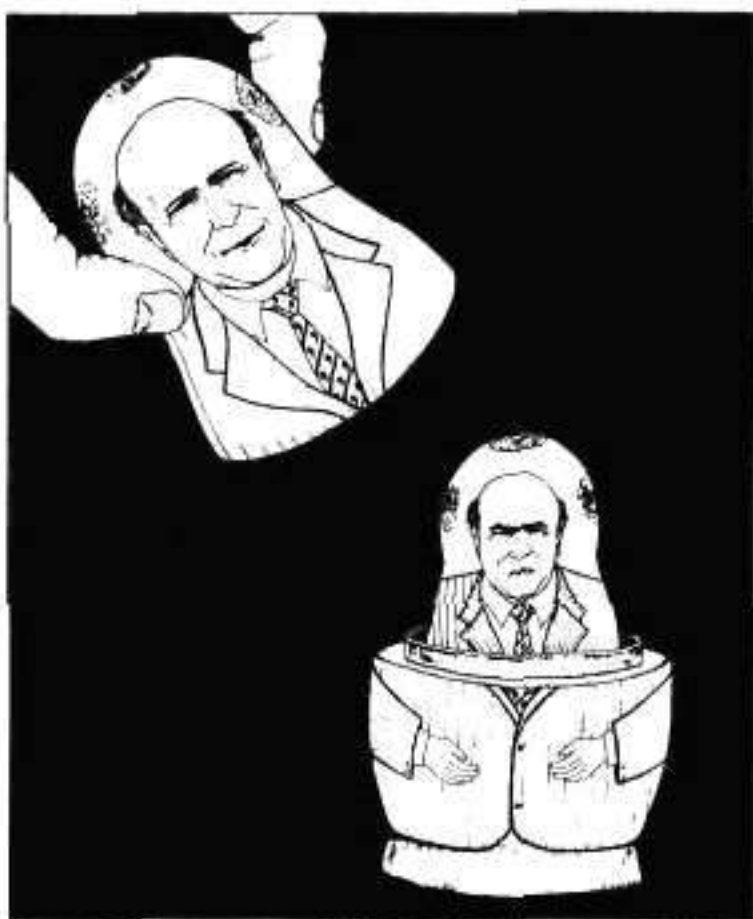
Instead, the ANC seemed content to sign the Peace Accord without an understanding of how deeply the government is involved in fanning the violence.

And now it seems content to blindly lead the Patriotic Front into an all-party conference, to negotiate our country's future.*

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Nico Basson, former SADF major, reveals startling information about the way government operates. He points directly at state president FW de Klerk and the cabinet as the instigators of the violence gripping the townships — a clever and devious ploy to destabilise the liberation movement
— Pages 9 - 13

De Klerk's double agenda

Sexual violence

November 25 is International Day of 'no violence against women'. Sheila Meintjes looks at the rising incidence of sexual violence against women, particularly on university campuses
— Pages 28 - 29



Wealth tax — Moving beyond the hysteria

Now that the hysteria over a one-line comment on wealth tax has subsided, Neva Seidman Makgetla soberly assesses the pros and cons of instituting a tax on the wealth of the very rich
— Pages 23 - 25

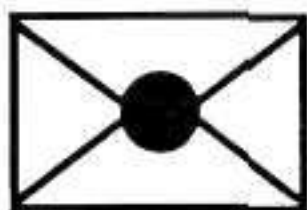
BC preaches unity

Dear editor

This letter comes as a response to an article in *WIP* 75, June 1991 written by Herbert Vilakazi. I would like to differ completely with Vilakazi who claims that the black consciousness non-collaboration principle 'lies at the root of the current wave of violence sweeping the country'.

Vilakazi, I would like to believe, does not understand black consciousness and what it is striving for.

If what Vilakazi is



LETTERS

Write to: The Editor
Work In Progress
PO Box 32716
Braamfontein 2017

saying is true, it would mean that this violence (between the ANC and Inkatha) began in the 1970s. To correct him, and to put

his unfounded and confused statements in order, he should know that this violence has nothing to do with black consciousness. Vilakazi should also know that during the 1970s there was no single attack amongst black people, the main reason being that black consciousness preached unity between them. It was through black consciousness that black people were able to clearly identify and distinguish between themselves and the white oppressors.

Thus isolating people such as Gatsha Buthelezi and other 'homeland' leaders does not imply nor

mean that we are isolating 'members' of Inkatha, for the poor people are not aware of Buthelezi and the De Klerk regime's intentions.

We in the black consciousness movement will do everything in our power to show all black people the proper way to total liberation. Vilakazi should know that black consciousness is for unity amongst the oppressed, and that if all black people could properly follow its principles, there will be no violence between the oppressed people. — *V P P Zulu, Natal University, Durban*

WIP is an independent publication oriented towards stimulating debate and discussion around the political and socio-economic future of South Africa. As such the views expressed in individual articles do not necessarily correspond with those of *WIP's* editor and advisory board.

PUBLICATION GUIDELINES

Work In Progress is a forum for analysing, debating and recording the major issues of our times, as well as the aims and activities of the various organisations of the democratic movement. To this end it requires contributors to conform to the following guidelines:

1. Constructive criticisms of organisations are welcome. However, articles of a sectarian nature, or which indulge in personal attacks on individuals, will not be published.
2. Contributions to *WIP* should not exceed the following lengths:

* analytical articles	2 400 - 3 000 words
* debates and reports	1 500 - 2 400 words
* reviews	800 - 1 800 words
* briefings	750 words
3. Articles should be submitted in a final and correct form, preferably on disk (Wordperfect 5.1) or via worknet. Hard copies should also be sent. In the event that the editor decides that other than minor editing changes are required, the article will be referred back to the author.
4. Articles should be written accessibly, with a minimum of jargon, footnotes and references.
5. All material submitted will be treated in confidence (except in the case of public documents).

Please contact the editor for more details

Cuban democracy deepens

THE Cuban Communist Party, at its recent 4th national congress, resolved to extend the limits of its one-party democracy, reduce the spread of bureaucratisation, and open its economy to foreign (Latin American) capital.

The congress, a spartan affair given the country's perilous economic state, was notable for the unprecedented manner in which the broadest range of citizens were drawn into the decision-making process.

All discussions in preparation for the congress were taken to all the political and social organisations, whose proposals were then integrated into the decisions and resolutions adopted at the congress. The party saw this as one way of strengthening the revolution in the face of increasing threats to its survival.

For the first time, all future members of the national assembly will be directly elected (until now only municipal parliaments were directly elected). In addition, the subtle discrimination against religious believers has ended, and believers may now join the party.

As part of its 'debureaucratisation' campaign, the party will shed between 30-50 percent of its paid functionaries, and encourage them to work in agriculture, as part of its ambitious nutrition programme. The party has also got rid of its party office, the executive of the central committee, and its functions will be taken over by the politburo of 25 members, 14 of which were



Fidel Castro

newly elected at the congress. The 225-member central committee was also renewed, with half the members elected for the first time. The average age of the committee has now dropped from 52 to 47 years.

The congress stressed that the manner in which the planned economy was practised 'was a political mistake', as it was unable 'to lead the economy efficiently'. Now, for the first time, small-scale private enterprises 'on the basis of personal work' will be allowed, in order to improve the availability of services.

With the collapse of Comecon, Cuba has decided to attract foreign investors, particularly from Latin American capital, which has been promised preferential conditions. As part of its move to strengthen ties with Latin America, the party, since its formation a 'Marxist-Leninist' party, will now also be called Martyist, after the Cuban and Latin American hero Jose Marti (1853-1895).

Unlike the communist parties of Eastern Europe, the Cuban Communist Party has shown a resilience that its enemies, particularly amongst the exiled community in Miami, will find hard to beat. Most Western observers, including *Time* magazine, have been forced to admit that the party and its leader, Fidel Castro, has retained the bulk of its popular support, despite the dramatic decline in living standards in recent years — a direct result of discontinued Soviet aid, and the continuing US economic blockade.

It remains to be seen whether the plucky Cubans will overcome the massive odds against them. There is no doubting their determination; the congress stressed 'the firm and unanimous will of the Cuban Communists to defend the country and the socialist revolution at any price'.

But more than determination and will is needed. There has to be a measure of tactical

flexibility, and compromise. The significant moves towards greater democracy have gone virtually unnoticed in the West, which measures democracy only in multi-party terms.

Perhaps the time has come for the Cuban Communist Party to make the bold move and have a multi-party election, if only to underline its popular support, and thereby strengthen the hand of those campaigning against the US blockade. — *Devan Pillay* (with reports from *El Pais* and *Prensa Latina*)

World Aids Day

ABOUT 40 million men, women and children may be infected with HIV by the year 2000, while the cumulative total of AIDS cases is expected to be close to 10 million.

So says the World Health Organisation (WHO) in its brochure to highlight World AIDS Day on 1 December.

As part of its contribution to World AIDS Day, the Johannesburg AIDS Centre is running a seminar for journalists on 30 November.

The aim of the seminar is to correct the type of sensational, uninformed and prejudiced reporting that AIDS has often received in the media.

Organiser Alison Munro says the media will hopefully disseminate this knowledge so that the public will acquire a better understanding about AIDS.

Speakers will include advocate Edwin Cameron, who will speak on the legal implications of AIDS; the *Weekly Mail's* Mark

AIDS break-down

North America	1 000 000
Asia	500 000
South America	1 000 000
Europe	500 000
Africa	5 500 000

(Figures from the WHO)

AIDS in South Africa

There are 893 AIDS cases in South Africa

Homosexual	338
Heterosex.	390
Haemophilic	16
Transfusion	22
IVDU	1
Paediatric	126

Age and Sex Distribution of AIDS cases in SA

Age	Male	Female	Unknown	Total
0-9	70	57	2	129
10-19	7	16	0	23
20-29	115	77	1	193
30-39	204	53	0	257
40-49	95	10	0	105
50-59	31	9	0	40
60-69	9	2	0	11
70+	3	0	0	3
Unknown	102	28	2	132
Total	636	252	5	893

Gevisser, whose topic is the role and responsibility of a journalist; Dr Nicky Padayachee, giving a South African update; Ron Ballard, on the relationship between sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and AIDS; and Sinnah Ramakhula, on the media's responsibility to educate women about AIDS.

World AIDS Day is the annual day of awareness and strengthening a worldwide effort to meet the challenge of AIDS. Events around the world include concerts, street theatre, workshops and phone-ins.

The theme this year, 'Sharing the Challenge', is intended to 'underline the global nature of the pandemic and to foster awareness that only by pooling our efforts,

resources and imagination can we hope to prevail against the common threat.' says the WHO, which defines the challenge as follows:

As of April 1991, more than 345 000 adult AIDS cases had been reported to the WHO from 162 countries around the world. But the WHO believes the true global figure is more than one million. In addition, there have been more than 500 000 paediatric AIDS cases, giving a total of more than 1.5 million AIDS cases world-wide. A further 8-10 million adults are thought to be infected with the human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV).

(Information released by the department of National Health and Population

Development on 16 September 1991, based on anonymous data supplied by the South African Institute for Medical Research.) — *Glenda Daniels*

Mama Kalonde's switch to the MMD

TYPICAL of the shifting allegiances that underwrote the election campaign here was independence struggle veteran Madeleine Kalonde Kangwa, who shifted her support from Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP) to the opposition Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD).

Kangwa, mother of 16 children and commonly known by all as 'Mama Kalonde', has a history of political activism that spans almost four decades.

During the election campaign that ended on October 31 with an overwhelming victory for the MMD, the 56-year-old grandmother was a frequent speaker at all the campaign rallies of Dr Guy Scott, MMD parliamentary candidate for Mpika, 640 kilometres north of Lusaka.

'We have achieved independence, but how can we enjoy this freedom when under UNIP we have had no food to eat and only ragged clothes to wear?' she asked villagers at one MMD rally in Kaola near Luangwa National Park.

Mama Kalonde has paid the price for her participation in politics and wrings her hands as she tells the story of her arrest and torture under the British colonial authorities.

'I was one of those Zambians who joined the boycott in 1952 against

buying through the back window of shops — the front was reserved strictly for Europeans,' she says with a grimace.

When she was pregnant and also carrying a baby tied on her back, Mama Kalonde was arrested by the colonial police and driven more than 700 kilometres south to Livingstone prison, where she was detained for 16 months.

Mama Kalonde says she was severely beaten with a long baton — with her baby still on her back. She suffered broken ribs while the baby died of internal injuries.

While in prison she also had a miscarriage and so sacrificed two children to political struggle.

After her release, as a member of the Zambia African National Congress, Mama Kalonde continued her campaigning to conscientise black Zambians to fight for independence.

Once power was finally peacefully handed over from the former British colonial governor on 24 October 1964, Mama Kalonde became a ward chairperson in Mpika — a position she held for the next decade.

But Mama Kalonde received much derision in UNIP for her lack of education — she never completed primary school.

As a consequence, she says, she was not promoted within UNIP and retired from politics, disgruntled, in 1975.

But with the dawn of the MMD in July 1990, Mama Kalonde joined the movement believing a change of government could improve her family's standard of living.

She complains that UNIP started many projects but abandoned them.

She sites self-help credit clubs for farmers, and the

building of schools, hospitals and roads which were not maintained.

No longer does she have respect for President Kaunda because she claims he listened to 'evil advisors' and confiscated and nationalised most foreign-owned businesses without thinking of the consequences for the country.

'He spends our taxes on buying helicopters while our children die in our homes because there is no transport to hospital,' she claims.

But despite her support for the MMD in Mpika district, she says she will remain an ordinary voter, leaving the field to younger people.

'Young people nowadays have had education and think they have more brains than old people, but if they make mistakes I will go immediately to their side and whisper my advice,' Mama Kalonde says, grinning. — *AIA/Melinda Ham*

Zambian elections a blow for democracy in Africa

THE Zambian election was 'the single most dramatic event witnessed in Africa', said former US Ambassador to Senegal, Walter Carrington, one of the international observers to the recent Zambian elections, which saw Kenneth Kaunda *humiliatingly defeated* by former trade unionist and leader of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), Frederick Chiluba.

Carrington, one of the

speakers in a panel organised by the Institute for Multi-Party Democracy (MPD) in Johannesburg recently, spoke of the remarkably conciliatory manner in which Zambians viewed Kenneth Kaunda since his defeat, considering the widespread dissatisfaction of most people during his one-party state rule.

The MPD organised a delegation of observers to the election from a wide spectrum of organisations. They included Jeremy Baskin from the ANC, Coetzee Bester from the National Party, Kobus Jordaan of the Democratic Party, Peter Mabe from the PAC, Mbulelo Rakwena from Azapo, and Otty Nxumalo and Sibongile Nene, both members of the MPD's board of trustees.

The point of the delegation, according to the Institute, was for South Africans to gain from the Zambian experience — to instruct on a course of democracy in this country.

Carrington, who represents the Washington-based Joint Centre for Political and Economic Studies, said that the great lesson about the elections was that it put paid to the idea that African countries were not ready for democracy, and that rural people were not able to participate in elections. The latter, he said, seemed to understand what was at stake more than anybody. He had witnessed a 'historic characteristic' — the ability of ordinary people to stand up against the government when it ceased to carry out its wishes.

For Carrington the 'winds of change' sweeping Africa for the second time are going to blow south, east, west and north of Zambia.

Carrington felt that Kaunda, who led Zambia to

independence in 1964, reminded him of Gorbachev — he went against the wishes of other leaders in the party, and held the election. He did not have to have international observers at the election, he said, and he did not have to hold the election at all.

Kaunda took a great risk, knowing that he might well lose the election, added the former ambassador. He also graciously accepted the results, and for this he should be praised.

This credit paid to Kaunda was not accepted by a member of the audience, who asserted that change and democracy was inevitable, that Kaunda was a tyrant and that he had to pay for what he had done to Zambia and its people.

Carrington found it curious that Zambians themselves, including the victor Frederick Chiluba, viewed the defeated veteran in a conciliatory manner, but outsiders were unable to. — *Glenda Daniels*

Tragic twist to Koster community struggle

THE 20 August death of 11-year-old Phoni Mokoena in a small rural black township 130 kilometres west of Johannesburg is emblematic of how the new South Africa is still shaped by the legacies of the old.

Reagile is a small Setswana-speaking township adjacent to the white town of Koster, a Conservative Party (CP) stronghold.

It was formerly established in 1928. From a very early stage in its history, white people in neighbouring Koster

complained that the township was too close.

For example in 1937, Koster's town clerk wrote a letter to the provincial secretary of the Transvaal stating that the 'council finds the location boundary is on the edge of the town, and wants to know what can be done to overcome this difficulty'.

The requests for funding to remove the township continued right through to the 1980s. Eventually in 1983 the money came through and it was announced that Reagile would be destroyed and residents moved 700 metres up the road, out of earshot of white people.

Black councillors used

A crucial feature of the removal plans was to use the Reagile black local authority (BLA) to do most of the pressurising of the residents.

The black councillors were the first ones to break the news of the removal plan to the residents. At a mass meeting called by the councillors towards the end of 1983, Reagile's mayor, J Marota, summoned the residents and announced that 'the residents of Reagile have to move to a new residential area a short distance away' and that 'residents will have to move whether they like it or not'.

At the same meeting councillor Richard Taunyane said 'the move was necessary as the residents of 3rd Street, Reagile were making too much noise and there had been complaints from whites occupying the nearby houses'.

The councillors embarked on their task of persuading residents to move with a great deal of vigour.

Residents were visited by the councillors and told that if they did not move

they would be kicked out of their houses in any case and have nowhere to live. The more vulnerable members of the community, pensioners and women-headed households, were the residents initially targeted by the councillors.

In 1987 the residents resisting the removal formed a resident's association to fight it. The Koster Residents' Association (KRA) was adamant that the old area be repleved and upgraded.

In the first quarter of 1988 they wrote a letter to the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, Chris Heunis, stating they were 'not prepared to move to the new township'.

The reasons given were explicit: 'We are not prepared to move from our spacious six and seven-roomed houses to the small houses in the new area. We know the local authority wants to move the old township because it is too close to the white area. We reject this with contempt. We see no reason to move.'

The pleas of the KRA were ignored. The government argued that the removal had been agreed upon by the BLA and must proceed.

Residents take over council

The KRA decided the only way they could forestall the removal was to take over the local authority.

In the October 1988 election, the KRA put up candidates in all five wards. This decision appeared to have a great deal of support in the community as, amidst much rejoicing, the KRA candidates swept aside the incumbents. The council was now controlled by loyal lieutenants of the KRA determined to halt the removal.

The tactic appeared to

pay dividends. In September 1990 the township was formally repleved. The provincial administration realised that without the support of the BLA they could not proceed with the removal.

How does all this relate to the shooting of Phoni Mokoena? Earlier this year the councillors refused to resign when asked to by the youth in the area.

Instead they have moved further away from their original constituency. At the beginning of September 1991 the 'Tswana-speaking Mayor', Blantina Rabutha, and the former leader of the anti-removal struggle formed a branch of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) in the area.

She was supported by three out of four fellow councillors. The launch was marked by the busing in of at least four Combi loads of IFP supporters who subsequently, it is alleged, wantonly attacked township residents, including the home of the local ANC branch chairperson, Eric Modisane.

In retaliation, youths attacked the homes of the councillors.

During the stoning of councillor Abraham Motlhamme's house, initially one of the stalwarts of the anti-removal fight, Andries Phoni Mokoena was shot and killed.

The KRA's strategy of taking over the local black authority, a strategy which had only noble ideals, had gone horribly wrong. — AIA/Alan Morris

Ciskei returns to Sebe era

CISKEI'S state of emergency is a direct result of resistance to the re-



Military ruler Brigadier Oupa Gqozo has become increasingly isolated

imposition of the headman system.

The situation in Ciskei is now remarkably similar to the last few weeks of Lennox Sebe's rule in early 1990: mass detentions, police brutality, the effective banning of the ANC and civics, and severing of relations with the press.

In addition Ciskei now appears to have overturned its own Bill of Rights and constitution by issuing a Decree which effectively removes the rights of individuals.

Military ruler Brigadier Oupa Gqozo has become increasingly isolated, apparently acting without consulting with his own ministers and legal advisors, allegedly purging his police force of any possible opponents, and telling his magistrates how to run their courts.

The South African government, his strongest ally so far, now also appears to be withdrawing support and has even been accused of plotting to overthrow Gqozo. However, South Africa has still declined to intervene.

Headman system

The crisis has been brewing since July, when Gqozo

started trying to re-introduce the headman system which he himself had ended after taking power in March 1990.

This put him into immediate conflict with the civics, culminating in the banning of all residents' associations two weeks after the emergency was imposed.

Features of the headman system are:

- * The cooperation of headmen is now necessary in order to apply for a pension or other monies from the government and have land allocated. This is similar to Lennox Sebe's system of forcing people to produce a membership card for his party before they could get any government related benefits;
- * it seems designed to exclude women and the youth;
- * conflict over the system is focused on the Alice, Peddie, Hewu and King Williams Town regions;
- * the headmen are installed at meetings run by the local magistrate and chief of a region;
- * these meetings are attended by very few residents: in the Alice region, where only eight of the 78 villages have had headmen installed, the

civics claimed that at four of these villages less than 12 people were present at the 'voting';

* Of the Alice headmen, four were headmen under the Sebe government, and a fifth is the brother of the chief who elected him. At least three headmen in this region are reported to have resigned already.

* headmen have had their businesses boycotted and taxis have refused to transport them;

* Gqozo cited 16 violent attacks over the past two months on headmen, African Democratic Movement (ADM) members and government institutions;

* the chief of the Alice region, Lent Maqoma, has been accused of arming five headmen in his region with 9mm pistols and shotguns. Maqoma has also been linked to Ciskei's covert military unit International Researchers-Ciskei Intelligence Services (see WIP 77).

African Democratic Movement

The headman system is being seen as an attempt to recruit support for Gqozo's ADM, which he launched in early July at the same time as the headman system was re-introduced. Gqozo appears to have formed the ADM in order to give himself a political base from which to take part in negotiations, and possibly as the beginning of link with the Inkatha Freedom Party.

Support for the headmen and the ADM seems to be coming from the PAC, an organisation which Gqozo currently has good relations with. This has meant that some of the violence has mistakenly been seen as a clash between the ANC and the PAC.

Early this month the PAC accused the ANC of attacking its members after a man seen as an ADM

member was hospitalised and had his business burned.

Gqozo has not only banned the civics but also effectively banned the ANC, as the organisation is no longer able to organise freely. ANC members have been told by police that they are being arrested because they belong to a banned organisation, and early this month 12 indemnified Umkhonto we Sizwe cadres were detained in a single swoop.

Almost all of the more than 600 people detained just before the state of emergency and in the first two weeks of it were members of the residents associations or the ANC. —

Louise Flanagan

Dilemmas over indemnity

MOST returning exiles face a serious dilemma as the government ducks and dives on the issue of indemnity.

De Klerk's piecemeal indemnity has three elements: short-term indemnity which is anything from a few hours to 30 days in the country; partial indemnity which pardons one on leaving the country without a valid travel document but does not pardon offenses committed before leaving the country; full indemnity which is nothing to boast about as covert elements can easily assassinate a returned cadre.

Coming home or not is a chicken and egg paradox, says ANC spokesperson Carl Niehaus. Those who avoid the repatriation programme will have serious economic constraints, as funds from donors are now concentrated in South Africa. Coming home to joblessness and violence, on

the other hand, is no heavenly experience.

Government dishonouring agreements

The government has become an unfaithful negotiating partner. Both the Groote Schuur and the Pretoria Minutes are being violated by the De Klerk regime, especially as regards indemnity.

Offences like leaving the country without a valid travel document and offenses related to previously banned organisations were to receive immediate attention. There were to be guidelines for dealing with people who had committed offenses on the assumption that a particular cause was being served or opposed.

The government promised to continue reviewing security legislation and its application. It was to ensure free political activity and to introduce amending legislation at the next session of parliament.

Cadres on trial

But these good intentions and promises mean little to Mpsa Jacob

Rapholo and his co-accused, Willie Maditsi. Both are alleged to have left South Africa on about 18 August 1985 to join the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and to have received military training until the 15 January 1990 in Angola, Yugoslavia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

They are alleged to have returned to South Africa via Botswana with an MK unit in July 1988 to do reconnaissance at Ellisras, and then again on 7 August 1988 with a large quantity of weapons, ammunition and explosives.

Rapholo, who is facing 17 charges under section 144 (3) (a) of Act 51 of

1977, is also alleged to have threatened a petrol attendant at a service station in order to get cash from him.

Both Rapholo and Madintsi are alleged to have threatened a Gilali and demanded the keys of his vehicle. Upon his refusal they allegedly fired several shots and seriously injured a Van Dyck.

Both Rampholo and Madintsi were locked up in a police van from where Rampholo is alleged to have fired several shots at a Constable Vorster.

In another case, MK member Elias Siphon Mabheba (29) is accused of digging up explosives and detonators (for the manufacture of a car bomb) from a 'dead letter box' in the vicinity of Magaliesburg.

It is alleged that on 26 July 1990 Mabheba, armed with a Stechkin, detained one David Shongwe and robbed him of a Nissan E-20 microbus in Mamelodi East near Pretoria. Shongwe was then allegedly shot and killed at Saartjiesnek near Hartebeespoort.

Explosives and an electrical wire were allegedly transformed into a car bomb. The microbus with the bomb was allegedly parked in a 'target area', Hallmark Building in Pretoria.

The objective, according to the state, was to explode the Hallmark Building where the administrative offices of the SADF are housed.

Rapholo, Madintsi and Mabheba are all still behind bars more than a year after the 15 September 1990 report-back-by deadline of the working group, established after the signing of the DF Malan accord, to resolve outstanding questions arising out of armed actions and related activities of the ANC. — *Mbulelo Mdledle*

The world of Babes Mabida . . .



De Klerk's double agenda



Is the state president the chief commander of the third force?

NICO BASSON, former major in the SA Defence Force and part-time member of military intelligence, was the first to reveal SA government and military involvement in a total strategy to sustain minority rule.

He revealed the top secret SA government's 'Operation Agree' in Namibia in 1989 — a plan to destabilise Swapo during the UN-sponsored 435-elections. In June this year he briefed journalists on how the SADF has deliberately fanned township violence, including funding and supplying weapons to the Inkatha Freedom Party. Here Basson goes further. He makes the startling claim that state president FW de Klerk has not only been aware of the 'third force' in his midst, but that he is the chief commander of the third force

My view of the state president's involvement in the SA government's double agenda, based on my extensive involvement close to the centres of power, is quite simple. He is not only aware of all the secret strategies and projects aimed at destabilising those in opposition to the Nationalist government, he is also the leader of this sinister plan to maintain white minority rule.

President FW de Klerk is not the angel everybody thinks he is.

He is an Afrikaner with a passion to put the cause of the Afrikaner first. In the context of the murderous violence that

has unfolded over the past year, he is becoming a modern day Hitler and his collection of Goebels-like aides form an inner circle of brilliant people operating in secret task groups.

Destabilising Swapo

My story starts in Namibia, 1989. Our president was then only a member of the cabinet. PW Botha was in charge, and Swapo was the target for massive destabilisation. At that stage I was a part-time major in military intelligence. At the same time I was running my own communications company. I was called to Namibia in January 1989 and was given the task of planning the communications

strategy for 'Operation Agree'. My sources close to the cabinet informed me that the cabinet took a decision, late 1988 or early 1989, that the different state departments should make sure that all the anti-Swapo parties were assisted, the aim being to ensure that Swapo did not obtain the required two thirds majority during the 435-elections.

'Operation Agree' was a massive operation executed in different areas, the main aim being to destabilise Swapo at the polls. The thrust of this operation was funding, personnel and infrastructure assistance to all the political parties opposed to Swapo; the use of hit squads; the distortion of foreign radio broadcasts

and the broadcasting of propaganda programmes in different ethnic languages by the SABC into Namibia; the infiltration of the United Nations Task Group (Untag); the use of agents and front organisations; and the involvement of the Administrator General in Namibia and other state departments who sided with the anti-Swapo parties.

An estimated three to four billion rands was spent on this operation, if all the direct and indirect costs are taken into account. This operation costs Swapo a two-thirds majority in the elections, and was a dress rehearsal for what is happening in South Africa at the moment.

A classic double agenda: to the world, an international treaty was openly signed promising to pull out of Namibia and to leave the local political parties alone to sort out their own future, and secretly the government embarked on a destabilisation programme.

During that operation I was in charge of media and I received orders to report back to my handler on a daily basis. He was Brigadier Ferdie van Wyk from military intelligence in Pretoria.

This man reported directly to the chief of the army and the chief of the defence force and they, in turn, reported directly to the cabinet. I was just three steps away from the cabinet. My reports were written for the top management and the cabinet and I addressed details in these reports.

Apart from the media I was aware that the cabinet was briefed on a daily basis in detail on the development of the campaign in Namibia. De Klerk was part of that cabinet. The president also had close ties with the Administrator General, Louis Pienaar.

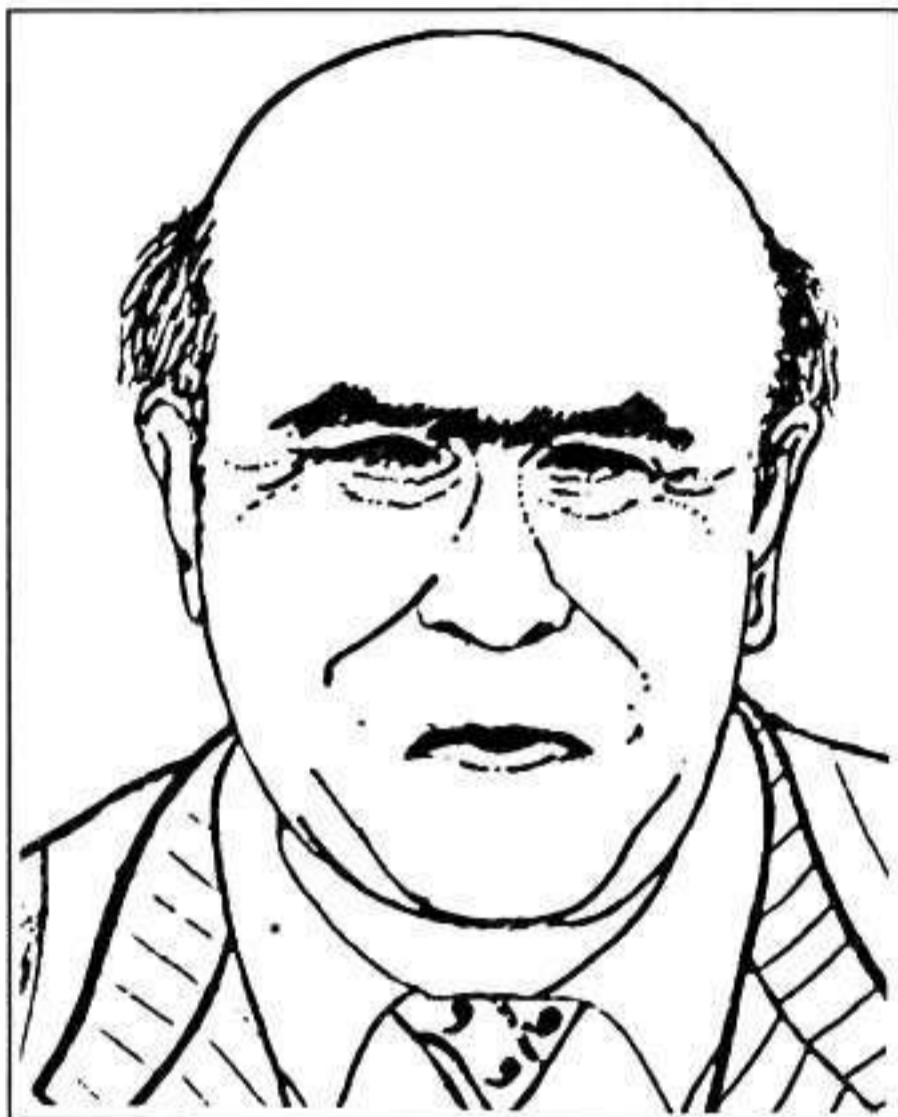
A special visit was organised by the Administrator General for De Klerk in 1989, just before the November elections, to visit Namibia for first hand experience on the execution of 'Operation Agree'. This was before his appointment as state president.

During that visit my colleagues in the system gave detailed briefings to De Klerk on the execution of 'Operation Agree'.

There was a deliberate effort made to inform him about the double strategies, in order to prepare him for what was still

to come in South Africa. Coincidentally Louis Pienaar was later appointed to De Klerk's cabinet.

Before the end of that year FW de Klerk became the state president. The results of the Namibian elections were out and the Nationalist Party sent a high level delegation of Nat MPs to the region to investigate the outcome of the elections. They reported back to the cabinet



The story that dissident rightwing elements in the security forces are operating on their own agenda, is well planned propaganda and aimed at misleading the public on the real role of the cabinet and the state president.

in the summer of 1989.

A new SA strategy

After this post-mortem session the cabinet went into a bush summit in January 1990. They discussed the results of the Namibian elections in the light of a new South Africa. Factors such as the crumbling of communism and the mounting economic pressure against South Africa were also taken into account. The result was a strategy for a new South Africa.

So the era of reform was born. On the one hand the plan was to openly dismantle the so-called pillars of apartheid, negotiate with political enemies, unban

illegal organisations and release political prisoners. This strategy of negotiation was established to rid the country of economic sanctions, because this reform process would attract a positive international response.

However, reform itself, while designed to avert the threat of economic collapse, cannot ensure survival for the Afrikaner in terms of retaining power.

Instead, it raised the possibility of a loss of power. This brought about a supplementary strategy on another level to walk the tight-rope between the twin threats of economic collapse and loss of power.

This secret part of the strategy is the destabilisation of the Nationalist Party's political opposition using the security forces, vigilantes and hit squads to create and sustain violence, as well as creating negative propaganda. It is a strategy that was rehearsed in Namibia, and the cabinet decided to adopt it for the new South Africa.

The open part of this strategy was announced to the world a few months after the bush summit on 2 February 1990 in parliament in Cape Town. It took the world by surprise, and as a result of this, the negotiations started to crumble internationally. FW de Klerk was perceived as the Gorbachev of South Africa — a man of integrity and reform. No one pondered the possibility that he may possibly be the chief commander of the third force.

After his opening speech in parliament the state president was asked no less than three times in later parliamentary sessions if the SA government funded and assisted the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) and other political

parties in Namibia during the transitional phase in 1989. He used the Protection of Information Act to avoid answering the question.

Amazing similarities

There are amazing similarities between the operation in Namibia and what is happening in South Africa at the moment. The same man that was briefed in detail in Namibia in 1989 on the secret 'Operation Agree' is running the country today, based on the same double agenda. Some of the similarities in the campaign are:

* The DTA was a grouping of political

parties and together with all moderate parties was funded and assisted by the government. In South Africa today the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) is funded, together with other moderate political groupings like homeland parties and church groups, to eventually align with the National Party in a Christian Democratic Alliance (CDA).

* The same front organisations and agents that were used in Namibia are being utilized in South Africa at the moment. An example is Dixon/Soule & Associates, now the Q Group, a communications company controlling various smaller front companies with secret military funds. They are the driving force behind Fida and Lucas Mangope, to name but two puppets. They are also behind the production of various propaganda videos for the SABC, where they have agents in high positions.

* The same special forces of the defence force and the police that operated in Namibia to intimidate, in particular in the north of the country, are managing the violence in South Africa at the moment. Five Reconnaissance Regiment and Koevoet are but two groupings with sinister backgrounds. Five recce's past is

linked to the CCB, and these dismantled hit squads are operating today in this reconnaissance regiment. FW de Klerk is the link between the Namibian operation and the operation in the new South Africa. His days of close contacts with Louis Pienaar and Pik Botha, the men who played a major role in Namibia, are continued in our country at the moment with a similar, but far bigger operation.

The only difference is that he demoted the defence force from a superior position, to play an equal role with the other security services and state departments in these destabilisation and wealth-creating programmes.

Pik Botha said in July on SABC-TV after the Inkathagate scandal that 'we did it in the past and we will do it again in the future'. How can we continue to trust this government with managing secret projects using huge state resources? It is particularly the structures in the cabinet and various state departments that reflect not only the existence of a double agenda, but also De Klerk's involvement in its management.

The cabinet controls everything

In 1979 the Joint Management Commit-

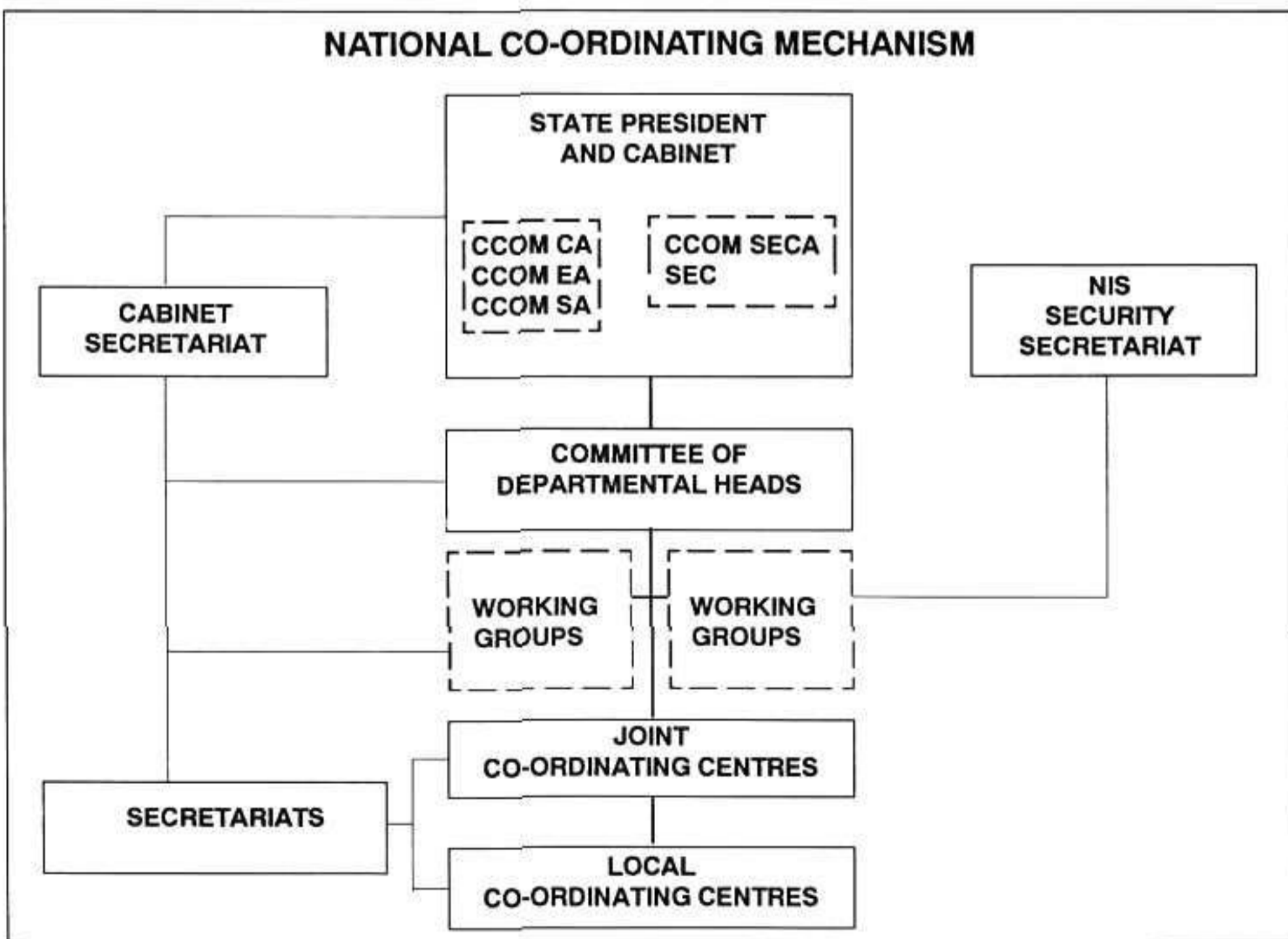
tee (JMC) was established primarily to provide the cabinet with information related to national security. The system provided for a hierarchical structure with a national security council which had direct access to the previous state president, a regional JMC operating in each of the regions, sub-JMCs operating at sub-regional level, and a mini-JMC operating at local or police station level.

From 1986 greater emphasis was placed on coordinating developments in problem areas as a counter-measure to unrest. As a result the state departments were more fully incorporated into the structure and bodies such as the regional Inter Department Committee were disbanded.

Towards the end of 1989, the JMC was abolished by De Klerk and replaced in 1990 by a coordinating system in which the security element was removed. The new system, known as the National Coordinating Mechanism, is also a hierarchical structure with a Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) operating at the regional level (See diagram).

In our country the cabinet is constitutionally the highest coordinating entity in the government hierarchy, with control

NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING MECHANISM



over all government actions. Its composition allows for four cabinet committees. Each committee is headed by a senior minister and assists the cabinet in its policy-making activities. The state president chairs the cabinet sessions when the different committees report back on different issues. The committees are for constitutional, economic, welfare and security matters.

The first three committees together form part of the wealth (or economic) creating strategy. The anti-sanctions drive is an integral part of the wealth-creating strategy and it is designed to rescue South Africa from economic collapse as a result of the international sanctions campaign. The wealth-creating aspect of the strategy is an attempt to neutralise issues like nationalisation and various other socialist policies. This is the open part of the agenda.

The security committee designs policies on the government's total war plan and this is part of the destabilisation programme to neutralise the government's opposition. The use of violence and the funding of possible political allies are the most overt manifestations of this secret strategy. The old state security council (SSC) is now integrated into the cabinet and forms an integral part of the security committee.

The two groupings of committees in the cabinet have powers to recommend and finalise, within their respective areas of jurisdiction, different policies and strategies, but always subject to confirmation by the cabinet. The state president is thus always aware of all decisions taken and informed on all progress reports.

Secret cabinet document

In a secret document drawn up by the cabinet secretariat last year, it was stated that the government believes that further developments should be based on past success, and that government effectiveness should be promoted. It concluded that some of the coordinating mechanism's most important advantages include:

- * 'the confirmation by the cabinet as the highest policy-making and coordinating authority';
- * 'the existence of only one formally structured mechanism for the coordination of government action'; and
- * 'the maintenance of an effective base for management information.'

It is clear from this document that the state president is a well informed man and the highest authority on all the strate-

Challenges for the ANC

WITH this message I am not only pointing a finger at F W de Klerk and his government. In fact, four fingers are pointing back to the ANC. My question to them is: what are you doing with this information?

This is not the only information that is available concerning the involvement of a government third force and the maintenance of violence. A lot can be done if the ANC starts using the information properly.

My experience with the the ANC so far is that they are crippled by a disability preventing them from taking any action.

I have tried since June this year just to organise a meeting to brief them properly, but without any success.

I am also not a perfect human being and by far not without mistakes. But I sit with crucial information and an insight in the processes that are busy destabilising our country.

Mr Mandela, the violence is also your responsibility. You are elected by the people to act on their behalf.

I am afraid that you and the ANC make no impression on me ...and many other South Africans as well!

Maybe it is time for us as individuals to take up action. We have waited too long for politicians to act on our behalf. This reminds me of a saying of Krishna Murti:

'No leader is going to give us peace, no government, no army, no country. What will bring peace is inward transformation which will lead to outward action. Inward transformation is not isolation, not a withdrawal from outward action. On the contrary, there can be right action only when there is right thinking and there is no right thinking when there is no self-knowledge. Without knowing yourself, there is no peace.'

God bless South Africa.



Nelson Mandela

gies and policies that are designed and executed by the government, using the structures available to him and the cabinet. The different state departments, including the security services, are an integral part of the state machinery — a total system managing a total strategy.

The story that dissident rightwing elements in the security forces are operating on their own agenda, is well planned propaganda and aimed at misleading the public on the real role of the cabinet and the state president.

Let's take the defence force as one state department as an example. The chief of the SADF sits together with other department heads on the committee for departmental heads. He reports

directly to the minister of defence and the minister, in turn, sits on the security committee in the cabinet and also serves on the SSC.

A special task group for security matters design concept strategies and policies on security matters. The chief of the SADF and some of his senior officers have a direct input in the formulation of these strategies. From there it will be approved by the security committee in the cabinet before it is approved by the cabinet as a whole.

National Intelligence Service (NIS) acts as the secretariat for both the security committee in the cabinet, the SSC and the task group for security matters. Any strategy to use the security forces to

create violence will be on paper in this secretariat, and the state president and the cabinet will be the highest authority to approve this strategy.

To create and maintain violence as a political strategy to destabilise the political opposition of the National Party will need more than one line of function in the defence force. On a strategy level the directorate of military intelligence on a defence force level, will be responsible for the designing and writing of strategies. Individuals from here also link to the task group for security matters.

Approved strategies will be communicated via special orders to the arms of the service level. Here the army constitutes the main player. The chief of army staff military intelligence will pass the order to his sub-directorate of communications operations.

They will appoint a project officer to plan, for example, an assassination of a political target.

This project officer, a senior person normally with the rank of a colonel, will use an intelligence team from another sub-directorate in the army or special forces to gather information to draw up a detailed plan. The finished plan will be passed to special forces and the chief of special forces will task 5 Reconnaissance Regiment to execute the job.

Special forces will put together a small team with a killing facility, logistics, a cover, and a senior warrant officer to act as a team leader. This group will study the plan, train for the execution and do the job in a very professional manner.

The former sergeant Felix Ndimene gave a detailed account to the *New Nation* last July of how 5 Recce was used to execute some of the train massacres, violence in the townships on the Reef and Natal, and the killing of certain political activists. He also revealed how they were told that communism constitutes the real enemy and why it is important to fight for peace.

The execution of a simple hit of a political activist therefore starts right at the top. You need a strategy to destabilise your political opposition before you can actually design a plan to kill somebody. Various depart-

ments, directorates and sections are needed to execute a simple operation. To do this you need an approved order with a proper authority number.

The national coordinating mechanism is designed to make sure that no action is taken without the approval of the state president and the cabinet.

Unanswered questions

Some argue that only 'hard' (ie documentary) evidence will convince a doubting public that FW de Klerk is an active participant in the carnage that is gripping the townships. For those who still doubt my story, and the conclusions I draw from it, please consider the follow-

sance Regiment and 32 Battalion. What are they doing? Why can they not be demobilised and sent back to their countries of origin? Why can they not all testify at the commission for intimidation to clear all the speculation against them, once and for all?

* What is the defence force doing with the huge communication and propaganda departments it has? These people are all part of 'comops', which is completely separate from the perfectly legitimate public relations department.

* Where is the secret defence budget of R4,1 billion going and what is happening in all the secret projects in the defence force and other state departments?

Anybody who tries to reject my theory on FW de Klerk must first answer these questions before they prove me wrong.

If De Klerk claims that he is not aware of the existence of a third force in the government, then why has his intelligence services in the military, police and national intelligence not received orders from him to investigate and produce answers?

The bottom line is that he is in charge of the country and therefore responsible for the violence and massive destabilisation of the ANC and groupings in the Patriotic Front.

For me it remains a question of trust. I simply cannot trust him and his colleagues in the cabinet when it comes to the management of state resources.

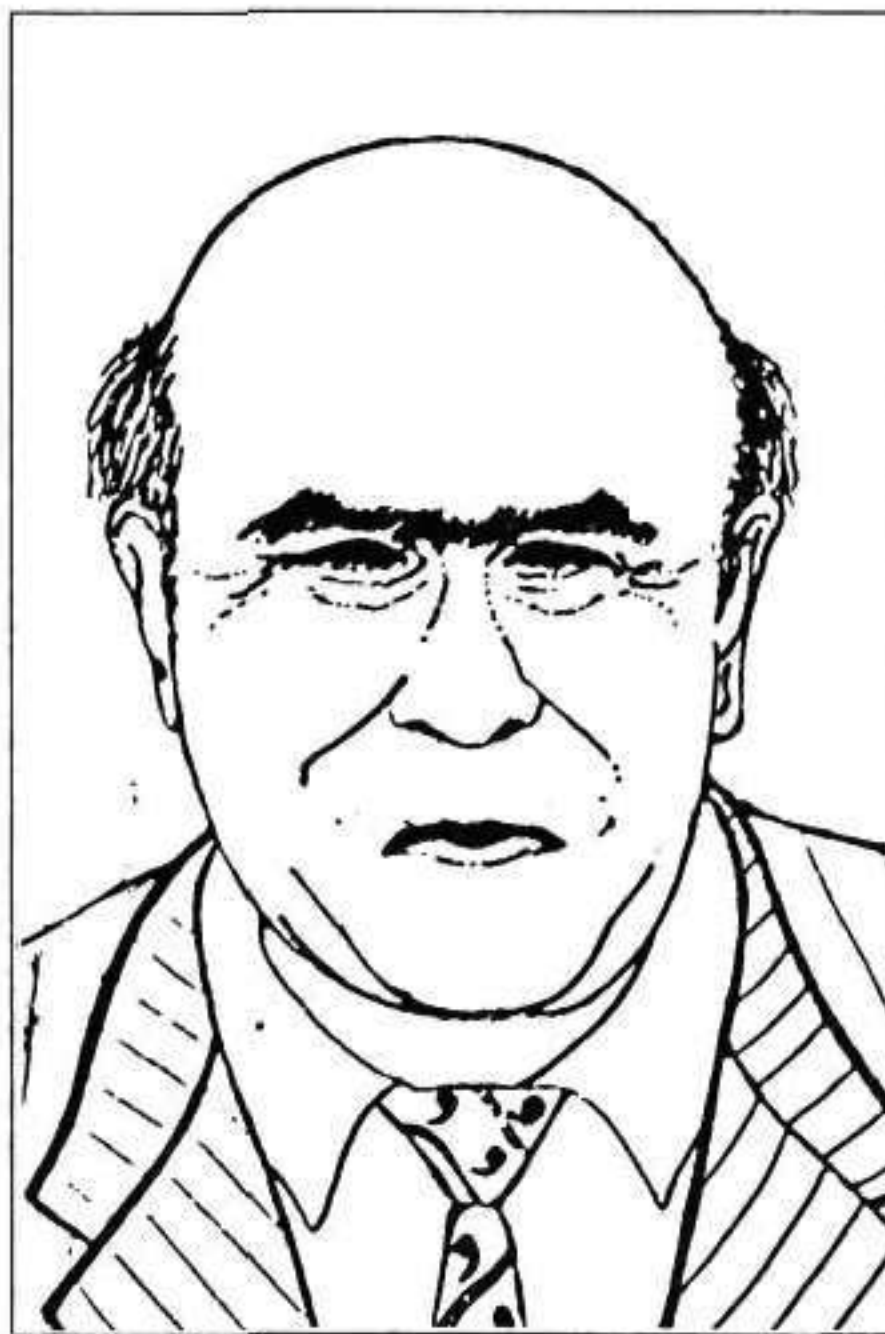
The control of funds, infrastructure and personnel in all the state departments was, for too long, utilised against the majority of people in South Africa, while maintaining an unjust ideology called apartheid.

For too long the present day leaders lied about these matters. I cannot accept their so-called honest and open answers any more.

They lied in the past. Why not do so now and in the future? They changed face, but not heart.

I want to end with a simple message. President FW de Klerk is the chief commander of the third force in the government.

We need an interim government to stop him from using state resources to manipulate the political process, using a highly professional third force and propaganda structures. *



If De Klerk claims that he is not aware of the existence of a third force in the government, then why has his intelligence services in the military, police and national intelligence not received orders from him to investigate and produce answers?

ing:

* There are close to 6 000 foreign mercenaries in the special forces in the defence force. They are all part of 5 Reconnaissance

DOUBLE AGENDA

The chairperson of the ruling Venda Military Council, respected by both international politicians and the ANC for his progressive stand on reincorporation of the homeland into a new South Africa, has a paradoxical agenda in his backyard.

Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana, who took power in a bloodless coup from Venda president Frank Ravele and his cabinet at the beginning of 1990, is alleged to lack a social base and to be coercing civic and student bodies, and targeting individuals, to suit his political ambitions.

Venda is a bantustan which, since its 'independence', has been at the centre of controversy concerning both ritual murders and political instability. It occupies 7 176 square kilometres of the Northern Transvaal, bordering Zimbabwe on the north and Mozambique on the north east; hence it is vulnerable to guerrilla infiltration. The homeland has a population of 651 393 people, according to the last census conducted in March this year.

The bantustan has a history of repression. During the 1970s, Ramushwana, as Commissioner of Police, was used by both the Mphahlele regime and the South African security forces. Ramushwana is alleged to have lost his credibility with the people of Venda when he shielded widespread corruption in the homeland. He is also alleged to have covered up a number of ritual murders, which necessitated the formation of the Le Roux Commission of Inquiry in 1988. His involvement in bush wars in countries like Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia, and the detentions in Venda, must, say activists in the area, 'make his past haunt him'.

Subtle and shrewd

According to seasoned activist and writer Rashaka Ratshitanga, who was detained and interrogated several times by Ramushwana when he was a security policeman: 'He is trusted a lot by the De Klerk crew for his subtlety. He is very shrewd indeed.'

The Venda Military Council, despite its marriage of convenience with the ANC, is alleged to be biased in dealing with matters handled by democratically elected structures, in favour of rulings made by administrations that are dominated by seconded officials from Pretoria.

Ratshitanga alleges that in 1989, while he was in detention, security police in the homeland tried to make his 10-year-



The paradoxical agenda of the 'people's brigadier'

The 'People's Brigadier' Gabriel Ramushwana got a warm welcome from cadres at the MK seminar in Venda this July. But what is his track record really like in terms of human rights, anti-corruption and resistance to apartheid? asks MBULELO MDLEDLE

old son Mukoni spy on him for R10. Mukoni, according to his father, fell into the hands of the police when he was caught selling publications like Work In Progress, Upbeat and Learn and Teach. Mukoni fled Venda and came to Johannesburg where he received medical therapy, and had an injunction issued on his behalf by Cheadle, Thompson and Haysom to the Venda government to stop the harassment.

Another controversy is the issue of Tshivhazwaulu Village, which was allegedly bulldozed by farmer Peter Grobber, who intends to make it his farm. The destitute villagers reported the matter to Livubu police station, to no avail. The local ANC Youth League branch then took the matter up with Ramush-

wana, after the latter had allegedly told the villagers they had to pay Grobber R200 000 to get their village back. Ramushwana later said he would probe how Peter Grobber got a deed of sale.

A spokesperson for the ANC Land Commission, Sphiwe Ngwenya, says the ANC is investigating the matter and is in touch with all parties involved, including the Venda Military Council. At this stage there is no further comment until the matter has been fully resolved, he says.

Worker grievances

The black staff members of Venda Development Corporation demonstrated on 9 December 1990, when seven members were allegedly arbitrarily suspended by

seconded officials from Pretoria. About 180 staff members carried placards and called on the chairperson of the corporation, Mr Steyn, to resign.

According to Mutshutshu Mamma, a black staff member who was suspended after the demonstration, the main grievance was blatant corruption by the seconded officials. Despite attempts by members of the military council to have the workers reinstated, Ramushwana refused to endorse their decision.

More recently South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Saccawu) members at the Venda Sun in Thohoyandou, had their meeting disrupted by a Mrs Erasmus, who called them 'kaffirs' and ordered them to stop the meeting. According to Joseph Mosiya, Saccawu organiser for Northern Transvaal, Erasmus repeated her insult and told the workers to stop the meeting. A grievance was then lodged against her with the general manager, R Walker, who promised to 'investigate the incident within three days'. Saccawu wanted Erasmus dismissed or suspended, but Walker refused, saying they must await the outcome.

On the third day, Walker said he would give a report at 3pm. At three he said he was calling an 'inquiry' into the incident. This sparked a dispute and Mosiya arranged a meeting with Walker, who said he could not talk to Saccawu which was not 'recognised by the government and the people of Venda'. He

said he would have preferred to talk to the defunct Allied Workers Union.

Walker then became arrogant and instructed the hotel security to 'throw out' Joseph Mosiya, who was manhandled and thrown off the hotel premises, sustaining bruises in the process. Saccawu members then went on strike for three days. The union approached the Venda Department of Internal Affairs, which said it had no 'jurisdiction' over the hotel. However, the department promised to intervene and a meeting between the three parties was called, after threats from Walker to call the police. After the meeting, workers were forced to sign a 'warning letter', and six workers, including shopsteward Esther Munyamela, were fired.

Student battles

At the Venda College of Education, where the administration is dominated by Pretoria, 12 students who were democratically elected onto the SRC were arbitrarily suspended in June.

According to Ratshitanga, they had beaten students put forward by the administration at the polls. The National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) failed to resolve the matter with the Venda Education Department, which he alleges has 'no power at all'.

Another grievance that seals the agenda of the Venda Military Council, is the government's interference at Liiivha School. The school was started in 1984

by a group of concerned parents, among them Professors Ross Harker, Steward Emerson, Melanie Donald and Rashaka Ratshitanga, who made available a lecture-theatre at the University of Venda. The school began classes on May Day of that year.

According to principal Maryla Bialobrzaska, the school, which had humble beginnings both financially and materially, is autonomous, non-racial, co-educational, English-medium and progressive. It has its own democratically elected school board comprising the principal as an ex-officio member, two teachers serving on a rotational basis, seven parents and two members of the school's SRC. The school ranges from pre-school to standard eight and currently has 219 students. It is unique as it has a strong SRC which jointly manages the school administration, without hierarchical tendencies.

The school is now a tug-of-war between itself and the Venda Education Department, which is denying the former its autonomy. It is alleged that most teachers, who are members of progressive structures like the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, end up being harassed and detained. Salaries are alleged to be arbitrarily cut while dismissals are also arbitrary.

The Venda Education Department, whose only role is supposed to be the payment of salaries, is alleged to be abusing its power to the extent that it has made service conditions miserable for teachers who are not from Venda. According to Bialobrzaska, there is no pension scheme for non-Venda citizens, no medical aid scheme and no housing subsidy. These difficult working conditions have resulted in an acute scarcity of teachers with Honours and Masters' degrees in the area.

ANC response

According to ANC spokesperson Carl Niehaus, the ANC appreciates the progressive steps taken towards democracy in Venda, but regrets the repressive steps that the military council has undertaken. The ANC hopes that Venda will be part of a democratic new South Africa. Calvin Khan of MK projects says the ANC will go along with any homeland leader that accommodates the organisation.

Meanwhile, Brigadier Gabriel Ramushwana denies that there is repression in the bantustan, and that the media is distorted. In a statement to WIP, he insists that there is freedom of expression in Venda. *



Learn and Teach ADULT LITERACY ORGANISATION

Learn and Teach is a mother tongue adult literacy organisation established in 1974. It is a non-government, non-profit making organisation.

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Since the start of the Reef conflict in July of last year, division between Inkatha's United Workers' Union of South Africa (Uwusa) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) members has assumed a critical level.

Whilst some of Uwusa members have been assaulted in workplace clashes, most often it is Cosatu-aligned workers who have been subject to attack. Cosatu members have been assassinated, others have received death threats, many tell of physical assaults. Cosatu shopstewards say they have been followed by 'sinister people' and workers report of being warned by Uwusa supporters not to attend Cosatu meetings. There are many accounts of workers, especially Zulu-speakers, being forced to resign from Cosatu-affiliated unions and pay protection fees. Not surprisingly, a number of shopstewards have found it difficult to call meetings, report back and negotiate with the backing of their members.

Industrial areas on the East Rand, South Africa's manufacturing heartland, have witnessed the most widespread intimidation. Members of Food and Allied Workers' Union (Fawu), the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) and the Print, Paper, Wood and Allied Workers' Union (Ppwawu) have been randomly attacked outside factory gates. Over August, in Driehoek industrial area, more than a dozen serious incidents were recorded by Cosatu officials. Here, workers tell of being confronted by Uwusa members armed with 'traditional weapons' and being assaulted on their way to and from work. AK-47s and other arms have been found on factory premises.

Structural divisions...

Explanations which merely see this industrial violence as a spillover from the wider township conflict are inadequate.

Although most often interpreted in the mainstream media and by employers as 'ethnic' conflict, the actual causes of these industrial conflicts are related to unchecked structural divisions within the working class.

On the Reef, apartheid policies have worked, notably through the migrant labour system, to create a segmented workforce. Urban 'insiders' constitute the bulk of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers in permanent employment, whilst migrant workers housed in hostels are predominantly in manual, casual or temporary contract positions,

Uwusa spearheads shopfloor violence

The unity of the working class on the Reef is being undermined by rising levels of violence on the shopfloor, say GREG RUITERS and RUPERT TAYLOR, who accuse the state-funded Uwusa of exploiting divisions amongst workers for sinister ends

constantly facing the prospect of unemployment. Crucially, it is the uneven development of employment prospects for these differing social groups and the competition over jobs which has fed divisions within the working class, opening up space for conservative forces to turn worker against worker.

Economic restructuring, retrenchment and the rising number of unemployed make these lines of division increasingly salient.

Over the 1974-89 period, only 1.2 million jobs were created in the formal sector as against a 4.7 million increase in the labour force. With rapid population growth in urban areas, unemployment at around eight million and a huge economic fall-out of 1 300 jobs per day, times are hard. And all this impacts most severely on contract and temporary workers who, in the desperate struggle to try to maintain jobs, are often the first to go.

It is these material conditions which enable mobilisation along ethnic lines. And, in this respect, the common assumption that the violence is fundamentally about a self-propelled, politicised ethnicity is dangerous — it obscures the extent of socio-economic disintegration within the working class.

...exploited by Uwusa

Indicative of how material factors relate to conflict, as opposed to those of ethnic identity, are events at Langeberg Foods — a canning factory in Boksburg organised by Fawu. In this factory Inkatha supporters have, for some time, been trying to gain recognition of Uwusa and after the contracts of 150 casual workers sympathetic to IFP/Uwusa were legally terminated, a cycle of violence ensued.

On 15 August, some 90 IFP/Uwusa supporters staged an illegal demonstration in the factory yard. The protesters, carrying placards citing the names of

shopstewards to be attacked, delivered a letter to management calling for the immediate re-employment of all IFP members who had been dismissed. The protesters were sent away. Over the following fortnight, seven workers were killed outside the factory gates and the East Rand Fawu branch chairperson's home was riddled with AK-47 bullets.

In response to these attacks, Uwusa spokesperson Duke Sennakgomo stated: 'The management at the factory allowed itself to be bullied by the Cosatu/Fawu/ANC alliance into driving out our members' (*Sowetan*, 28 August 1991).

However the conflict at Langeberg Foods is interpreted, such events threaten the entire practice of democratic shop-floor unionism — historically the strength of Fosatu and Cosatu. If this kind of conflict goes unchecked the result is likely to be ever increasing polarisation. In fact, at the height of the Reef conflict last year, Numsa reported that either all Zulu-speaking or all Xhosa-speaking workers quit certain factories.

As Uwusa promotes Zulu ethnic nationalism and works to build support along ethnic lines, what could unfold is the firm crystallisation of an ethnically divided working class. The dangers of this are many. Most importantly, it would reduce the potential for collective action and prove deeply disintegrative at national level, creating and exacerbating tensions that would hinder the prospects for a democratic non-racial South Africa.

Marginal support

Since its launch on May Day 1986, Uwusa has organised and mobilised by drawing on ethnic consciousness projected by Inkatha's exclusivist reading of Zulu culture, tradition and custom. It is no coincidence that on the Reef the highest degree of support for Uwusa is amongst those Zulu-speaking hostel dwellers who



The actual causes of industrial conflicts are related to unchecked structural divisions within the working class

are in need of a sense of collective identity in a destabilising environment.

According to sources at Uwusa, paid-up membership for 1989 stood at 100 000 — with an additional 100 000 signed-up. Although such figures are open to dispute, there can be no doubt that the majority of Uwusa's paid-up members are concentrated in Natal. On the Reef, Uwusa occupies a marginal position, having been able to establish a presence in very few workplaces. On the East Rand, where support is strongest, factories with an Uwusa presence report membership as ranging between five and 20 percent of their workforce.

Consequently, Uwusa has been unable to attract much revenue from its members. In 1990, Uwusa was forced to postpone its national congress because of lack of funds. July's Inkathagate scandal clearly revealed that without state funding Uwusa would have encountered severe financial difficulties. It was disclosed that Inkatha, with security police guidance, established Uwusa with taxpayers' money. From September 1987 to July 1991, Uwusa received R1.5 million in funding from the SAP's special account.

Apart from state backing, support for Uwusa is to some extent related to the weaknesses of the labour movement. Uwusa has managed to benefit from the

organisational gaps left by Cosatu and Nactu, particularly at the lower end of the workforce.

Migrant workers neglected

The labour movement has, by and large, focused on the interests of the relatively secure skilled and semi-skilled workers in large modern industries. Migrant workers have experienced alienation in union structures and the bulk of the poor have been largely neglected; there has been little serious response to the ongoing retrenchment of workers and only a fraction of the millions of unemployed workers, for example, organised into the (now defunct) National Unemployed Workers' Coordinating Committee.

Part of the problem has been that working class organisation has been severely hampered by state security legislation, such as the emergency regulations, but the reasons run deeper.

In Cosatu, in particular, there has been a tendency towards the centralisation of key decision-making and an increasing bureaucratisation. Recent financial reports of the federation reveal that much is spent on salaries and national conferences while campaigns constitute a much smaller proportion of expenditure. On the ground, the reality is that even in areas not affected by the violence, Cosatu locals have failed to mount

effective campaigns.

Moreover, union meetings are poorly attended and few shopstewards bother with report-back meetings. In one Johannesburg local, for example, only around one-sixth of companies are regularly represented at meetings.

Ironically, unlike Fosatu, Cosatu has, on the ground, emerged as a looser labour federation — solidarity amongst union affiliates has been weaker and local structures of Cosatu have no constitutional status.

New direction needed

New direction, to rebuild working class unity, could best be advanced at national level by addressing the material divisions among workers and giving campaigns a more central focus in the action plans of Cosatu and Nactu. Such campaigns need to draw on and create basic referents and common symbols for collective identity, endeavouring to counter conservative constructions of ethnicity through stressing the importance of unity and non-racialism on the shopfloor and amongst the unemployed.

Organised workers need to draw in the unemployed and defend every individual, irrespective of affiliation, from such measures as retrenchments, price rises and state policies like VAT.

At local level, in those areas on the Reef affected by violence, a number of specific measures could be pursued: organising Industrial Area Committees; distributing leaflets outlining the material sources of the conflict; establishing a code of conduct on labour-related violence; guaranteeing safety of workers through establishing representative grassroots peace committees on trains, in industrial areas and so on; protecting workers as they travel to and from work; and holding large workers' meetings in industrial areas to reaffirm a commitment to peace.

Structural divisions generated by apartheid and socio-economic decline have two possible outcomes for the working-class. They can either lead to greater solidarity and organisation among the employed and unemployed, or they can open up a desperate and violent competitive struggle between segments of the working-class. Organisational strategies do play a crucial role in determining the direction the present crisis will take; working class unity has to be consciously built.

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The great VAT strike

The overwhelmingly successful anti-VAT strike has made it clear that organised labour is a major player in the process for change. For the government or the ANC to ignore this reality in economic and political restructuring talks would be suicidal, says GLENDA DANIELS

The VAT stayaway, heeded by about 3.5 million people, has been hailed as the largest in the country's history.

There are three main reasons for the success of the strike: the planning and consultative processes involved; the involvement of a wide spectrum of organisations (left, right, centre); and the issue itself. Value Added Tax (VAT) affects the day to day lives of people and their pockets.

Organisation for the stayaway began at the Cosatu Congress in July this year.

Planning involved setting up an Anti-VAT Co-ordinating Committee which involved different and wide ranging organisations, workshops, rallies, marches, seminars and so on, as part of the build up to the strike. Thousands of pamphlets and posters were distributed around the country.

If this strike had been organised a few days or even a few weeks before it

was called, it would probably not have been so successful. In the past many people — including activists — have admitted to remembering they were supposed to be observing a consumer boycott only while they were in town shopping or while reading about the boycott in the newspaper.

No one can accuse the VAT strike of being in that league.

So while the government peevishly cries 'intimidation' to explain away the success of the stayaway, it doubtless realises it must reconsider VAT — especially with regard to basic food, health, water and electricity. Whether it will act on this is another issue. More importantly, the government should have learnt that labour is serious when it says 'don't restructure the economy without consulting us'.

Massive success

Cosatu reported a 80-90 percent stay-

away countrywide and denied allegations of 'intimidation'. Fifty percent of postal workers observed the strike. The motor industry came to a standstill and reported a loss of R135 million on the first day alone. SA Breweries had a 90 percent stayaway. Consul reported a 97 percent absenteeism, and Seifsa 60 percent.

These are among some of the available statistics on the strike in industry.

The Witwatersrand stayaway was between 80-100 percent successful. In the Northern Cape and Orange Free State 70 percent stayed away; in Durban 50 percent, in the Western Cape 65 percent, and East London and Port Elizabeth 99-100 percent.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) and the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) agreed that school examinations should go ahead on both days. More than 90 percent of students turned up to write

their papers, which is about the normal figure.

Lack of intimidation

Meanwhile, government representatives condemned the stayaway on SABC TV's 'Agenda' programme as 'highly irresponsible in this political climate'. The NP spokesperson said it was 'absolute nonsense' that the strike was supported by the majority because the 'townships were kept in hostage'. 'There is no doubt there was a high level of intimidation' and 'if it's so voluntary then allow the taxis to run freely, guarantee that!'

Interviewer Marietta Kruger hammed it when she ended the programme saying something to the effect of 'got to go now — we have hundreds of calls coming in reporting intimidation!'

Despite government propaganda to contrary, this strike has been characterised by a lack of intimidation compared to some in the mid-1980s, when undoubtedly intimidation did occur.

Before the strike Cosatu publicly said that nobody, irrespective of whether s/he was a member of Cosatu, was obliged to strike.

Sabta, the black taxi association, took a decision on its own to observe the strike. Nevertheless some taxis were seen running around empty or with one or two passengers.

Anti-VAT picketers in Hillbrow, Johannesburg merely hoisted up their placards to rogue taxi drivers who smiled back at picketers.

Pickets said 'Tax Harry, Not Tom and Dick'; 'Du Plessis Give Us a Break, Man' 'VAT is a Poor Idea'; 'Taxing Health is Sick'; 'VAT: Hands off Electricity' and 'No Change Above our Heads'.

Far reaching implications

Cosatu general secretary, Jay Naidoo, said on the first day of the strike that the stayaway was like a referendum which demonstrated a vote of no confidence in the government.

The local activities in each area — pickets, rallies, picnics or marches, depicted a sort of Patriotic Front in action.

In some places, like Hillbrow, where police broke up a peaceful moving picket and arrested and beat up many people, marches were lead by the Azanian Peoples' Organisation (Azapo), Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and Workers' Organisation of South Africa (Wosa).

Commented one ANC member: 'They are really gaining mileage out of this, but so what? We can't be sectarian.'

Jay Naidoo told WIP the strike had



Cosatu has managed to win support beyond our traditional opponents of apartheid — we involved the religious sectors, sections of the white community, welfare organisations, some business sections, and some white unions. — Jay Naidoo

'astounded' the government and big business, which had been critical of the ability to mobilise at a popular level.

It was also, he said, the first time that talks over the years about a broad coalition came into action. For Cosatu itself it was the first time that unity with the National Congress of Trade Unions (Nactu) had been achieved. Naidoo felt it was important that Cosatu 'managed to win support beyond our traditional opponents of apartheid — we involved the religious sectors, sections of the white community, welfare organisations, some business sections, and some white unions.'

Further, he said the point had been made to the government that the working class has a role to play in democratising South Africa. 'In National Party terms Cosatu is not supposed to be at the multi-party conference and they have rejected the proposal that we be drawn into it in a consultative role.'

Cosatu, said Naidoo, showed the capacity to organise in a disciplined fashion. 'The government has now learnt that it is not going to introduce anything in a unilateral way.'

He pointed out that, through the VAT issue, divisions within big business and the government were taking place, because sections were beginning to see that only genuine negotiations could resolve problems.

Cosatu hopes to build on the success of the strike and on trade union unity with Nactu to strengthen the Patriotic Front. The federation hopes to move quickly towards setting up a macro-economic forum and to enter into genuine negotiations with big business. According to Cosatu, its doors are still open to the government to negotiate VAT.

Doctors' protest

The October doctors' anti-VAT strike also had far reaching implications, involved much planning, was the first of its kind and was also a success when an estimated 3 500 doctors closed their practices in protest against previously GST-exempt medical services.

Dr Aslam Dasoo, publicity officer for South African Health Workers' Congress (Sahwco) and spokesperson for the Vat Co-ordinating Committee said the closure of surgeries for the two days in October was symbolic, and contingency plans were made for emergencies.

All closed practices had emergency numbers and available transport. Doctors also presented themselves at state facilities to make their services available. The action made it possible for health services to be open on 4 and 5 November, the days of the national strike when services were needed.

According to Dasoo: 'For the first time doctors took a stand on an issue where there was no monetary gain but in fact losses were incurred. The whole strike is about future policy and we made our voices heard.'

He added: 'We thank Barend for bringing us together.'

Broader than VAT

But for organised workers, unity was only one aspect of the significance of the anti-VAT protest action. The pressure exerted by Cosatu and the ANC through the anti-VAT strike has, in broader terms, put pressure on the government for an interim government and constituent assembly.

Cosatu, specifically, has made it clear that the issue goes beyond VAT and is a strong and desperate plea to the government to open up and to enter into genuine negotiations on broader economic issues — to formulate macro-economic policy with them — and to regard them with some credibility as a major player in democratising the country.

For workers, change in the country goes beyond the vote to bread and butter issues, literally. *

Azapo claims to have first heard about the decision of the African National Congress and Pan Africanist Congress to exclude it as co-convenor of the Patriotic/United Front through the newspapers, radio and TV.

The black consciousness organisation was stripped of its status as co-convenor at a convening committee meeting on 20 October, which took place without Azapo. At the time, the convening committee was made up of Azapo, ANC and PAC.

Azapo was subsequently given a general PUF letter dated 10 October, which named Azapo as a signatory, asking Azapo to send four delegates to the conference. The organisation claims to have received no correspondence saying it was no longer a co-convenor.

Azapo did not attend because as a liberation movement, it could not accept status equal to social clubs and sports groups.

Betrayed

Azapo felt betrayed, specifically by the PAC, because of the commitments made by the latter in the Kadoma agreement with Azapo and the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania in Zimbabwe on 9 and 10 August.

The agreement, signed by Azapo president Pandelani Nefolovhodwe, BCMA chairperson Mosibudi Mangena and PAC first deputy president and chairperson Johnson Mlambo, said they wanted 'a broad-based principled Patriotic Front'.

The agreement said: 'it was also agreed that all organisations of the oppressed that accept the democratic Constituent Assembly formula be invited to participate in the PF conference'.

The meeting rejected 'talks about talks' and also resolved that 'the only kind of negotiations that Azapo, PAC and BCMA will be amenable to is to discuss the transfer of power from the minority to the majority through an elected Constituent Assembly'.

Azapo was excluded as a PUF co-convenor because the ANC and PAC were upset that it wrote a letter to 14 government-associated and ethnic groups, insisting on them taking principled positions by abandoning their collaboration and ethnicity, and asking them to join the struggle of the oppressed people.

The 14 organisations were: Inyandza of KaNgwane, Intando yeSizwe of KwaNdebele, the Dikwankwetla Party of Qwaqwa, United People's Party of Lebowa, the tricameral Democratic Party,

PAC betrayed us, says Azapo

The Azanian People's Organisation did not take part in the Patriotic/United Front conference which took place in Durban from October 25 to 27. MIKE TISSONG asked the organisation why

Bophuthatswana's Seopasengwe Party, the tricameral Labour Party, the ethnic Transvaal Indian Congress and Natal Indian Congress, the SA Rugby Board, the Venda Reincorporation Forum, Ximoko Xa Rixaka of Gazankulu, the Transkei Military Council and the Bophuthatswana Progressive Party.

Azapo also asked them to accept the constituent assembly formula or else 'Azapo would not support their attendance of the PUF'.

For the PAC to sign the Kadoma agreement and penalise Azapo because Azapo stuck to it, was seen as a high level of betrayal.

No place for 'collaborators'

Azapo deputy president, Nchaupe Mokoape, said there was no place for collaborators among patriots.

'Collaborators must be isolated. Azapo cannot be party to giving them a kiss of life by accepting them as patriots. They are enemies of the oppressed people'.

The feeling among grassroots supporters of Azapo, based on reportbacks to branches, is that Azapo took the correct stand.

It was felt that the unity achieved

among the PUF participants would remain hollow while the collaborators have the double agenda of furthering the programmes of the government, and pretending to be part of a gathering of patriots aiming to change those programmes.

Furthermore, unity is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

The unity achieved among the ANC, PAC and collaborators will have to be furthered through joint programmes that will be carried out by the membership of the organisations or else the PUF will be meaningless.

It will mean ANC, PAC, Labour Party, Lebowa United People's Party and Ximoko Xa Rixaka members, among others, sharing platforms and working together in the townships and rural areas.

That is where the unity of the PUF will be tested and whether it was wise for the ANC and PAC to choose the company of collaborators to the exclusion of Azapo.

According to Azapo general secretary Don Nkadimeng: 'In our letter, we said our position as regards bantustans, the tri-cameral parliament, community councillors and all formations operating within government created institutions, remains unchanged.

'The way we see it, Ramodike cannot enjoy the status of being a participant in the PUF and then go back to Lebowa and lock up our people in those horrendous jails which he controls.

The same goes for councillors.'

Nefolovhodwe said Azapo was still committed to joint campaigns with the PAC and the ANC, but 'where our programmes and activities do not coincide with those of others, Azapo has the democratic right to pursue its own direction'.

At the time of going to press, the ANC, PAC and Azapo met to explore the possibility of Azapo rejoining the Patriotic Front. It is still unclear whether it will agree to do so. *



A victory for tactical flexibility

The recent Patriotic Front conference, which brought together almost 90 organisations, was a masterful tactical stroke by the liberation movement, which could seriously derail government plans to maintain white domination.

This was despite the exclusion of Azapo, whose insistence on 'principled unity' (see previous page) would have meant a much more narrowly-based front, with little potential to disorganise the National Party's attempts to build its Christian Democratic Alliance.

Constituent assembly

The major significance of the Patriotic Front, coming in the wake of the all-party conference, is that it has bound a wide range of groups to the crucial demand of an elected constituent assembly.

For this demand to be won, the regime needs to be as isolated as possible. Azapo, and some within the ANC, in their desire to maintain ideological purity, seem to have lost sight of this important political objective.

No matter how opportunistic certain groups, like the Labour Party, may be, the fact that they have embraced the constituent assembly demand adds all that much extra pressure on the regime to give in. It was therefore short-sighted of groups like the Natal Indian Congress, a virtually moribund body, to have blocked the possible inclusion of groups within the House of Delegates, on the dubious grounds that it (the NIC) can only represent the indian community.

As with the Labour Party, if the Rajbansis and Reddys commit themselves to an elected constituent assembly, then nothing should stand in the way of them aligning with the liberation movement against the government.

It is to the credit of the ANC and PAC that they have firmly grasped the principle of tactical flexibility. This partially offsets their blindness in other areas, like security matters, where the regime has run rings around them (see editorial).

Interim government

A demand of immediate urgency is that of an interim government. A properly constituted transitional authority will go a long way in disorienting the regimes plans to destabilise the liberation movement, in the run-up to a new South Africa.



There is, however, as yet no clarity about the exact nature of such an authority. This emerged in a debate at the conference between Wosa's Neville Alexander and the SACP's Blade Nzimande.

Alexander warned against a transitional government composed of leadership figures of the various political organisations, where the power of the state remained in the hands of the current Afrikaner bureaucracy. Such a government, he said, would have no power to

rule, yet it would share the responsibility of administering apartheid.

Nzimande agreed that the movement ought to exercise great care when considering the exact form of an interim government. Such a government should impact on all the structures of the state, and should not be confined to leaders at the top. During the interim government phase, he argued, mass struggle should continue in order to pressurise the state to act in the interests of democracy.

The balance of forces within an interim government, said Nzimande, will be based on the balance of forces in the wider society.

He challenged those who argue against such an authority to provide a concrete, practical alternative beyond the vague slogans of 'revolution' and 'seizure of power'.

The recent massively successful VAT strike, which brought together the entire Patriotic Front under the leadership of Cosatu, has gone a long way in shifting the balance of forces towards the forces for democracy. The Patriotic Front, as it enters the all-party talks, must ensure that it tips the balance even further away from the regime's double agenda. —

*Devan Pillay **

Organisations which attended the conference

Delegates

Muslim Youth Movement; Performing Arts Workers Equity; SACP; Venda Reincorporation Forum; Jamiatul Ulema; International Socialists of SA; Pan Africanist Students Org; Advice Centres Ass; Civics Interim Coord Body; SADTU, SASCO; Five Freedoms Forum; Lebowa United Peoples Party; Transkei Military Council; NECC; Peoples Progressive Party; Black Lawyers Ass; Call of Islam; Contralesa; Black Deaf Community; Azanian Youth Unity; Nat Ass of Democratic Lawyers; Ass of Black Accountants of SA; Black Staff Ass; SA Hindu Maha Sabha; ANC; Labour Party; TUATA; National Seoposengwe Party; NAFCOC; Fed of SA Cultural Orgs; ANC Youth League; Transkei Congress of Civic Ass; Cosas; African Women's Org; NACTU; Muslim Students Ass; Black Management Forum; Cosatu; Natal Indian Congress; Baptist Convention of SA; Udusa; Transkei Council of Churches; SA Tamil Federation; SA Black Doctors Discussion Group; FABCOS; Transvaal Indian Congress; National Medical and Dental Ass; Wosa; Congress of SA Writers; Qibla; Nat Sports & Olympic Congress; Muslim Judicial Council; Congress of Business & Economics; SA Medical Discussion Group; Mafubese Arts Committee; Independent Civics; Dikwankwetla Party; SA Health Workers Congress; SA Health Awareness Group; Transkei Civic Assoc; Pan Africanist Teachers Ass; ANC Women's League; PAC; SA Catholic Bishops Conf; Consultative Business Forum; Black Sash; Transkei Traditional Leaders Ass; Intando Yesizwe; Gocon; Azania Comm; Nat Soccer League; SA Community Based Health Care Ass; Community Arts Centres; Interfaith Community Development Ass; SA Credit Union; Western Cape Traders Ass; United Peoples Trust

Policing the transformation

Police are involved in creating the order we call society through the ordering of social relations. They are not the only people who do this, but what makes the police different is that they are agents of the state, who have the specific responsibility to 'keep the peace'. 'Crime' is the name that we usually give to actions that breach this peace.

What is crime depends on what is peace. The 14 September Peace Accord does not define crime although it has asked what role the police should play during the transitional period. This question has been essential to the negotiations process.

What the Peace Accord requires is a 180-degree about-face in the definition of the peace and a corresponding about-face on the part of the police. There are two essential elements to the shift the accord requires.

First, it stipulates that the police should commit themselves to the protection of all South Africans.

Secondly, and perhaps even more importantly, it stipulates that the police should commit themselves to ensuring that the negotiations process will be fair. More specifically, it requires the police to facilitate the expression of a range of political opinions and to legitimate attempts to mobilise support for them.

The accord thus requires the police to stop acting to maintain the institutions and spirit of apartheid, and to stop acting to promote the interests of particular players in the process.

The role I have just outlined is one that the parties to the accord have publicly endorsed. The problem in implementing the accord is going to be moving from a public commitment to action on the part of the police that gives reality to this commitment. It is the police who will, in large measure, determine whether the accord works.

There are two principle impediments to the police developing this new role. The first has to do with the fact that the control of the police rests at the moment with the government.

This is the player/referee problem that has received so much attention. One suggested solution to this has been the dissolution of the present political structure and the establishment of alternative structures in the form of an interim gov-



There is no 'essential' role that belongs to the police by some divine or natural right. Whether there is a police institution and what its role is varies from place to place and over time, argues

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ernment and/or constituent assembly.

A second, less radical solution, and one that finds expression in the accord, is the establishment of a review mechanism that will make visible and public the actions taken by the government to preserve or interfere with the integrity of the transitional process.

Retooling the police

The second impediment has to do with the police themselves and their strategies: that is, with the routine habits of mind and action that the police have developed over the years to preserve apartheid. The South African police have been carefully shaped over decades into an instrument of apartheid.

They cannot simply be given a new role and be expected to perform it.

Police officers who are accustomed to terrorising communities are not going to be able to do the job laid out for them by the Peace Accord.

How to convert this attitude to democratic policing and how to tackle the 'securocratic culture' that has driven South African policing for so long are major challenges. Several proposals have emerged in my research. First are the steps that should be taken to ensure that what the police do is known to the public. The second concerns changing the style of policing through changes to the police culture.

* Make what the police do visible so that deviations from their new role will be known. The Peace Accord tackles this by setting up a review mechanism for

policing the police.

For the accord to work, however, its provisions for reviewing police activity should be strengthened in at least three ways:

The review process must be simplified; the review mechanism must be provided with an independent investigatory capacity; its findings and recommendations must be made public.

The provisions of the accord would be strengthened if they were to include a community education programme to inform people on what they should expect from the police during the transition period.

* There needs to be a new style of policing. This requires changing the way the police see the world and think and feel about what they see. Policing is formed by and arises out of a state of mind. What makes the riot squad so brutal is the way they experience their world and the motives that guide the way they act within it. This is learnt both through formal training and through informal peer reinforcement.

Changing this culture requires a multi-pronged strategy: New formal training that presents an alternative view of the police role and their world; constant interventions that challenge existing ways of thinking and acting; the disbanding of special squads, such as riot squads, and ensuring that individuals who epitomise the securocratic culture are not in positions of influence.

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Wealth tax: Moving beyond the hysteria

We now know, after the *Sunday Times's* wordy apology, that the ANC has no firm plans for a wealth tax. Nonetheless, at the mere suggestion, the white-oriented press had hysterics — like an upper-class Victorian lady at the sight of a mouse.

Meanwhile, outside, ignored, lurk the real monsters of poverty, unemployment and oppression.

We racked our brains to come up with a metaphor less set about with sexist and eurocentric overtones, but to no avail. The combined ability of reporters, editors and letter writers to repress the real issues brought only that image to mind.

White hysteria

Like the Victorian upper class, too, the 'mainstream' press — with a few notable exceptions, including Alistair Sparks, Chris Gibbons and Shaun Johnson — displayed no visible inclination toward serious or openminded discussion of South Africa's political and economic ills.

Rather than encouraging and reporting on all possible suggestions for bringing about a more balanced and dynamic economy, most editorials used language — calling the putative proponents of the tax, among others, 'loony tunes' and 'half-baked intellectuals' — all too reminiscent of South Africa's authoritarian heritage.

In the event, the proposed tax is hardly radical. Its major benefit is that, given the massive disparities in wealth, it could target those most easily able to pay. Its drawbacks thus do not include a tendency to impoverish the middle class.

Contrary to the impression created by the press, the ANC has no great interest in creating a new population of homeless professionals.

A wealth tax would have major weaknesses. Above all, it does not transform the economic and social relationships and technologies that currently foster extreme inequalities in wealth. A wealth tax merely raises reve-

nues from the rich. It will not in itself guarantee an expansion in the productive assets, housing and education of the poorest 70 percent in society.

If its revenues finance current consumption only, a wealth tax will run into the same obstacles as an income tax. By definition, any progressive tax seeks to impose a heavier burden on that class — the rich — which has a greater capacity for influencing or evading the law. In the long run, therefore, using state power solely to redistribute income tends to run out of steam. A wealth tax will only generate a stable equalisation of incomes if it accompanies the basic institutional changes required to establish and maintain a more equitable distribution of wealth.

A few hundred white men

There are two interrelated causes of poverty in South Africa: unemployment and starvation wages. Both derive, in large part, from the extraordinary concentration of wealth in a few hands. In effect, a few hundred white men currently own most of the economy.

In 1990, total fixed productive capital in South Africa was reported at around R800 billion⁽¹⁾. In that year, the forty largest private conglomerates in South Africa had assets worth around R570 billion⁽²⁾. Commercial banks and insurance companies accounted for over half their assets. By themselves, the ten largest conglomerates owned R340 billion,

or almost half the national productive capacity⁽³⁾.

Each of these corporate groups had assets worth between R20 billion and R53 billion. In the public sector, four state agencies — Eskom, the Reserve Bank, the Land Bank and Transnet — each had assets of over R25 billion.

No one can argue that these leading companies achieved their pre-eminence solely due to economic or social virtue. Their assets derive from a history of conquest and wages that, whether judged by productivity or human needs, remained very low.

Compensation of employees makes up only about half the national income in South Africa, leaving almost the same amount for business. By comparison, profits comprise merely a third to a quarter of national income in most industrialised countries.

Moreover, the state has not compelled companies to contribute to social welfare at levels comparable to, say, the US. Income taxes absorb only about a seventh of reported aggregate company income. By contrast, in the US, companies pay about two fifths of their aggregate income to the state.

Most whites are not rich

Not surprisingly, the distribution of personal wealth parallels the centralisation of productive capital. Fifteen years ago, a study by McGrath⁽⁴⁾ found that the richest five per cent of the entire population owned almost nine tenths of all personal assets in South Africa. Even within the white community, personal wealth was held by a few: a fifth of all whites owned some four fifths of white property.

A more recent study⁽⁵⁾ suggests that only six per cent of urban whites had net assets worth more than R500 000 in 1991. Half owned net assets under R100 000, and a fifth, under R10 000. By international standards, in other words, most whites are not rich. They own, essentially, little more than a house and a car; since they frequently buy these assets on

A few weeks ago the Sunday Times, in an odd, if not sinister, lapse in journalistic ethics, converted a one-sentence comment by an ANC member at a conference into an ANC policy position. The issue was the now infamous wealth tax, which has since been given the currency it would not otherwise have had. NEVA SEIDMAN MAKGETLA takes a serious look at a tax on wealth, and finds that there may be something in it after all

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credit, their net assets remain low. The average white seems rich only in comparison with the deprivation of most of their black compatriots.

Some economists would extend the concept of wealth to include education, since, like capital investment, it bolsters future earnings. For this conceptualisation, they develop the metaphor of 'human capital.'

Apartheid put this form of accumulation out of reach for most South Africans. Almost half the black population remains functionally illiterate. In 1985, two percent of blacks had completed Standard 10, compared to 30 percent of whites; fewer than one in a thousand blacks had a university degree, compared to about one in a hundred for whites.

In short, whether we look at personal or company assets, at physical or human capital, wealth distribution in South Africa remains unacceptably skewed.

That inequality spells poverty for the majority, despite fairly high national productivity, ensures that market demand only inadequately reflects the requirements of most people, and undermines competition in virtually all sectors of the economy. A wealth tax could help raise revenues as a step toward overcoming these problems.

Taxing only the very wealthy

The great disparities in ownership means that a wealth tax need not affect most salary earners or small-scale businesses. Yet it could generate significant revenues. A three percent tax assessed on the assets of the top forty private groups would increase government revenues by a fifth; a similar levy on net personal wealth over R200 000 should increase revenues by almost 7 percent. Neither tax would affect the vast majority of the population (see Tables 1 and 2).

A carefully targeted wealth tax could shift the tax burden to profits, permitting some relief for individuals. If we posit, conservatively, a normal rate of return on capital of 15 percent⁽⁶⁾ a wealth tax of three percent a year would raise the actual tax incidence on capital for liable companies to around 40 percent.

That figure more or less equals the real rate in the US.

A tax on personal assets need worry only a small percentage of the population. If it exempted, say, R200 000, by a rough estimate only about ten percent of the total population would have to pay anything at all. At a rate of three percent, only families with over R240 000 in net

Table 1

Estimated revenues from a wealth tax on the top forty private groups.

Rate	Amount	As percentage of of 1991 revenues
0.5 %	R 2.75 bn.	4.1 %
1.0	5.50	8.2
3.0	16.50	24.6
5.0	27.50	41.0
10.0	55.00	82.0

Table 2

A tax on personal property, exempting R200 000 in net assets.

A. Estimated revenues

Rate	Revenues R billions	As percentage of 1991 revenues
0.5 %	0.8	1.2
1.0	1.5	2.2
3.0	4.5	6.7
5.0	7.6	11.3

Note: To estimate, very roughly, the current distribution of personal wealth, this table extrapolates figures on net assets for urban whites from Market Research Africa, Socioeconomic Survey, reported in *Business Day*, July 23, 1991.

B. Incidence

Tax on a family with net assets of:

Rate	R200 000	R500 000	R750 000	R1-m
0.5 %	0	1 500	2 750	4 000
1.0	0	3 000	5 500	8 000
3.0	0	9 000	16 500	24 000
5.0	0	15 000	27 500	40 000

assets — about 250 000 households in all — would pay over R100 a month.

If there was no punitively high tax rate, moderately productive companies and individuals could pay a wealth tax out of current income.

A wealth tax might hinder normal accumulation, stopping the expansion or possibly even maintenance of assets in real terms. In itself, however, it need not normally compel taxpayers to sell property.

Human capital

Finally, a tax could be levied on human capital. The obvious problem is that such a tax might discourage the acquisi-

tion of skills. This drawback could be overcome by addressing only the historic, legal differences in education for whites and blacks.

The revenues could appropriately be placed in a revolving fund to support improved education for all South Africans. Such a tax would transform the excess paid to white families for education from a loan into a grant. Recipients would then repay the grant over a suitable period — say, thirty years. The tax would thus apply only to people who attended schools within the relevant educational administrations, paid for by the state. It would phase itself out naturally over the thirty years following the establishment

of an integrated school system.

The amount repaid would depend, naturally, on the number of years of school attended, with a premium for more expensive university courses. Suppose, for instance, we take the current difference between spending on white and black pupils as the basis for the tax. The tax would then be assessed at R3 000 per year of primary and secondary education, payable over thirty years. As the average person who suffered a Christian National Education has completed about eight years of schooling, they would be liable for around R800 a year. Altogether, the tax should initially raise at least R1.5 billion a year.

Unlike the other wealth taxes, a tax of this type could prove regressive. Everyone who completed the same amount of schooling would pay the same amount, regardless of their income. A partial remedy would be to tie the tax to a means test, exempting, say, people whose incomes remain under the Minimum Subsistence Level.

Implications for investment

Four principle arguments have emerged against a wealth tax. They are that it would reduce capital formation; cause capital flight; discourage capital-intensive projects; and prove difficult or impossible to levy. All but one of these points turns on the impact on investment.

Closer consideration suggests that these fears are ill-founded. They presuppose that companies now invest adequately and efficiently — a supposition which cursory examination proves untenable. In the last five years, according to official statistics, about a third of company income has gone for investment, compared to some two fifths in the early 1970s.

Moreover, since transfer pricing reduces reported income by up to 20 per cent⁽⁷⁾ these figures probably overstate the share of investment significantly.

A wealth tax could actually foster more efficient investment in the private sector. A corporate wealth tax levied only on very large groups would discourage the centralisation of capital.

Conglomerates could reduce their liabilities by breaking up into smaller component parts.

Similarly, a tax on personal property would deter investment in non-productive assets. The tax could thus promote both productive investment and a reduction in unnecessary imports.

Finally, a democratic state could re-

duce the tax on desirable types of investment — for instance, to produce basic goods or exports or create employment.

As for the threat of capital flight, it has become the standard private-sector response to any measure designed to restructure the economy. In this case, that tired warning can only arise out of unwarranted panic or a very low opinion of South Africa's capitalists.

At least from the turn of the century, most of Europe had a wealth tax of between 0.7 and 2.5 per cent⁽⁸⁾. For thirty years, the Germans had an additional surcharge of 1 per cent a year to provide loans to refugees from World War 2. A similar tax has now been reimposed to assist the eastern provinces.

Neither tax caused noticeable capital flight. Rather, despite much grumbling, the vast majority of wealthy Germans seem to have accepted that, if they want a prosperous and stable society, they must compensate their fellow citizens impoverished through no fault of their own.

In short, given the misuse of investible assets by the rich, most arguments against the tax seem weak at best. The more important question is whether and how the state, or whatever financial institutions it may establish, can do better.

Limitations

As a tool for restructuring the economy, the wealth tax does have fundamental shortcomings. Essentially, they reflect a single weakness: a wealth tax cannot, by itself, bring about the institutional arrangements required for a more democratic economy. The tax may raise needed revenues from appropriate sources, but its long-run success depends on the ability of the state and civil society to redirect investment both directly and by regulating markets.

These institutional weaknesses emerge in two principle ways.

First, like any tax, a wealth tax would take away property people view as their own. Demonstrating clearly that revenues will improve the social and economic position of the country as a whole may alleviate some resistance. The classic path to that end is to tie tax revenues to purposes related to their source: taxes on companies and individuals to productive investment and housing, taxes on human capital to educational programmes.

Nonetheless, experience shows that high taxes provoke high avoidance.

Second, apartheid laws are not the sole cause of wealth disparities. We must also blame modern economies of scale.

In many critical sectors — including, for instance, auto production and banking — it makes little sense to redistribute assets to small, competitive firms. Wealth inequalities reflect, too, the inability of South Africa's highly concentrated financial sector to fund small-scale enterprise, particularly in the black community.

In these circumstances, we must look to other methods of redistributing assets. Above all, such measures involve changes in the structure of ownership and management that would give workers and communities a greater say in the overall investment process. Measures to that end include laws promoting the establishment of worker, consumer and community organisations; open-book requirements for business and the state at least equal to those in Europe or the US; and policies ensuring worker and community input into decision-making about investment, whether by the private sector or the state.

In sum, a wealth tax is only a tax: it cannot by itself bring about a more democratic economy. Nonetheless, the proposal deserves serious consideration. We cannot afford to reject any potential solution to South Africa's social and economic problems out of hand simply because of a hysterical reaction from some of the more articulate parts of the public.

FOOTNOTES

1. Calculated from SARB, Supplement to Quarterly Review of Statistics, June 1991.
2. 'Top Companies' Supplement to the Financial Mail, July 26, 1991 pp 142-3.
3. In descending order: Old Mutual; Anglo American; SBIC; Sanlam; Nedcor; First National; Bankorp; Liberty Life; Volkskas; and Gencor. Amalgamated Banks of South Africa (Absa) was formed too late to get into the report. It would rank as one of the two or three largest conglomerates.
4. M D McGrath, Distribution of Personal Wealth in South Africa, Economic Research Unit, University of Natal, 1982.
5. Market Research Africa, 1990 Sociomonitor Survey, cited in Business Day, 23 July 1991, p3.
6. A South African Chamber of Business (Sacob) study suggests that nominal rate would be much higher; see Sacob, A Concept for the Development of a New Industrial Policy for South Africa, Johannesburg, 30 May 1991.
7. Zavareh Rustomjee, 'Capital Flight Under Apartheid,' in Transformation 15 (1991).
8. See C T Sandford, J R M Willis and D J Ironside, An Annual Wealth Tax, London: Heinemann, 1975.

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Gay rights' activists are getting more acceptance and better coverage in the media than ever before. But within the progressive movement in South Africa homosexuality is still treated with disdain or disgust. GLENDA DANIELS reports

Ask any gay man or lesbian woman about 'gay bashing'. In South Africa it takes the form of prejudice, jokes, enforced alienation and blatant harassment.

A few gay people interviewed by WIP about the significance of last month's gay pride march have also spoken out about the homophobia (hatred of gays) to which they have been subjected.

Some common misconceptions and homophobia are captured in the following responses to homosexuality among students, activists and workers⁽¹⁾. With one exception, all the men interviewed found homosexuality abhorrent.

'I am not well disposed to that, I cannot articulate it, perhaps it's the way I've been socialised. It's not right, it's revolting actually' was a typical comment.

One male student said he was 'one hundred percent opposed to it. It sounds harsh but I think prohibition should be entrenched in the constitution.' He felt being gay was a 'social disease'.

Commented a worker active in a trade union: 'I must say it's unnatural. I'm not used to it. I feel sorry for these with double sex. It's sad really.'

He associated gay sex with the mines and prisons. 'When you look at the mines you see it. It's bad. When you are arrested, not for political detention, you will be forced to do it. I've seen some sad cases with my own eyes.'

A women worker giggled: 'Shame! that's all I can say.'

A gay, black, woman student activist said most people in her political organisation viewed her as a person with a disease.

She said the attitude to her showed a total lack of understanding: 'You must be an ugly woman if you can't get a boyfriend.'

Support

Simon Nkoli, a co-ordinator of Glow (Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the



Taking a silenced, side-lined struggle to the streets

Witwatersrand), ex-Delmas treason trialist and also a counsellor at the Aids Advice Centre, says during the long treason trial some of his comrades, after expressing initial reservations, became supportive after he let them read the magazines sent to him and after receiving messages of support from gay individuals and organisations. 'These messages were sent to all of us — not just to me because I was gay,' he says.

Nkoli feels that the gay pride march made homosexuals visible and was a means of showing protest and pride. Last year 800 participated, this year there were 1 000. 'We were making a statement that not all of us are in the closet.'

A few days before the march, Amnesty International adopted protection for homosexuals into their Bill of Rights. This was celebrated as a victory by the gay community, who were also delighted last year when the ANC included gay rights in their Bill of Rights.

Glow received messages of support for the march from 50 different organi-

sations including the ANC, Black Sash, Nusas, the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) in both Holland and the UK and international gay organisations.

Impact of the march

Daan Matheussen, 23, a Wits graduate presently doing community research, was not happy with the gay pride march because it was made 'political'. He feels it should have been a 'gay solidarity' march instead because gay rights are fundamental human rights.

Glow co-ordinator Tanya Chan-Sam feels the march was important because people were drawn together. Normally the gay community is very dispersed, she says. She believes there are large numbers of gay men and lesbian women who lead heterosexual lives, only coming out (revealing their gayness) at the weekend. For her the march was about gay pride identity, 'like black consciousness — it gives a positive identity'.

Chan-Sam says there is homophobia even within the gay community which

manifests itself as shame and embarrassment about being gay. She says often women say: 'don't call me lesbian, it's derogatory'.

Gay Bashing

Gay people want a new government to accept and legalise homosexuality, to make laws to protect gay men and lesbians, says Simon Nkoli.

'We have all been victimised for what we are — so there is gay bashing. Not all progressives have a gay consciousness. Look at the Winnie (Mandela) trial.'

Gay bashing comes in various forms. Nkoli outlines some of them:

- * parents sometimes evict their children from their homes when they find out they are gay;
- * many gays have been forced to resign from their jobs. Some gays remain unemployed, others open their own businesses;
- * in the streets lovers do not make physical contact for fear of harassment;
- * heterosexual people often desert friends who are gay;
- * there is the stigma of being associated with AIDS;
- * there is the perception that gay men and lesbians are abnormal. If you're a gay man you are not seen to be physically strong like other men and if you're a 'dyke' (derogatory word for assertive lesbian), then you're stronger than everybody;
- * there is the view that homosexuals are incapable of making a contribution in the development of this country;
- * in the black community people say gayness is not part of the culture. For black women it is even more difficult because parents put pressure on daughters to become 'decent women', which means engagement rings and a steady boyfriend at 21.

Black people wonder if you are tell-

ing the truth about being gay, says Nkoli. They question your upbringing, or even worse, the influence of whites. They think being gay is a sign of insanity and ask if you have seen a traditional doctor. 'Sex is just not talked about in the black community except when men get together over a beer,' he says.

Nkoli asserts that homosexuality has always been around. If this was not so there would not be a word for it in Sotho — 'mantanyola' — meaning men having sex together. 'The men who are repelled, the sayers of the worst things against gays are probably the doers. They protest too much' says Nkoli. He estimates about one person in 10 in South Africa is gay.

Insidious bashing

Chan-Sam argues that in South Africa gay bashing has not been very public. She mentions the more 'insidious type' of gay bashing which goes on within the progressive movement. When gender rights are raised it is argued very eloquently that this is not the political issue. 'It is not seen as progressive to fight for gay and lesbian rights,' she says.

She believes black lesbians suffer a quadruple oppression. 'In the ANC, women are largely seen as mothers and daughters and on top of that if you have a different sexual orientation, you can't cope. A number of people pull out because it is so difficult to be up-front about it.'

Matheussen feels that most progressives when confronted with the situation are very 'careful and clever'. Some see the obvious contradiction between being homophobic and fighting discrimination — but most don't. 'When they don't watch themselves they get caught.' He adds that for many it's a non-issue. 'But even in the university there was an incident last year when a black lesbian girl was approached by a Black Student

Society (BSS) member and told: "What you need is a big dick".'

And if they joined Student Homosexuals on Campus (SHOC) they would be excluded from BSS, says Matheussen. On campus some students have begun publishing and vocalising extracts from the Bible to attack homosexuals, he says. 'People don't believe there are genuine feelings involved in homosexual relations. Instead they focus on the sexual act.'

'I have not reached the stage where I am not affected by comments in the street and blunt threats.' He says one way to avoid this is to act butch (aggressive, typically male) to fit an image that society has constructed for the male gender.

Matheussen resents people's tendency to ask 'why' and then explain a gay orientation using genetics or environmental factors. He says straight (heterosexual) people want reasons because they think it is abnormal to be gay although 'this has been around for thousands of years and in nature there is homosexuality in animals'. Religion also plays a big role in prejudices, he adds.

Coming Out

Matheussen says a gay person's life can be destroyed if s/he steps out of the closet. He laments the way people are always pressurising him to have a girlfriend or trying to introduce him to a 'nice girl'.

At university he had some 'pretty girlfriends', one of whom got quite upset and frustrated that he didn't want sex. In his third year he came 'out of the closet', lost some friends and upset his parents.

The question that puzzles many progressive thinkers who believe in homosexual rights is: Why do so many gays perpetuate gender stereotypes by playing out husband-wife or macho-camp roles? Is this not missing the point of challenging these norms in the society?

Chan-Sam admits: 'There is a very small feminist consciousness which belongs mainly to the white lesbian feminist movement.'

But she concedes that generally within South Africa there is an acting out of gender stereotypes and reproducing the status quo by imitating heterosexual couples — hardly the role model for perfect relationships.

Reference:

- (1) Daniels, G, 'The Level of Feminist Consciousness in Progressive Organisations', Unpublished honours thesis, Wits, January 1990. *

Some gay and lesbian organisations

- * Women's Forum (for lesbians) contact Tanya 011-648 0218
- * Gay Advice Bureau (counselling service) phone 011-643 2311 between 7pm and 10pm
- * Gain (Gay Association of Inland Natal), contact Deniat at 0331-472109
- * Yachad-Organisation for Jewish gays and lesbians, contact Michael 011-803 2013
- * Gay Christian Bond — phone Hume at 011-726 3620
- * Student Homosexuals on Campus (SHOC) contact Carol Huber at 011-442 6961
- * Gay and Lesbians Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW) contact Simon Nkoli at 011-837 6413
- * Gay Association of South Africa (Gasa) — 021-236826

Sexual violence: remedies for old wrongs?



A recent survey amongst students in Cape Town shows that an alarming number of male students believe date rape is their right. SHEILA MEINTJES looks at the rising incidence of sexual violence in the country, particularly on university campuses

November 25 is International Day of 'No Violence against Women'.

This draws attention to the fact that on all other days of the year, violence against women is endemic. Public awareness of the phenomenon of sexual harassment has been raised by the accusations against American judge Clarence Thomas, in his confirmation battle for a seat in the Supreme Court. In South Africa, this has led to a greater focus on the issue as well.

Sexual harassment is hardly recognised as an unacceptable practice. It is a manifestation of sexism, which refers to 'unfair prejudice against women, the stereotyping of women, the defining of women in regard to their sexual availability and attractiveness to men, and all the conscious and unconscious assumptions which cause women to be treated as not fully human, while men are identified as the norm' (Tuttle, Lisa, *Encyclopedia of Feminism*, London, Arrow Books, 1986).

The prevalence of sexual harassment

is masked in our society by the dominance of a sexist culture.

However, there is much evidence about more violent forms of abuse against women, including battery and rape. Both of these have become severe problems on our university campuses.

One in six women in South Africa is reported in statistics to be in a battering relationship, but it is believed that the real incidence of battery is greater because so much goes unreported. Information on battery in low income groups is better than among the more affluent because social workers and public health officers become involved. The rich have access to private medical care, so information on middle class battery escapes the statistics, but is believed to be no less prevalent.

None of this is new, but now the issue has become newsworthy.

Why? Partly because women's organisations have become more vociferous about violence against women. They have taken to the streets to protest. Women are speaking out, and breaking

the silence about what was never talked about. Violence against women is becoming a public issue. This applies also to the universities.

Universities take action

If universities are seen as the training-ground for the middle classes, then they may be a barometer of norms in wider society.

This applies as much to sexual behaviour as to any other type of behaviour. Certainly this is the view of the South African edition of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, which looks at date rape among university students in its September 1991 edition in an article entitled 'Rape and sexual aggression'.

Major universities in South Africa are beginning to realise there is an alarmingly widespread incidence of sexual harassment and sexual violence on their campuses, particularly in the residences. This seems to be linked to the broader culture of pornography and violence in society. In the last two years, universities in South Africa have

been taking up the issue very seriously.

* The University of Cape Town took the lead in investigating the problem when an anonymous pamphlet accusing five prominent student leaders of rape was distributed on the campus in 1989. The pamphlet accused UCT and student organisations on the campus of ignoring the problem of sexual harassment and sexual violence, and not providing adequate protection or supporting disciplinary procedures in such cases.

The university responded by establishing a committee of enquiry into sexual harassment and, more significantly, in appointing Carla Sutherland to conduct research into and establish programmes to probe the extent of the problem and raise consciousness about the issue. Since then other universities have followed suit.

* The University of the Witwatersrand set up a Committee of Enquiry into Sexism and Sexual Harassment in October 1990 after the Women's Movement and Gender Forum protested about the prevalence of activities which demeaned women and cultivated a pornographic and violent sexual culture in the university.

* Student newspapers have, in the last year, complained bitterly about sexual violence on campuses. *Wits Student* has reported extensively on rape, sexism, and homophobia (attacks on and discrimination against gay people). Headlines such as these testify to the problem: 'Flirting with Rape', 'Campus unsafe', 'Security ignore attack'. *Open Eye*, mouthpiece of the Wits Women's Movement, argued that a major problem was lack of security and protection services on campus. But the underlying cause of sexual violence was pinpointed: '...as long as our society remains structured along unequal power relations, and for as long as our society remains sexist, women will continue to be targets for sexual violence' (*Open Eye*, Vol 2, no 1, March 1991).

* Reports about sexual harassment at Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) draw attention to assaults on women students during Orientation, which are explained away as 'tradition' or as a means for women to gain the attention of men: 'Elke meisie geniet dit om aandag te kry van 'n man' (*Wits Student* Vol 43, no 10 1991).

* At Rhodes University, a student undertook a survey of sexual harassment and discovered that of her sample, 63 percent of women academics had experienced sexual harassment. Some students (five percent of the sample of 200)

reported sexual advances and innuendos by lecturers. One student discussed the matter with a lawyer 'and was advised not to say anything to the university authorities because it would be to her detriment' (*Saturday Star* 12 October 1991, p10). What an indictment of an institution which is supposed to be an environment conducive to unleashing the full potential of people who study there.

There is no way of knowing the full extent of the problem of rape and sexual harassment on campuses until research is undertaken, but comparative research in the United States has uncovered an alarming picture of sexual violence which dispels the myth that it is linked with deviance, dark alley-ways, and lurking strangers. 'One in nine women on American campuses are raped.

Eight out of 10 victims know their attackers. Five percent of the women raped report it', reported *Wits Student*. This picture of a phenomenon called 'date rape' is corroborated by what evidence there is on rape generally. The familiarity of the victim with the rapist is a major reason why rape, and battery, is under-reported.

The National Institute for Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of Offenders (Nicro) estimates that 300 000 women are raped each year in South Africa, a rate of one every three minutes.

Although estimates like these cannot be relied upon, the SAP has produced figures of reported cases which are alarming enough. Ten years ago, 15 535 rapes were reported, of which 9 974 led to prosecutions, with 5 179 convictions.

Why is rape so prevalent, and why is it so little reported? The first question is difficult to answer. There are a multitude of theories about the prevalence of rape, from individual deviancy, to the pornographic culture of the 20th century. Rape is also explained as an expression of male power over and humiliation of women. Others explain it as a consequence of economic stress, or as a function of patriarchal structures. None of these explanations is conclusive. The low reportage of rape is also difficult to explain. One reason is that women simply do not know what their legal rights are.

Low rate of conviction

It may also be related to the low rate of conviction or the attitude of the police, who are reluctant to take sexual violence seriously. Police will discourage women from laying charges for assault by claiming that the issue is a 'domestic' one. A

further factor may be the way in which women are treated in court. Survivors are subject to rigorous cross-examination, as are witnesses in any criminal case.

However, in cases of sexual misconduct, the view is taken that women's evidence should be 'treated with suspicion'. This has led to the evolution in the courts of a 'cautionary rule' with respect to evidence in rape cases. This fosters 'secondary victimisation' experienced by survivors when reporting and in court proceedings. Secondary victimisation arises from the prevalence of myths which suggest that rape and other forms of sexual assault are perpetrated by deviant strangers in deserted streets.

The horrible truth is that most rapes are committed by sexually and psychologically 'normal' men upon women they know, often intimately. Friends, lovers, brothers, fathers, uncles, husbands, can all be sexual violators. Nor are rapists necessarily members of marginal and poorer groups in society, as other myths portray. Perpetrators and survivors of violent sexual acts are men and women of all classes, ages or ethnic groups. Other myths suggest that it is only prostitutes who are raped, that women consent to rape, and even enjoy it, because it is a crime of passion.

So women who report the crime are often conceived of as trying to 'get back' at a man. These myths inform the way the police in particular react to reports — with disbelief — and the view that somehow women 'asked for it' by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. In reality, though, no women mean 'yes' when they say 'no', and very few report incidents to the police to 'get back at a man'.

The experience of reporting is traumatic in itself. Rape is a sexual assault and a violent crime, not a crime of sexual passion by a man driven by the uncontrollable urges of his genitals.

South African social and cultural traditions relating to gender relations and sexual norms make a sorry tale. Wolf-whistling, touching women's buttocks and breasts and other parts of their anatomy, demanding sexual favours, suggesting that 'no' really means 'yes', are all examples of sexual behaviour that most South African men see as normal, if not their right.

Unfair labour practice

It is perhaps significant that in all of South Africa's labour history, there has only been one case of sexual harassment

in the industrial courts, *J v M Ltd.* (1989). Carla Sutherland quoted the historic judgement in a paper written for the 'Gender and Women in Southern Africa Conference' held in Durban in February 1991, in which sexual harassment became an unfair labour practice: Sexual harassment, depending on the form it takes, violates that right to integrity of the body and personality which belongs to every person and which is protected in our legal system both criminally and civilly.

An employer has a duty to ensure that employees are not subjected to any form of sexual harassment (Quoted in Sutherland, C, 'Sexual Harassment: A Darker Side to Campus Life' *Agenda*, 11, 1991, p9). For universities, the implications of this judgement are that they have to make provisions for the prevention of sexual harassment and appropriate punishment for such behaviour.

It is not only women on South African campuses who are demanding that sexual harassment be outlawed, but South African women generally are beginning to organise against the culture which tolerates woman abuse. In November 1990, women in Soweto marched to a Soweto police station to protest at the extent of rape in the area. In the same month, women took to the streets of Cape Town in eight different marches organised by the Federation of SA Women (Fedsaw).

In March 1991, International Women's Day was celebrated by the ANC Women's League organising a march through the streets of Hillbrow in Johannesburg 'reclaiming the night' for women. This was supported by women from all sections of the political spectrum, including women from People Opposed to Women Abuse (Powa), Azanian People's Organisation (Azapo) and the Pan African Congress (PAC).

All political actors need to understand that woman abuse is unacceptable in all its forms, from unwanted innuendos to sexual advances and sexual violence. The universities, corporations, businesses, educational institutions, churches, and all organisations, including political parties, need to introduce codes of conduct which condemn sexism (discrimination on the basis of sex or sexual orientation) and sexual harassment (unwanted sexual advances of any kind).

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Of gender, vice and policemen

Gender equality in the police force is a challenge to the state, argues
AMANDA GOUWS

The South African Police (SAP) recently held a conference (in Graaff Reinet on 26 September) with the theme of affirmative action for the police in a post-apartheid society.

The conference, involving both police members and the academic community, was based on the assumption that affirmative action only applies to race and not to gender; that race is a more pressing problem than gender and that the issue of gender inequality in the police has long since been rectified.

Why is gender-related affirmative action not taken seriously by the SAP (as may be the case with many other state agencies should this issue arise)?

Male state

The most obvious answer, of course, lies within the common male perception in South Africa that racial inequality is a more serious problem than gender inequality. Yet there is a much more profound reason for affirmative action lead-

ing to gender equality not being taken seriously by the SAP: The police force is an agency of the state which holds a monopoly over the exercise of legitimate force. Power over formidable instruments, honour and often high positions are bestowed upon the police (Stiehm, 1982, p 282). And most often police are male.

Legitimate force is exercised in such a way that it complies with the male nature of the state. The police enforce laws that reflect this male nature of the state. As feminist legal scholar Catherine MacKinnon (1987, p140) points out:

'The state is male in the feminist sense: the law sees and treats women the way men see and treat women. The liberal state coercively and authoritatively constitutes the social order in the interest of men as a gender, through its legitimising norms, relation to society, and substantive policies. It achieves this through embodying and ensuring male control over women's sexuality at every level, occasionally cushioning, qualify-

ing or de jure prohibiting its excesses when necessary to its normalisation. Substantively, the way the male point of view frames an experience is the way it is framed by state policy.'

The state, through its laws and policies, claims a meaning for women's roles and experiences. We can use rape as an example. The law does not treat male aggression as the cause of rape but rather a lack of consent, while it is more often than not very difficult for women to refuse consent, let alone prove a lack of consent (consider how rape victims are usually blamed for the way they dress and that they were 'looking for it').

The police as an agency of the state orders power relations in such a way that women do not have a say in the definition of who will benefit. Women are the protectees as long as they fit into the established order the police serves. Any act or action that disturbs or endangers this order falls outside the realm of protection. Therefore, giving women control over the legitimate exercise of force could change the definition of protectee. Furthermore, incorporating women into high ranks allows for the potential to restructure the male nature of the state according to a woman's point of view.

While women in other societies such as the United States have been accepted into the police force in roles that also allow them on the beat, they are still not found in proportional numbers in higher ranks. They have managed to have an

impact on the definition of protectee but they have not changed the male nature of the state. And most of them have been co-opted into accepting the male point of view for the exercise of their duties.

Police and prostitutes

A recent example of this is the incident of policemen arresting prostitutes in Johannesburg. From the legal point of view these women were breaking the law and therefore conducting illegal activities. The policemen went undercover to arrest the women and in doing so became quite brutal in their behavior and language (see *Weekly Mail*, 20-26 September 1991). Because the law defines the activities of prostitutes as illegal, these women are not perceived to be in need of protection. The protectors therefore discarded their role and became the exercisers of force against women.

Prostitution is defined from a male point of view. Prostitutes are not seen as women being brutalised by a patriarchal society. The blame is put on the women, not on their male clients and the police exercise their duty according to the state's definition of prostitution. The way the state through the police (and the law) determines what order means serves the interest of men. The law never makes prostitution unavailable or illegitimate. And because it is illegal, it cannot be viewed as a high-risk job that is in need of probably more protection than any

other job (when the police's use of language in this incident was raised at the conference, a high ranking officer's response boiled down to 'you talk to a hooker in a hooker's language').

But while affirmative action with the effect of eradicating gender inequality in the SAP may not be taken seriously right now, it may become enforced by law as the result of a Bill of Rights in a post-apartheid society. Women may be incorporated in larger numbers into the force but it will still only be a liberal solution to gender inequality in the SAP (and a good starting point) but it is not a feminist solution.

A liberal solution only incorporates women into existing structures that reflect the male point of view. It is liberalism applied to women — the belief that inequality can be redressed by incorporating women into existing structures (see MacKinnon, 1987, p 137). A feminist solution seeks to change the male nature of existing structures, including law, that deny the incorporation of women's experience in the definition.

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* *Dr Amanda Gouws teaches political science at Stellenbosch University.* *

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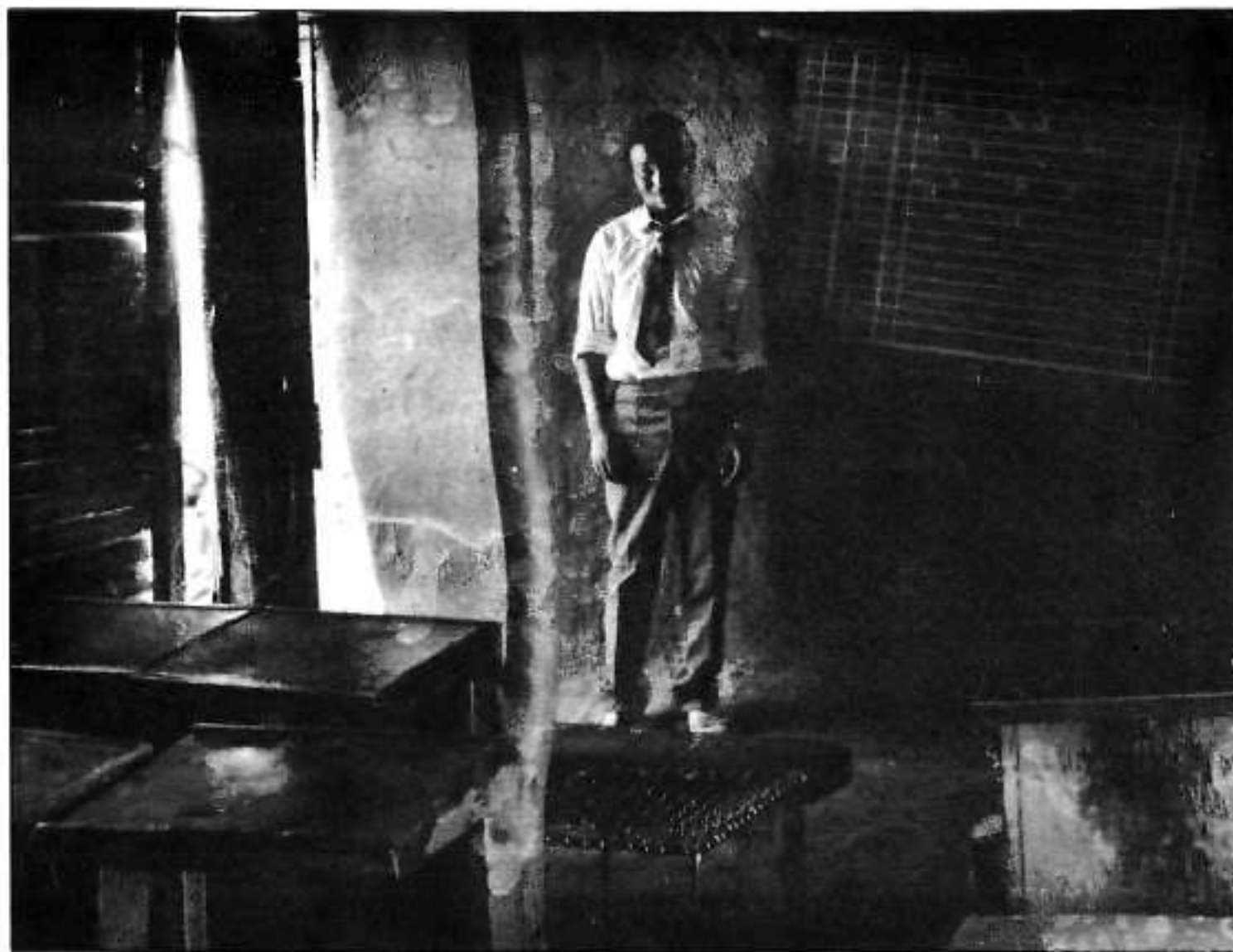
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Old MacDonald had a school



Of the approximately 1.5 million children of school-going age living in white rural South Africa, only 31 percent are in primary and one percent in secondary schools. Why? And why are white farmers controlling the rural education system? MEL HOLLAND looks at the origin of farm schools.

The 1913 and 1936 Land Acts placed education provision for black children living on farms under the jurisdiction of the white land owners. Until the 1953 Bantu Education Act, churches took it upon themselves to establish some 1 000 schools between 1910 and 1948 in what are now white farming areas.

The act empowered the state to commandeer these schools and pull them under its central control through the authority of the Native Affairs Department.

The schools now became state-aided, which meant the state agreed to subsidise them, to oversee and control curricula and certification. But the farmers retained the authority to regulate access to and provision of education in these specific areas. This has meant bottomless authority for farmers over the lifestyles and employment potential of the communities living on their farms.

Initially, the state's subsidies were confined to school buildings. Between 1955 and 1975 the state paid between 10-18 percent of the building costs of establishing a school. Since 1988, the state has paid 75 percent of all school costs, including water, toilets and teacher accommodation.

Through accepting state subsidies, the farmer was obliged to maintain the school for 10 years. However, conditions were also modified to exempt a new farm owner from any such obligations.

The closure of many of the 227 schools that have shut down from 1987 is probably a result of these loopholes.

Until 1980, state regulations stipulated subsidies to include a maximum of two classrooms and two teachers. Schools at this time were actively discouraged from teaching above Standard 2 and there was no subsidy for secondary schooling.

Access to schooling

Only 31 percent of the approximately 1.5 million children of school-going age living in white rural South Africa have places in primary schools and only one percent have been accommodated in secondary schools.

In 1990, 464 405 and 11 066 children were enrolled in primary and secondary farm schools respectively. There were 5 685 primary schools with 12 297 teachers — an average of two teachers for 70-100 students a school. There were only 14 secondary schools with 343 teachers — about 20 teachers for 700-850 students per school. Five to six pupils shared a textbook.

In 1988 the state spent R280 on each farm school pupil, R560 for each Department of Education and Training (DET) pupil and R2 700 on each white pupil.

The farmer, as a proxy education authority, can still take decisions about whether to establish a school, how many pupils to enrol, what level of schooling to offer and whether or not to allow children from neighbouring farms to attend. These decisions are made with little or no consultation with the farmworkers.

Education for communities living on farms has always been provided with the express intention of creating unskilled and subservient labour. Children have been made to work, partly because of the tenancy system where a family is given access to the fields in exchange for their labour, crops or cash. Schooling thus becomes secondary to a child's work in the fields.

Access or non-access to a particular farm school has been used as a lever by the farmer to control the workers. This is a considerable threat given the one school to every 10 farms in South Africa.

Where a farm school is 'open' and the farmer allows neighbouring children to attend, many do not because of the long distances between farms and the lack of

subsidised transport.

High absenteeism and dropout rates are exacerbated by migration, retrenchments and combined classes (Standards 1 to 5 are often taught in the same class). Many students who are forced out of these schools have attempted to enrol in others in either the urban or bantustan areas. Many are unable to do so because of the enrolment procedures and gross overcrowding, but those who manage are often scorned and fail easily.

The challenges of the '70s

The economic crisis of the 1970s had a direct bearing on the agricultural sector. The impact of the growing uncertainty in labour relations in agriculture as well as the growing resistance to apartheid education forced the DET to appoint a special task force to investigate the structure and servicing of farm schools.

The task group recommended the transference of farm schools into the general responsibility of the DET; secondly, it recommended their upgrading. However, while guidelines for the conversion of farm schools into public schools dominated the task group's recommendations, other options were included to exempt those farmers who wished to retain their schools.

One option was dual ownership whereby the DET could be granted a long lease on the land instead of expropriating or purchasing the land. Since the 1980s, only six schools have been converted into public schools.

The essence of the task group's recommendations became concretely translated into legislation in 1988 through the Education Laws (Education and Training) Amendment Act. This statute also enabled the state to buy schools, to convert primary schools into combined schools, to prevent children being taken from the classroom into the fields and to establish school management bodies comprising farmers and parents — if the farmer so wished.

Curriculum restructuring

In 1986, certain recommendations from the De Lange Commission were implemented by the DET. Ostensibly the intention of the new courses that were introduced, called 'skills and techniques development', were 'to improve students' employment potential through relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes'.⁽¹⁾

Such initiatives have been supplemented by others from the private sector or state parastatals. The most notable are those provided by the National Training

Board and the Rural Foundation which provide skills development programmes in areas such as fencing, pruning and tractor maintenance. The National Institute for Personnel Research (NIPR) has also provided in-house training on labour relations and strategies.

This type of training has developed dependency skills which entrench the farmworker in the rural areas and more specifically on a particular farm. Schemes such as those of the NIPR have led Ball to conclude that 'the state, the SA Agricultural Union and the Rural Foundation are developing a broader strategy to head off effective worker organisation in agriculture'.⁽²⁾

Five-star schools

Despite the policy increases in state subsidies for farm schools, there was a marked decrease in enrolment between 1989 and 1990. During this period there were large-scale evictions and retrenchments within agriculture; also, no new schools were built and those which existed had not increased their levels of enrolment.

Between 1989 and 1990, the state budget for building was R10 million. If this had been divided between the existing 5 600 schools, each school would have received R2 000 a year. However, DET policy stipulated that funds would only be disbursed through applications. Thus only the most enterprising farmers have been able to access funds.

The outcome has been that differences have developed between the quality of infrastructure and teaching of individual farm schools. Some have developed into luxury schools which are well equipped and maintained, others have remained without the most basic facilities or potential of upgrading.

In 1990 there were 12 297 and 343 teachers employed for primary and secondary schools respectively. This figure represents 31 percent of all the teachers employed by the DET.

The DET pays the salaries of farm school teachers to the farmer. A common complaint is that the farmers often pocket teachers' pay, forcing farmworkers themselves to pay the salaries. The same happens to school fees paid by students.

Teachers employed by the DET to work in farm schools have invariably been transferred from urban areas. The teacher has no control over these transfers and s/he feels little commitment towards the schools and even hostility — an attitude exacerbated by bad accom-

modation and delays and underpayment of salaries. Many teachers in rural schools are under-qualified, overworked and under-serviced. Because of these conditions, parents and students often believe the teachers are 'second-rate'. This is not helped by the fact that most 'good' teachers leave to seek better employment elsewhere.

The way forward

Solutions for the rural areas cannot be technical. They need to span a process of educational, social and economic restructuring.

At an educational level, any restructuring should incorporate a holistic system of formal education, teacher development and incentives, adult basic education — which includes literacy and numeracy — as well as a vocational education programme through which transferable and general skills rather than dependency skills can be developed. Such a system, however, will only be effective if it is the consequence of a participatory education policy.

Control over the schools must immediately be removed from the farmer's whims, fancies, paternalism and violence and located into the administrative function of a central department of education. This relocation of control also needs to be coupled with the establishment and empowerment of locally based, democratically elected parent-teacher-student associations to oversee questions such as teacher employment and enrolment levels.

A second fundamental intervention lies with the ability of farmworkers themselves to link their struggles with struggles in education because without safe tenure, any education provision in the future will be meaningless. For this reason it becomes critical that established organisations develop specific strategies and programmes that not only draw farmworkers into policy processes, but also develop farmworkers' abilities to respond to these imperatives as a sector in and of itself.

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* Mel Holland works for the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) *

Left alive ... or barely breathing?



People hold their own conferences, but not of their own free will; they hold them not under circumstances of their own choosing, but under given and inherited circumstances which they must confront directly.

This was certainly true of the gathering at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) on the 6/7/8th September 1991. The advance in the 1980s of the Right internationally, the collapse of late Stalinism in East Europe, the ignominious death throes of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), and the crisis of confidence gripping Marxist theorists — these might not have 'weighed like a nightmare' on the minds of delegates, but they provided a pretty challenging context.

The conference developed out of the presence at UWC of a Marxist Theory Seminar (MTS). The MTS, run by staff and students, has been engaged since 1988 in providing a programme of seminars, debates and lectures on aspects of Marxism.

Committed to developing Marxism as a theoretical and political resource, it has invited speakers right across the theoretical and organisational spectrum. (Speakers this year included Ben Turok, Max Sisulu, Dullah Omar, Hillel Ticktin, Martin Legassick and Angela Davis). In a manner probably not achieved on any other campus, the MTS has succeeded in hosting systematic discussion of Marxist perspectives.

More ambitiously, the conference aimed at a national forum for assessing the past performance, current capacities and future potential of South African

Marxism conference

The University of the Western Cape recently hosted the first conference on Marxism in this country. COLIN BUNDY assesses the significance of a gathering marked by the absence of the SACP, and the presence of a large measure of doctrinal purity

Marxism. While such analysis was intended to be reflective and critical, it was anticipated that as Marxists, delegates would also be concerned with appropriate political responses to 'given and inherited' circumstances confronting them.

Quantity...

How successful was the conference? What follows is a view from within the organising committee: but there are probably as many answers to this as there were delegates. And there were just upwards of 300 delegates (of whom 192 paid the student fee of R25). This statistic, of itself, goes some way to vindicating the effort to holding the conference. It was especially pleasing that so many students (drawn, incidentally, largely from the historically black campuses) chose

to devote a weekend to attending a conference on Marxism. They mingled with academics, activists and trade unionists (disappointingly few of the latter, partly because the conference clashed with a regional Cosatu congress).

Once they had braved a truly appalling Cape September, delegates were offered 35 papers presented in seventeen sessions over three days. There were five plenary sessions.

In addition to an opening address and a keynote address, there were panel discussions on the implications of East Europe, on feminism and Marxism, and a final session reviewing and evaluating the conference. There were also thirteen parallel sessions. Three of these drew large audiences: they covered ethnicity and nationalism, the relevance of Gramsci to contemporary South Africa, and an exchange on the politics of a 'social contract'.

Three sessions dealt with the past: one on historiography, and two concerned with various organisational and theoretical tendencies in South African left history. Relatively specialist panels were devoted to Marxism and philosophy, Marxism and religion, Marxism and political theory.

Overlapping to some extent with these were sessions on Lenin and Leninism, contemporary issues in South Africa, and labour issues. A panel on Latin America provided a somewhat sparse comparative perspective.

... but little quality

The quality did not always match quantity. Some of the papers and many of the contributions from the floor, seemed more

concerned to reiterate existing positions than to consider alternatives or to develop new perspectives. Much energy was consumed in asserting doctrinal purity and in denouncing ideological waverers. It was, commented a bemused delegate, enough to give sectarianism a bad name.

Perhaps the most disappointing feature, from the view of the conference organisers, was that these contesting political positions largely displaced genuine theoretical enquiry or debate. Marxist theory does not consist of dogmatic utterances on politics, peppered with self-validating quotations from Marx/Lenin/Trotsky; but at times, this was what was on offer.

Disappointment of a different kind was voiced by delegates during the conference, and attracted a certain amount of media attention. Many of the more polemical contributions were highly critical of SACP and ANC positions; but they were hardly debated. Although some SACP members were present in their personal capacity, there were few of them. And there was not a single paper submitted to the conference by SACP theoreticians which developed or defended the party's positions. The role of the Communist Party as Banquo's ghost came as a rather wry surprise to the conference organisers, who made sustained efforts to inform the party of, and invite it to, the event.

In retrospect, one of the problems which the conference faced was that delegates came with widely divergent and even incompatible expectations. Some anticipated that it might serve as an organisational platform for a broad left grouping; others regarded it as an opportunity to push for caucused 'narrow left' positions. Then there were delegates who sought a quick fix, hoping for ready-made radicalism or pre-packed praxis. And some may have shared, somewhat wistfully, in the hopes of the organisers that the conference would simultaneously deepen theoretical understanding and sharpen political interventions. Quite clearly, our gathering did not have the reserves to cash all these cheques. The danger we ran was being conscious of all these creditors, but satisfying none.

Theory and praxis

Another limitation of the conference was reflected in the gender, class and ethnic composition of panels and paper-givers — these were predominantly white, middle class and male. This pointed to one of the lessons that might be drawn: the need actively to develop black, work-

ing class and female Marxists in contemporary South African struggles and structures. A panellist in the concluding session called for an 'indigenisation of theory', and this serves as a pertinent goal for the immediate future.

A second pointer that arises from the conference is the need to distinguish between organisational activity and the promotion of theoretical enquiry. This is not to advocate that political practice should be innocent of theory, nor that leftwing intellectuals can ever stand aloof from day-to-day struggles. But it does recognise theory and praxis as analytically distinct; it validates as political the enterprise of grappling with thorny intellectual issues. Equally, it acknowledges that intellectuals can and must learn from activists. It does not, however, collapse the categories of analysis and action into one another.

This links with the third finding that can be derived from the conference at UWC. Quite simply, it is that Marxist theory is not easily acquired. Built into the project of developing Marxism as a theoretical and political resource is a

demand for mental effort. Marxists are not only involved in scrutinising reality through the lens of their concepts; they must also accept the need for sustained testing of their concepts against reality. It is precisely when the two do not mesh that theory must adjust, must enrich itself.

It is impossible to know yet whether people who attended the conference left with a greater appetite for theory; but perhaps they did. Perhaps reading groups or theory seminars will be formed on other campuses or in organisations. If this does happen it will be a very real measure of the longer term significance of the UWC conference.

In the shorter term, and for all the acknowledged shortcomings of the conference, its importance appears to lie in the fact that it happened at all: that it served as some kind of a step towards promoting in South Africa Marxist politics informed by theory, and Marxist theory shaped by politics.

* Colin Bundy teaches history at UWC. This article was written on behalf of the MTS. *



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Thoughts on the SACP manifesto

The new SACP draft manifesto, to be debated at the party's 8th national congress in December, provides a powerful critique of capitalism. But it could be more self-consciously open and challenging, writes
GRAEME BLOCH

The manifesto of a party must obviously be clear, in order to identify the party in a competing political 'market-place'.

It must also give direction to membership and prospective members, and be a guide to action.

In general, this draft is exciting and open, democratic and mobilising, directing and giving solutions, with strong emphases. My criticisms are given within this overall framework.

Communists should be among the most open-minded and critical of people. While a programme must speak to people in the language and rhetoric that is current, to understand their immediate situation it must also go beyond the immediate.

This is the major weakness of the manifesto. Communism is in a serious state of crisis for many of the reasons suggested in the draft. What this should mean is a self-consciously open and critical spirit. Communists should say: We have much work and rethinking to do to construct a vision of workable socialism. We need to debate, to examine old ideas, to try out new ones.

How do we accommodate ideological, religious, ethnic, social and cultural differences? How do we build political tolerance?

On what moral values can we base/negotiate/construct a community? What means or tactics are valid to achieve change?

What are the limits a political party should set for itself?

What is its legitimate field of operation?

In asking these questions, I obviously have certain starting-points in mind, though the process of debate is what is crucial. I think the starting-point must be democracy, as the manifesto states.

Human rights essential

More than this, though, the manifesto's discussion of human rights is too limited and is even negatively phrased. We must demand human rights, not because there is 'no contradiction between bourgeois/liberal rights and socialism' or because Marx said we want to go beyond bourgeois society, but because these rights are essential.

We want to oppose bigotry, prevent ideas being imposed on people, defend people from arbitrary power, so that we can create a humane society. We do this because there are no final answers. No person or group can guarantee Ultimate Truth. Tolerance is central to our vision

of socialism, thus these are not 'bourgeois rights extended', but fundamental human rights.

The manifesto makes several gestures to Marx and Engels, to Marxism as the party ideology, to scientific socialism. We should not be shy of referring to Marx — yet that section does nothing to open the long heritage of socialist thought.

Combined with the other gestures, I think it simply puts restrictions on people who might want to join the party. There are many socialists or leftists who disagree with Marxism — in any case, the terms are used without any explanation, and for that reason alone are unhelpful. I would go further, and say the reference to 'scientific' socialism is outdated.

The programme is also a little shy of speculating about a vision of socialism. It does give some outlines that are minimal starting points: decent housing, living wages, control by workers and trade unions of aspects of production, decent health care and education. But I think the manifesto could encourage us to engage in more utopian thinking to explore the moral dimensions of socialism and other options.

It should set more of a challenge to people to build our own vision of a humane society, of the limits on politics and economics, of the range of institutions and ways in which humans individually and collectively can express and satisfy their wants, whether material, cultural or social.

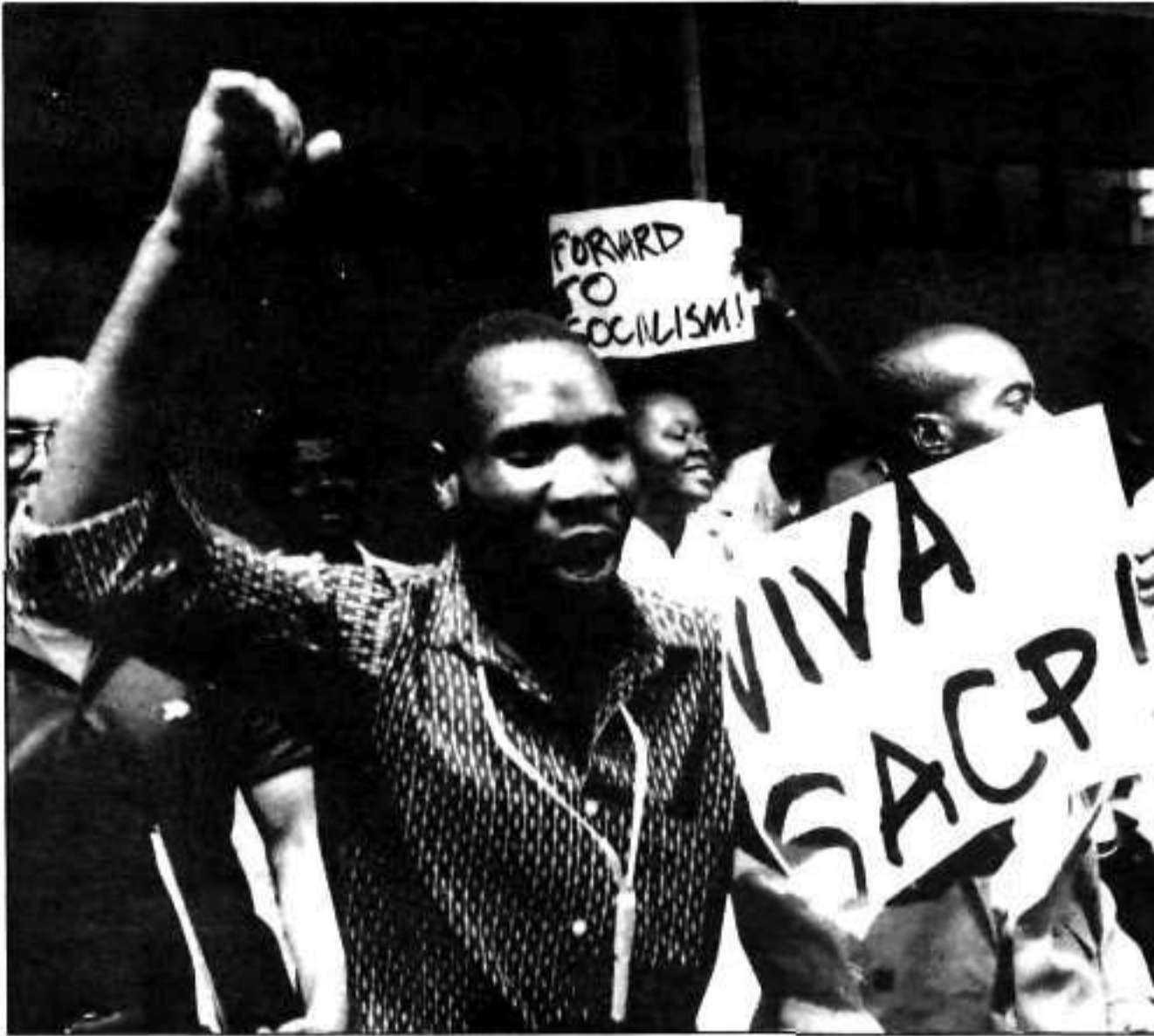
'Working class' reified

The manifesto refers continually to the working people. This is only necessary in part. The organised workers, especially in the trade unions, are the biggest constituency interested in socialism.

They have raised debate, they have created institutions that can challenge capitalism and fight for economic justice. These institutions have done much to establish democratic, accountable practices (that could be adapted in many areas of social life) and are importantly located in civil society. They have done much for their membership in all sorts of spheres.

Also, our theory suggests, located as they are at the point of production, they are the essential class in anti-capitalist struggles.

However, from this theory and practical experience, we should not reify the notion of the working class. The 'working-people' do not have mysterious, essential interests in common on all issues and at all times.



The SACP's draft manifesto could be more challenging, tentative and self-consciously open.

They choose different churches or none, some are women or men, or gay. They go to discos or bars, play sports or watch TV, identify ethnically with some traditions, listen to the symphony or mbaqanga music. They may live in the towns or rural areas, or be part of this or that civic, or have a house or a shack, or suffer from AIDS or be healthy.

This may sound mundane, but the point is very important.

Workers are workers as well as all sorts of other identities that they construct.

We have a vision of a rich and varied life, with a range of organisations, institutions and activities in civil society.

To emphasise this as well as the unity of workers as workers, is to tilt us away from authoritarianism ('You are anti-worker!') to a flexible understanding that interests have to be justified and negotiated in different situations, times and places.

I don't think the manifesto makes enough effort to speak to non-workers. This weakens the broadness of workers' own understanding of the social tasks of *building a whole society*. It is a limited view of the party and of socialist society.

As an intellectual (but what about women, youth, artists, professionals, the unemployed?) I think the manifesto makes

little attempt to speak to my interests and concerns.

Linked to this is a critique of the section on negotiations.

This is related in the manifesto to our commitment to national democracy and unwillingness to make premature leaps into collectivism. Yet the perspective on negotiations is too short-term and contingent: the current political needs obviously make this approach one of burning importance.

The questions of how you ensure social stability, of the limits of change, of how you construct alliance and so on are continuous and long-term issues in the building of socialism.

The short-term discussions should be extended to show how they have implications far beyond day two of the People's Constitution, and even day three of the National Democratic State.

Too simplistic

Still looking at the South African section, too much is simplistically blamed on capitalism and apartheid. There are hard questions we have to ask ourselves. For example, the issue of crime and even of school boycotts and the lack of a climate of learning...what kind of efforts, at what sorts of levels, are going to have to be made to re-establish a fabric

in our society that can hold together our communities? Another area might be analysing the whole question of ethnicity and cultural identity. How do we develop a clear policy?

The manifesto is too optimistic about the seriousness and difficulties of taking such issues into our own hands, especially given the resource limitations that will prevail for a long time.

Perhaps central to my arguments here and elsewhere is a feeling that the manifesto is too statist in its approach.

So often, the hidden implication is that problems can be addressed at the level of the state/politics/the political party. In other places, the manifesto does encourage the institution of civil society. Yet the language and emphasis of the document tilts to the state-centred approach, and has not really come to terms with the wider and richer emphasis and direction that we should really be exploring and opening up.

There are far too many problems that a party cannot begin to solve, and this needs to be explicitly told to communists, who are often at the leading edge of struggles for social and economic justice.

My last point is on the 'third world' section. We should be much more upfront about the elitism, injustice and anti-democratic practices of the 'third world' regimes. While the people suffer from debt and imperialist exploitation, pro-democracy movements are often ruthlessly suppressed. We need to align ourselves.

Also, we should say something about our own position in regard to aid in various forms — is it inevitable, what projects could use aid, under what conditions, what costs would be involved and can we avoid these costs? On both the issues of aid and democracy, we might well find ourselves in contradiction with a future South African government — but we should certainly not be afraid to look at areas that might well not win us favour or advance within a national democratic formation in the future.

Overall, the party manifesto is refreshing. It provides a clear thrust and a powerful critique of capitalism, addressing many of the important issues facing socialists in South Africa and the world. It could be more challenging, tentative and self-consciously open, however, and help us get away from some unnecessary traces of old-style thinking.

** Graeme Bloch is a former UDF Western Cape executive member, now studying in the USA **

West Africa — a place of colourful contrasts

Looking northward, the average South African, black and white, racist and anti-racist, can be forgiven for picturing a desolate, barren African wasteland. Our isolation from the rest of Africa forces our perceptions to be shaped by a world media that is uninterested in Africa beyond the disasters, wars and famines.

For white racists, it was quite expected that post-colonial Africa would wither, because quite simply black people are 'unable to run a modern country'. Racists argue that they either lack the 'mental capability', or they are as yet insufficiently 'westernised' to adequately undertake the task.

For the anti-racists, Africa's demise is a direct result of the legacy of colonial underdevelopment, and neo-colonial dependency on Western trade, aid and loans. The enormous debt burden it is saddled with has resulted in a net outflow of capital. Brutal tin-pot dictators have been kept in power by Western interests to ensure that Africa's raw materials feed the economies of the industrialised world, at rock-bottom prices.

But while there is a great deal of truth in the picture of poverty, dictatorship and debt, a visit to West Africa last September allowed a glimpse at some of the finer lines beyond the broader brush strokes.

The visit was organised by the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (Idasa), and brought together a range of people with different views. Before our departure, we were given 'pep-talks' by various people. A representative of the SA Foreign Trade Organisation painted a bleak picture of corruption and decay in Nigeria, our first stop. We were told to be prepared to pay \$100 each in bribes, to ensure passage through the airport upon arrival. Ben Turok of the Institute for Africa Alternatives assured us that it was not that bad.

Lagos, Nigeria

Slightly consoled, we set off to Lagos, the coastal capital of Nigeria (population well over 115 million). Our passage through the airport was smooth — mainly because we had a protocol officer from

DEVAN PILLAY visited Nigeria, Senegal and Ghana recently, and found a colourful tapestry of contrasting patterns beneath the grey quilt thrown over the continent by our mass media

the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) to meet us. The Institute did much to make us feel at home — even to the extent of providing a coach for our sight-seeing.

The coach, however, spoke volumes about the state of the Nigerian economy — it would never pass a roadworthy test in this country!

Nigeria is currently led by General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. The country has been under military rule for most of its independence years, and this was very evident as we drove through the wide main street to our hotel. The military were everywhere, and every day during our five-day stay in Lagos, traffic came to a halt at least once, to make way for military vehicles, sirens blaring and roof-top machine guns at the ready, leading a government convey through the congested traffic.

Nigeria is a huge country of deep religious (Muslim/Christian), regional and ethnic conflict. But the instability in Nigerian society is not based on simple ethnic/religious rivalry. What was immediately apparent in Lagos was the extreme poverty of most of the people in this grossly overcrowded city of over five million.

Decay was everywhere — from the buses and cars which miraculously kept on the road (new cars are out of the reach of most people), to the houses, streets and open drains (a legacy of British colonialism) that fouled the air.

But Nigeria is an oil-rich country, with a growth rate of over 4% per annum. However, as in most 'third world' countries, there is a super-rich elite, and a very poor mass, with little inbetween.

The millions earned from oil are invested in prestige projects (like stadi-

ums), personal property in Nigeria and abroad for the national and foreign elite, with the rest probably sitting in Swiss banks.

Brain drain

Major causes of this maldistribution of wealth, according to Daniel Idowu, a Nigerian living in the Ivory Coast, is the enormously ineffective taxation system, and the absence of any meaningful local democracy. The super-rich are not adequately taxed, so there is insufficient revenue to pay public servants, including teachers and lecturers, properly. Hence the massive brain drain (and corruption).

Idowu used to be a lecturer at the University of Lagos, but was forced to leave the profession a few years ago, because of a devastating decline in earnings (to about R500 a month), and an equally devastating rise in the student population.

Local elections were held recently for the first time in many years, as part of Nigeria's slow transition to democratic rule.

But even if local councils are in operation, there is insufficient public funds to even begin to remedy the dilapidation in the living areas of most people.

Nigeria is a stark example of 'growth' without distribution — the path South Africa's ruling elite want to take this country along.

But there were pleasant moments on the trip. The people, as promised, were friendly. And the music was wonderful. By chance we came across a jazz club owned by the niece of the world-renowned Nigerian musician and government critic, Fela Kuti.

It is well known that West Africa, for centuries before colonialism, has always had a bustling economy based on trade.

Nigeria is no exception. It seemed as if everyone was a trader — from the young girls selling their bodies to foreigners at our hotel, to the multitude of motor mechanics who miraculously keep the cars on the road, to the kids in the street making good use of the frequent traffic jams to sell sweets, teddy bears, watches, music cassettes and a lot more.

Nigeria, after South Africa the capitalist giant of Africa, was in the end a

depressing sight. As we left Lagos en route to Dakar, Senegal, we felt a huge sense of relief. The last few hours were tense, as we finally came face-to-face with the corruption. On the way to the airport, the military stopped our vehicle, and threatened to search every item of our luggage. A \$20 bill prevented that. At the airport, despite the presence of our protocol officer, we had to part with another \$300 all-in-all to ensure a smooth passage to the aeroplane.

Dakar, Senegal

We had heard a lot about this former French colony, and our brief stay there more than lived up to our expectations. There could not have been a greater contrast to Lagos.

Dakar is a beautiful city of 1.4 million, in a country of under eight million people. The grossly overcrowded hustle and bustle of Lagos was completely absent. The streets were clean — and, of course, the French left a closed drainage system.

After the intellectually barren time spent in Lagos — the original programme fell through, and for various reasons, including fear on the part of our hosts (the military seemed particularly jumpy while we were there), we did not meet anyone in opposition to the government — Dakar was an intellectual oasis.

For three days we were treated to a government welcome; a lively debate between four political parties; a fact-filled discussion on the economy by businessmen and trade unionists; a panel composed of a diverse range of media practitioners; an illuminating talk by human rights lawyers; a chat over lunch with a representative from the Ministry of Women's Affairs and a feminist activist; and an informative discussion with the pan-African NGO, Codesria, on the state of African intellectual activity.

Multi-party state

Senegal became a multi-party state in 1978, although it is only since 1981 that

the opposition have felt free to organise. The ruling Socialist Party, under Abdou Diouf, earlier this year drew the largest opposition party, the left-of-centre Democratic Party, and the formerly Moscow-aligned Independent Labour Party, into a coalition government.

There are a range of tiny leftwing parties which refused to join Diouf's coalition. One is the Revolutionary Move-

of a vibrant press freedom (the newspapers are of poor 'skop, skiet en skandaal' quality).

Senegal's population is too small to sustain independent dailies.

However, there are a range of vibrant privately-owned weeklies and other periodicals, including a weekly satirical paper called *The Free Cockroach*.

At the panel discussion, it became

apparent that there is growing pressure on the government to implement mechanisms to ensure a pluralistic press. Most concern, however, was directed at monopolistic control over radio and TV — particularly since around 80% of Senegalese are illiterate.

Remarkable tolerance

A curious aspect of Senegalese society is its remarkable tolerance. A predominantly Muslim country, since independence in 1960, Senegal has not allowed religion to interfere with politics.

Thus the devoutly Muslim majority do not bat an eyelid at the minority's indulgence in alcohol and pornography. Somehow the governing elite has managed to contain the political ambitions of religious leaders, to the extent that the existence of an Islamic political party is still only a remote possibility.

Islam in West Africa is certainly not of the austere Middle Eastern

variety. One of the outstanding features of the society is the brightly coloured dress of men and women. This is as it was long before the Arabs and French came. The women transformed the obligatory head-dress of Muslim women into an apparel of attraction, rather than a means to shield a woman's beauty from the lecherous eyes of men in public, as in traditional Islam.

Senegal is said to be suffering from severe financial difficulties. Its official growth rate hovers around 1%, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank have been reluctant to lend money to a socialist-oriented economy.



ment for New Democracy (Ande Jef), a student-based activist group whose representative Mamadou Diouf gave a scathing critique of government corruption during the debate. Formed in 1974 of Maoist militants, Ande Jef leaders suffered harassment, torture and imprisonment during the 1970s. It only became a legal party in 1981.

Unlike Nigeria, which has a thriving media industry (15 national English dailies and weeklies, plus a range of regional TV and radio stations), Senegal's major news outlets are state controlled. In Nigeria competing elites fund their own newspapers, thus giving the impression

But, unlike Nigeria, Senegal did not reek of poverty. We visited some of the poorer neighbourhoods, where Environment Development Action (Enda) has been active in promoting environmental awareness, and found clean, relatively comfortable simplicity.

The roaring trade everyone seemed to be doing contrasted sharply with the official statistics. It became clear that the huge informal economy is largely unaccounted for in the statistics.

Granted, we did not get a picture of Senegal as a whole, in particular the rural areas and villages where most of the illiterate population live. That might alter the picture quite substantially. But if the two capitals, Lagos and Dakar, are compared, well... there is just no comparison.

We were sorry to leave Dakar. It is a place you know you have to come back to, especially the peaceful, friendly garden of Eden, Goree Island, where everybody knows everyone else, where you feel safe, and at peace. How ironic that such a place of beauty should have been used to house slaves in pitiful conditions, waiting to be shipped off to help build the USA into an imperialist power.

Senegalese intellectuals are leading the demand for reparations from the West for the rape of Africa through the slave trade and colonialism. Thus, instead of Africa owing Western banks billions of dollars, the West should write off these debts, and in addition pay for the severe

damage it has done to the economies of African countries.

Accra, Ghana

Enter Accra, the capital of Ghana, the first African country to achieve independence, in 1958, under the persuasive leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. It is a country rich in paradoxes and contradictory trends. Our three days there gave us a solid sense of Ghana under the 'revolutionary' leadership of Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings — and the IMF.

Kwame Nkrumah set the tone of an African socialism with strong Marxist underpinnings. He was, however, overthrown in a CIA-linked coup in 1966, and the country took a sharp turn to the right.

When Jerry Rawlings took power, first in 1978 and then in 1981, the promise of a return to 'revolutionary socialist' politics captured the imagination of leftwing groups and individuals at home and in exile. Committees for the Defence of the Revolution, modelled on Cuba and Nicaragua, sprang up in every locality, with the purpose of defending the poor against the rich and powerful.

The honeymoon between the left and Rawlings, however, did not last long. Rawlings severely repressed any opposition, and consolidated his military rule. It is only during the past year or so that his grip has loosened, with the promise of a return to multi-party democracy.

But the process Rawlings has im-

posed on the Ghanaian people is remarkably similar to what De Klerk has in mind for South Africa.

We discovered that the universities and the Bar Association were the only two centres of opposition to Rawling's 'consultative assembly', an unelected body composed of organisations ranging from the butcher's association to the military, which has the task of drawing up a new constitution. As in South Africa, the alternative proposed is an elected constituent assembly.

Much of the urging towards 'democracy' has come from the IMF, which regards Ghana as its darling in Africa. Not long after coming to power, Rawlings embraced the IMF policies of economic liberalisation and structural adjustment. Real GDP growth in 1989 was 6.1%, among the highest in Africa. But it has come with a price — in particular in terms of social services, and pressure on the trade union movement, one of the oldest and most independent in Africa.

Despite its close relationship with the IMF, the Rawlings regime, according to its foreign minister, still sees itself following in the footsteps of Kwame Nkrumah. His name has been restored in the history books and public places of Ghana, and the activist committees in the various localities around the country still exercise considerable influence.

Beyond the myths

Our visit to West Africa, in particular Senegal and Ghana, exploded many myths about Africa. While there is indeed poverty and corruption, the people were certainly not the passive victims our scanty media reports portray. There was vibrancy, colour and a determination to make the most of the little they had.

There was a high degree of environmental awareness. In Ghana, the state-controlled television urged Ghanaians to exercise their rights against smokers in public places. In fact, very few people smoke in Ghana.

Contrary to the widespread notion of 'African time', we noticed a remarkable degree of punctuality in Ghana and Senegal. Our coaches were always on time, and none of our speakers arrived late.

According to the people we spoke to, the prevalence of public violence in Senegal and Ghana is very low. Women apparently feel safe enough to walk alone at night. The contrast with South Africa's big cities was therefore striking — we were very far from the Thokoza violence we were seeing on Ghanaian television. *



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A red/green convergence — but where's the politics?

This is a beautifully produced book, with a selection of photographs scattered throughout the text in an unusually attractive layout. It consists largely of case studies by different authors, covering issues as diverse as asbestos mining in Mafefe, overpopulation, water, toxic waste, soil erosion and land use, coastal and marine ecology, and energy.

There are several chapters dealing with issues from broader perspectives (community organisations, trade unions, the law).

There is a good list of references, and a detailed index.

In keeping with the title of the book, which prioritises people, there are also a number of profiles of individual environmentalists who have made outstanding contributions to raising environmental awareness in South Africa. However, despite the fact that the word politics is also in the title, if you read *Going Green* hoping to find a broad political overview of environmental issues, you will be disappointed.

One of my main problems with this book is that it sets up the environment as a site of struggle, as Darwin told us it has always been: the survival of the fittest, nature red in tooth and claw, and so on. Modern evolutionary theory, however, suggests that long periods of stagnation are followed by periods of rapid change, when the balance of forces in nature shifts dramatically, allowing new life forms to establish themselves. Whereas in almost all spheres of life in South Africa there are processes of negotiation and consultation now taking place, this book continues to present environmental issues in a largely adversarial fashion, with few pointers to a possible democratic future.

Jobs and the environment

Among the profiles of prominent environmentalists, such as Chris Albertyn, Mark Gandar, Japhtha Lekgetho, and Bev Geach, is that of Humphrey Ndaba, who is the general secretary of Nactu-affiliated South African Chemical Workers Union (Sacwu).

He is one of the few who suggests anything like a resolution for some of the conundrums posed. For instance, he maintains that one can campaign both for jobs and for the environment:

'It's quite tricky but it can be done. My worry is, if we are going to interfere with the wealth-generating mechanisms, we can forget about a better environment.'

So there, as with many of the other speakers in this book, he sets up a dichotomy, but he then suggests a possible way forward: '...environmental organisations must take up the issues of safer substitutes. While pressure might initially lead to redundancies...the creation of substitutes could result in

whole new industries to which workers can be relocated' (p93).

There is always seen to be an opposition between industry cleaning up its act, and the cost to industry, leading to job losses. An aspect of this debate that is generally overlooked is that there is a choice of technology at the point of design, where clean technology can be built in.

Existing processes can be modified, so that it's not a matter of cleaning up the waste that is generated but preventing the generation of that waste in the first instance, or minimising it.

Once industry is forced to look at the technology involved, international experience shows, cleaner processes may provide direct savings to the company as well as shadow benefits to the environment as a whole.

Reds and greens

The chapter written by two Cosatu unionists, Rod Crompton of the Chemical Workers Industrial Union (Cwiu) and Alec Erwin of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa), entitled 'Reds and greens: labour and the environment', does attempt to integrate environmental issues with wider political and economic issues presently being debated. They suggest that the work environment is usually seen as somehow separate from 'the environment'.

But 'for many people, industry is their environment'. So, 'the reds are becoming aware of the importance of the environment — the effects of Soviet central planning on the environment providing a stark lesson — and the greens are becoming aware of the role that industrial planning plays — Chernobyl and Bhopal being harsh reminders here'.

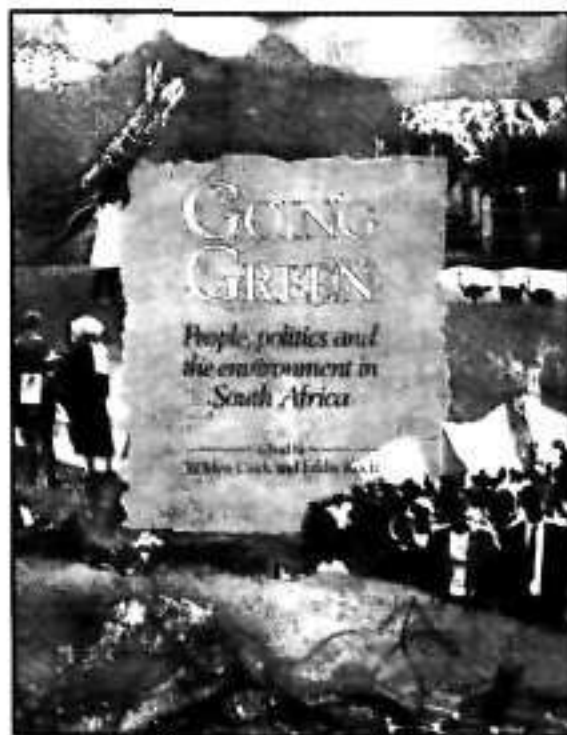
If this perceived convergence leads to greens articulating interventions into industrial strategy which will be taken seriously and incorporated by the strategists, all to the good. Crompton and Erwin state:

'We want to argue that in South Africa this integration of red and green political traditions is essential.'

This gives a point of entry into thinking around the diverse aspects of environmental problems, and makes it possible to find a new way of looking at the environment. They continue:

'We recognise that environmental damage begins right at the point of production ...industrial democracy becomes a vitally important issue in transforming dirty industry into clean industry.'

The issue of transformation is surely the key here: the idea that we have the power to change what is happening in our country, and in our environment. Perhaps environmentalists need to learn a few lessons from the trade union movement in



GOING GREEN : People, politics and the environment in South Africa

Edited by Jacklyn Cock and
Eddie Koch

Oxford University Press,
Cape Town (1991)

R44.95

(262 pages)

Reviewed by ANIA GROBICKI

how to take advantage of possibilities that open up for action, instead of restricting themselves to protest politics.

What the environmental movement in this country needs more than anything else at the moment are concrete detailed demands with achievable objectives, a forum in which these demands can be discussed and debated by the actors involved (industrialists, civil servants, trade unionists, researchers, community groups and other pressure groups) and the development of mechanisms for implementing change.

The unionists agree that 'development and growth cannot ignore environmental factors'. However, it is an unfortunate fact that at a recent ANC development policy workshop, held from 6-8 September 1991, development in South Africa was discussed without environmental factors being explicitly taken into account. Clearly, the red-green or 'rainbow' alliance still has a long way to go before becoming a reality.

Blind spots

This may have more than a little to do with the mutual blind spots of environmentalists and economists. Economists in South Africa have not yet taken environmental issues on board as economic issues, and conversely environmentalists tend to have very little respect for the laws of economics. The new discipline of environmental economics, which looks at the shadow costs and shadow benefits of economic activity, has a great deal to teach both sides in the debate.

Crompton and Erwin's economic analysis states that 'the environment provides three kinds of benefits that are in fact basic conditions for sustaining economic activity', namely resources, waste disposal facilities, and environmental services. However, environmental economics has already gone a lot further in defining the interactions between the human economy and the environment. What we are offered here is an overly simplistic analysis compared to the thinking to be drawn on internationally.

So, the rainbow alliance is all very well, but there is a need for better research, for concrete proposals, and for moving ahead with establishing institutions and mechanisms that can effect change. As Eddie Koch says in his chapter, 'rainbows are ephemeral things', and he points out that the alliances which have emerged around the environment need to guard against fading. He calls for a permanent environmental organisation which will have the staff and facilities to ensure continuous support to environmental pressure groups, to do research, offer advice and provide information, which in South Africa is so frequently in short supply. The present network of restrictive laws make it very difficult for grassroots groups and other pressure groups to get access to information.

The demand for public participation in government decision-making is crucial in the process of democratisation. Going Green is inspirational in demonstrating the possibility of community mobilisation and participation over a wide range of environmental issues. The need for environmental education at all levels is emphasised, and there are calls for the establishment of an Environmental Protection Agency, as in the USA, and for the enshrining of environmental rights in a future Bill of Rights.

This book is essential reading as a snapshot of where the broad environmental movement stands at the moment, but it makes me long to see some detailed, critical, and strategic thinking on the issues raised. The work has only just begun.

* Ania Grobicki is a senior lecturer in chemical engineering at Wits, and coordinates the ANC Interim Science and Technology Group. *

The unhappy marriage between theory and drama

DRAMA AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN STATE

By Martin Orkin

Witwatersrand University Press (1991)

R39.95

(263 pages)

Reviewed by CAROL STEINBERG

African drama these days is hampered by a cluster of associations that runs something like this: boredom, old hat, oh no not again, crisis, bad, dying. Orkin's new book, *Drama and the South African state*, is a sharp reminder that theatre matters. For decades the state has waged war on dissident playwrights who refused to be silenced. Why? Why were people harassed, detained, banned and assassinated for making plays? Why has the state seen fit to pour huge amounts of money into its own drama? What is at stake?

Orkin's book is about the politics of our drama — its relationship to the society that produced it. But frustratingly, it fails to come to terms with all that is at stake.

Professor Martin Orkin works in the Department of English at the University of the Witwatersrand. He is widely recognised as an eminent scholar of South African drama. Orkin is author of the highly acclaimed book *Shakespeare against Apartheid*, in which he reinterprets Shakespeare in the context of South African history and politics. *Drama and the South African state* contributes to an impoverished area of study: South African drama and indigenous performance traditions.

Theatre a site of struggle

Drama and the South African state explores a selection of plays that were performed between the early 1920s and the late 1980s. Orkin analyses the plays in the context of prevailing state and oppositional ideologies. Quite correctly, he does not attempt to argue that theatre has had any direct, revolutionary impact on South African society. Instead he emphasises the political nature of language and the way in which language is implicitly bound up with relations of power. Orkin's point here is that theatre not only reflects the 'frightening, vicious and murderous battles that have been and continue to be waged throughout the country', but that theatre itself is a site of those battles.

One aspect of the 'language war' is that of access to publication and theatrical resources. Orkin documents those 'chosen' plays that have institutionalised themselves into theatres, books and school syllabi, and those that have been ignored. In addition, he questions the promotion of certain preferred interpretations of plays and the stifling of others. His sharp criticism of the state's performing arts councils' indifference to local theatre is most pertinent in this context.

A telling example of the way in which the ruling classes have manipulated theatrical tradition and skewed our histori-

cal perception is to be found in the following comparison. The plays of Guy Butler, despite their mediocrity, and perhaps because of their largely colonialist discourse, were readily performed and quickly published. A playwright like Herbert Dhlomo on the other hand, who enjoyed no state assistance, and whose work contests colonialist and segregationist discourse, remains largely unpublished. His 'massive project in drama' was subject to decades of neglect. It is only recently that Dhlomo has been acknowledged (by some) as the '(unknown) father of much of what is significant in present-day South African drama'.

Drama and the South African state is itself an attempt to contest official histories and perceptions. It is an attempt to give voice to silenced texts and to re-centre marginalised traditions.

How ironic then, that the playwright who is afforded the most attention in Orkin's book is the one who least needs recognition or retrieval — Athol Fugard. Why does Orkin privilege Fugard over a playwright like Gibson Kente, whose undeniable popularity and importance has scarcely been documented? Although Orkin may well pay tribute to Kente's 'enormous impact on huge [township] audiences', it is Fugard's biographic details, notebooks, and plays that are explored at considerable length. It would seem that Orkin misses a golden opportunity to rectify the skewed perception of South African theatre history that official theatrical and educational institutions have created.

A materialist concept of theatre

Orkin's analysis of Fugard's work raises further problems that are central to the book. In the introduction, Orkin points to the political conservatism of traditional interpretive criticism. This traditional approach regards a literary or dramatic text as the simple expression of the author's personal experience. Following on from this idealist premise, the job of the critic is to extract from the text universal truths about a universal human nature that the author has, in his or her creative genius, so effortlessly revealed.

This traditional approach, focusing on the emotional life of the characters and the inspired mind of the author, has definite ideological underpinnings. Its idealism obscures the fact that both characters and author are necessarily defined by certain material conditions. In the course of the book, it becomes clear that Orkin subscribes to a materialist concept of theatre — a Brechtian theatre in which characters are shown to be the product of their social relations.

I agree with Orkin's rejection of traditional interpretive criticism. However, I wish to query his own analytic approach to drama. At the heart of Orkin's highly academic and seemingly very complex approach is a simple formula: plays are evaluated in terms of the extent to which they conform to or deviate from the Brechtian prototype. This prescriptiveness fosters a functionalist approach towards drama. It seems that Orkin is suggesting that plays must operate like political treatises, analysing and revealing individuals' relations to their historical moment. Plays must, in other words, be politically correct.

Surely the political effectiveness of drama cannot be reduced to its political correctness. And surely the power of drama lies in its ability to seep into those spaces through which rhetoric cannot pass. To approach Fugard's theatre, for example, by assessing how effectively it reveals the workings of apartheid is highly restrictive. Is Fugard's preoccupation with individual angst, with the deeply personal pain suffered by

people who search for their humanity in a dehumanising society, a mere shortcoming of liberalism? Is the political effectiveness of Fugard's theatre really undermined, as Orkin implies, by its essentialism, humanism and existentialism?

Plays are not political treatises

Orkin suggests that Fugard's theatre is politically potent when it escapes these tendencies. Perhaps these plays most vigorously oppose the apartheid order precisely in the emotive power of their existentialism. A political prisoner in Fugard's *The Island*, trying to count his many remaining days in prison, cries out for witness to and support for his despair:

'My life? How do I count it, John. One... One...another day comes... one... help me John!.... Another day... one... one... Help me, brother!... one....'

This moment of existential angst gives most powerful expression to the ultimate horror that apartheid produces: the impossibility of living one's life. Certainly, *The Island* does not explain how and why apartheid works with any analytic rigour. And yes, its politics is impure, hybrid, contradictory. Its political usefulness, its social function, the way in which it impacts on society are not readily grasped in any neat way. *The Island* is not a conjunctural analysis of the South African social formation in the early 1970s. For that we should be grateful.

Orkin overemphasises historical analysis and critical theory to the point where they often eclipse the plays themselves. This is not to say that locating a play in its historical context is not vital to its analysis. But in this book, the plays tend to serve a secondary role of merely illustrating the historical analyses at hand. In a study of drama, surely an intricate elaboration of historical context is useful only insofar as it serves the dramatic content.

The subversive drama of H E Dhlomo

A notable exception to this unhappy marriage between theory and play is Orkin's analysis of H E Dhlomo, a dramatist working in the 1930s and 1940s. Previous critics have interpreted Dhlomo's plays as simply reproducing prevailing ruling class ideologies. Orkin, via a careful examination of the historical and dramatic context in which Dhlomo wrote, turns this interpretation right around.

He argues that Dhlomo was the first playwright to contest colonialist attitudes, and that his plays were an attempt to represent black South Africans as something other than inferior pagan savages civilized by British colonisation. Dhlomo's drama confronted its audience with an affirming image of itself, with an identity that is dignified and resistant. With these insights, one can sense how empowering and subversive these plays might have been; one can sense the efficacy of drama at work in its society.

Sadly, it is this sense, this subtle and slippery relationship between drama and society, that the remaining chapters of the book do not develop. Orkin analyses a period of history, and then takes pains to identify how that history is embedded in plays. However, simply to determine whether plays reveal a social and historical reality tends to deaden them into mere objects of study.

Surely the impact of the magical, pleasurable and political world of a play cannot be measured in this way. Moreover, to show that theatre is a site of political struggle is crucial, but at some point, must be taken further. Orkin's book is erudite, rigorous and knowledgable. But it does not come to terms with the subtler relations between drama and society.

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Cuba's challenge to Soviet socialism

The pipe dream that socialism can be achieved with the help of the dull instruments left to us by capitalism (the commodity as the economic cell, profitability, individual material interest as a lever, etc) can lead into a blind alley. And you wind up there after having travelled a long distance with many cross-roads, and it is hard to figure out just where you took the wrong turn. —Che Guevara, 1965.

With the collapse of socialism in most of eastern Europe and the deep crisis besetting what remains of the Soviet Union, there is no shortage of 'we-told-you-so's'. Much of this comes from the usual right-wing, pro-capitalist chorus. But there are also left-wing, Marxist 'we-told-you-so's' with their own pedigrees.

The *Revenge of History*, for instance, is the title Alex Callinicos gives his latest (and often thought provoking) book on contemporary east European developments. It could as well have been entitled: *The Revenge of Trotskyism* (or at least, of Trotskyism as developed and interpreted by Tony Cliff and Alex Callinicos). I suppose we should concede Callinicos's right to smirk, just a little.

There is another Marxist tradition, associated with the Cuban revolution and with the names of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, that might well now also be saying to eastern Europe and the Soviet Union: 'We-told-you-so'. But the Cubans, for their part, are not smirking.

The collapse of Comecon and recent political developments in the Soviet Union pose grave problems for their beleaguered and heroic attempt to build socialism in a third world island, in the face of nearly 30 years of economic blockading from the American superpower just 90 miles off their coast. Yet Cuba's unfortunate geographical location — unfortunate for the construction of socialism, that is — may have something to do with one of its singular contributions to Marxism.

'We are building socialism in a context which is very different from eastern Europe,' a Cuban comrade explained to me some years ago. 'We cannot afford to make mistakes, or to lose our mass base for one single day. With Yankee imperialism on our doorstep, if there are mass disturbances here, we can be sure that the first tanks to arrive will not be those of the Red Army. Perhaps this is why we have understood correctly the importance of mass ideological work.'

Che Guevara: *Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* by the Cuban economist, Carlos Tablada, is a timely intervention into today's debates. The book presents the socio-economic perspectives of Che, as culled from writings, speeches, interviews and seminars that he gave in the years immediately after the revolutionary victory in 1959. In these years Che held various senior economic posts, including president of the national bank and minister of industry.

Not that Che, an Argentine by birth and a passionate internationalist, remained in these posts for long. One of the key source documents for this book, incidentally, Che's pamphlet, *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, was completed here on African

soil. By 1965 Che had left Cuba and his prestigious official positions to participate directly in revolutionary struggles abroad. He went first to the Congo and later to Bolivia, where he was murdered in 1967 after being captured in a CIA organised operation.

Cuban perestroika

Tablada's study of Che's economic and political thinking was first published in Cuba in 1987. It served as a major intervention into Cuba's own perestroika, or rectification programme. But if there are obvious echoes between Soviet perestroika and Cuban rectification (both were reacting to a certain stagnation, a malaise that had set in), the Cuban rectification went in a diametrically opposite direction. It was restructuring to lessen the grip of market forces, not to increase them. It was restructuring that was able to rely upon revolutionary mass mobilisation. It was not restructuring from above, in the teeth of an indifferent or even hostile population. It was a restructuring that called for an increased (not diminished) role of the party.

The Cuban rectification process was a response to serious danger signals for their socialist project. These included a growing black market in food and consumer goods; the evaluation of economic performance by state enterprises measured by their profitability in money terms, not by their output of socially necessary goods; growing competition and market relations between state-owned enterprises; and increasing reliance on bonuses and individual material incentives, while expenditure on housing, health, education, creches, etc. was stagnating.

These deviations all derived from what Castro described, at the time, as 'the stupid notion that [economic] mechanisms would do the party's work for it, that they would build socialism, that they would promote development.' (p21) Narrow technical mechanisms resulted in numerous anomalies. One of which, recounted here by Castro, was the tendency for state building enterprises to meet their annual production targets by 'earthmoving and putting up a few foundations because that was worth a lot and then not finishing the building because that was worth little; that tendency to say, 'I fulfilled my plan as to value but I didn't finish a single building''. (p46)

By contrast, Castro told the 1986 Cuban Communist Party congress, 'we have achieved our best results working with the pride and honour of people with their consciousness...These are not illusions, they are examples which are clear to all.' And, pointing to one congress delegate who had twice fulfilled internationalist missions in Angola, Castro added: 'I wonder, what bonus could we give him, what mechanisms could we utilise with him and the many thousands of others like him who have done their duty there?' (p25)

Moral factor

This theme, the importance of the moral factor, of mass revolutionary consciousness in the building of socialism was central to Che's thinking ('A socialist economy without communist moral values does not interest me...If communism

neglects facts of consciousness, it can serve as a method of distribution but it will no longer express revolutionary moral values' — p77).

For both Che and Castro this perspective is, in part, a more or less explicit criticism of the way in which socialism was being constructed in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. As Castro said in 1982: 'There are some countries much richer than ours — there are some. I don't want to make comparisons of any kind; that would not be correct. But we do know of revolutionary countries where wealth has advanced more than consciousness, leading even to counter-revolutionary problems and things of that sort' (p95).

The Cubans, then, have a legitimate claim, a claim backed up by a real history, to be able to say in 1991: 'We told you so'. But what exactly are the theoretical grounds for this?

Che's perspective needs to be anchored, argues Tablada, within a specific theory for the management of the socialist economy. This theory Che called the 'budgetary finance system' (as opposed to the 'economic accounting system' which prevailed in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union). The essence of his approach is, in Che's words, to 'view the entire economy as one big enterprise. In the framework of building socialism, our aim is to establish collaboration between all the participants as members of one big enterprise, instead of treating each other like little wolves' (p114).

In Che's budgetary system each individual enterprise turns all its revenues over to the national budget, it does not retain them in the form of cash in an account of its own. Che attempted to apply the modern techniques of economic organisation, accounting and administration used by multinational corporations in establishing relations between the parent company and its subsidiaries. These relationships, he argued, have precious little to do with the 'free market'. They are planned relationships.

While there has to be overall profitability of the socialist national economy, the prices of a particular enterprise's goods may be deliberately held lower (or higher) within the socialist economy (or, for that matter, within a capitalist corporate empire). Building socialism on the basis of the 'entire economy as one big enterprise' enables workers to assume control of and responsibility for the economy as a whole, and not just for their own enterprise.

Emulation vs competition

Castro: 'The workers own all the factories in the country and it is in the interests of all workers to have all factories, schools, and services functioning well... We are not going to have our socialist enterprises competing with each other, because that has nothing to do with the idea and conception of socialism; it has nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism. They can emulate each other but that's not competition in capitalist fashion, with its dramatic consequences' (p23-4).

By contrast, in the Yugoslavian system, with its enterprise-

level workers' self-management, working class power is atomised and weakened. Che writes in 1959 after a brief visit to Yugoslavia that this approach results in a 'managerial capitalism with socialist distribution of the profits. Each enterprise is viewed not as a group of workers but as a unit functioning more or less in a capitalist manner, obeying laws of supply and demand, and engaged in violent struggle with its competitors over prices and quality ...' (p111).

Allowing socialist enterprises to relate to each other in terms of narrow economic and technocratic mechanisms posed, according Che, a severe threat to socialism. This was not to say that market relations or material incentives could be abolished overnight. 'The process must be directed more towards the withering away of material incentives than towards suppressing them. Establishing a policy of moral incentives does not imply a total rejection of material incentives. The aim is simply to reduce their field of operation, and to do so through intensive ideological work rather than through bureaucratic means' (p193).

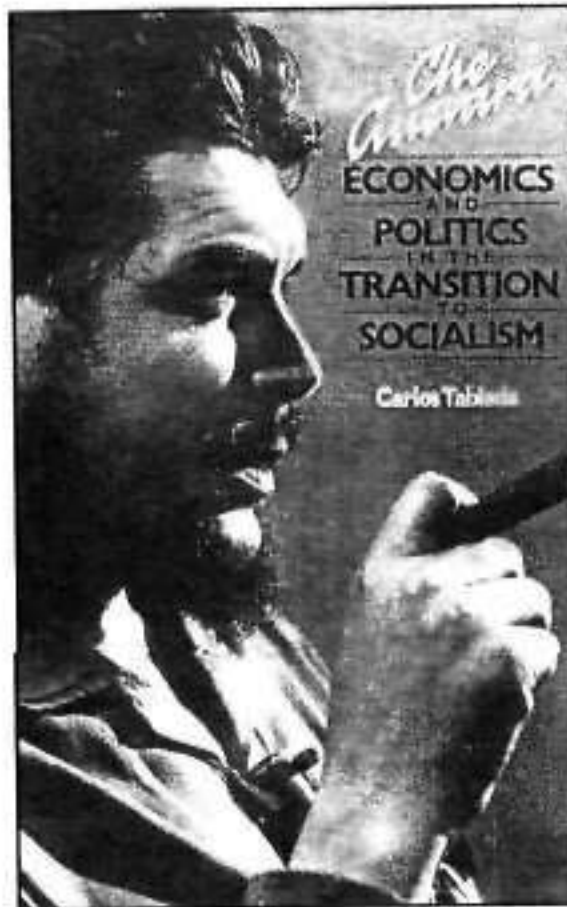
In anchoring Che's emphasis on the moral factor within his budgetary finance system, Tablada seeks to undercut the criticism that Che is presenting a purely voluntaristic perspective. In other words, Che is not contrasting the economic and the ideological, or production and consciousness. Rather, he is emphasising the significance of the moral factor within socialist production. In short, he is seeking to avoid a narrow technical, economic reduction of Marxism. Social relations of production are not narrowly reducible to economic relations; the material base is not identical to economic wealth; material life is more than consumer goods.

Challenging 'post-modern' cynicism

What, if any, is the relevance for South Africans in 1991 of all of this? It would certainly be wrong to see in Che's 'budgetary finance system' some kind of blueprint for socialism, let alone for the post-apartheid mixed economy into which we are likely moving. Tablada's exposition of the system itself remains relatively general. What the book does do is to throw at us some challenging questions.

For instance, is there not a tendency within our movement at present to collapse what is possible at the given moment with what is desirable in the longer term? I am thinking of the market mechanism for instance. The fact that it is not possible to abolish the market mechanism in any immediate future, doesn't mean that we should become lyrical about the market. I am also thinking about a certain tendency towards moral cynicism. Concepts like 'revolutionary morality' or 'voluntary labour' are seen as unfashionable, as naivetes with no place in the real, hard-nosed world of the 1990s. This book and indeed the Cuban revolution itself challenge this kind of 'post-modern' cynicism.

Whatever its enormous problems, the Cuban revolution has maintained its mass revolutionary base. In comparison with eastern Europe and the Soviet Union there is a genuine revolu-



**CHE GUEVARA:
ECONOMICS AND POLITICS
IN THE TRANSITION TO
SOCIALISM** by Carlos
Tablada, Pathfinder, Sydney
(1989).

Reviewed by
JEREMY CRONIN

tionary elan. It is manifested in huge popular rallies; in mass participation in and support for internationalist duties in Angola and elsewhere; and in the mini-brigade voluntary work system pioneered by Che and rediscovered during the rectification process. 'Before rectification only five new day-care centres in Havana had been planned over a five-year period...one per year. Through the mini-brigades, more than fifty were constructed in one year!' (p27).

Nevertheless, the Cuban revolution is today under greater threat than at any time in its existence. The US economic blockade and wide-ranging sanctions and destabilisation measures continue. The Soviet Union is scaling down its military presence drastically, while the United States, which has a naval port enclave on the island, is not. Above all, the Cuban revolution has depended until now upon the economic solidar-

ity of the Soviet Union and other former Comecon countries. The Cubans are not utopians, they have never relished the prospect of building and defending socialism in isolation (socialism in a single island). Their economic life-line is now threatened.

The outlook, then, is serious. There are plenty of smug, anti-Cuban 'we-told-you-so's' lining up in the wings. But don't write off the Cuban revolution too quickly! And, above all, understand that the difficulties are essentially extrinsic (a lousy international balance of forces). They take nothing away from the great contribution the Cuban revolution has made, and is making, to the struggle for a better world.

Jeremy Cronin is a member of the South African Communist Party and an executive member of the ANC.

The making of the african working class

In the course of the 1930s and 1940s South Africa's working class was transformed. For the first time, in the towns, africans outnumbered whites and, by the mid-1940s, settled african workers were more numerous than migrant labourers.

This transformation, on its own, would have posed new and major difficulties for the country's white rulers, even if the country had not, for much of the period, been at war. Their problems, however, were further increased by the propensity of african workers to engage in strike action.

From December 1942, a special War Measure (which was continued after the war) prohibited all strikes by africans. But, despite the threat of jail or a hefty fine, and the possibility of being shot, the number of black strikers continued to rise. Indeed, the african miners' strike of 1946 was, until recent times, the biggest strike in South African history (measured in terms of numbers involved).

In 1945, the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (Cnetu), could claim 158 000 affiliated members; and it has been estimated that, at the same date, more than 40% of africans employed in commerce or private industry were at least intermittent subscribers to trade unions. Comparable levels of unionisation, and similarly high rates of strike action, were not to be repeated by black workers until the 1980s.

And, in the early 1940s, for the first time in South African history, there was a reduction in the white/african earnings gap in private industry.

Communists and Trotskyists

Hirson has written about all the major battles of african workers on the Witwatersrand in this period. Thus, it is with some justice that he can claim to have produced a study of the making of the african working class in South Africa. His book is about strikes and trade unions, but it is also about community-based battles. The miners, the factory employees and even the domestic workers are there; so too are the Alexandra bus boycotts, James Mpanza and the squatters, and the struggle against the pass laws. In assessing these struggles Hirson has

YOURS FOR THE UNION: Class and Community Struggles in South Africa, 1930-1947

By Baruch Hirson
Witwatersrand University Press,
Johannesburg (1991)
R39.95 (230 pages)

Reviewed by PETER ALEXANDER

made use of new material and presented a distinctive interpretation of events and individuals.

In particular, he has highlighted the important part which Max Gordon played in rebuilding african unions on the Rand. Gordon, who came from a poor white family, was a Trotskyist. When he arrived from Cape Town in 1935, aged 22, the few unions which did exist were minuscule. In 1940, when he was interned as a result of his opposition to the war, he was the secretary of the joint Committee of African Trade Unions which, with nearly 20 000 affiliated members, was easily the largest grouping of african unionists.

Gana Makabeni, who had been expelled from the Communist Party, led another, smaller block, the Coordinating Committee of African Trade Unions. Although Communist Party members had been successful in building unions elsewhere — in the Western Cape, particularly among coloured workers, among indian workers in Natal, and even, to some extent, among white workers — in 1940 they only had a marginal presence among african workers.

In reconstructing this early part of the story, Hirson has made good use of archives collected by the South African Institute of Race Relations and by Margaret and WG Ballinger (then associated with the Friends of Africa). Initially these liberals supported attempts at unionising african workers.

But they were fickle friends, with their own agendas, and by 1942, when the unions were pursuing more militant tactics, both bodies had withdrawn from the field.

In the course of the war the Communist Party's influence increased. In 1945, Gaur Radebe, a Communist who was secretary for Mines in the Transvaal ANC, convened a conference which launched the African Mine Workers' Union.

Gordon and fellow Trotskyist Daniel Koza were, however, members of the union's first committee. In 1944, the Communist J B Marks was elected as president of Cnetu, the body which had replaced the Joint Committee and the Co-ordinating Committee. Marks, who defeated the incumbent, Makabeni, was also president of the African Mine Workers' Union.

Hirson focuses attention on an interesting dispute at the 1945 Cnetu conference. Marks, backed by Koza and probably a majority of the delegates, supported a move to transform Cnetu from a Transvaal organisation into a national body. The resolution split the Communists, and it became impossible to take a vote before the conference was closed. Later, however, the party confirmed its opposition to Cnetu becoming a national body, arguing that african unions should join the national, mainly white, trades and labour council (TLC).

Was this official line correct? Probably not. Koza and Solly Sachs, the ex-Communist leader of the Garment workers, proposed an alternative approach to unity: Cnetu should link up with the left unions in the TLC to form a new anti-racist, militant bloc. Eventually, with the formation of Sactu in 1955, this is what did occur. By then, however, the trade union movement, particularly the african trade union movement, was very much smaller than at its high point in the mid-1940s. It had been incapable of withstanding the body blows which had been inflicted by Smuts in 1946 (the miners' defeat) and by the Nationalists.

State role underplayed

Hirson's principal thesis is that although the industrial and community struggles were complementary, the campaigns were never united into one movement, and that it was this failure that was 'ultimately disastrous'.

Unfortunately, he does not prove his case. Proof would require an assessment of, firstly, the relative importance of other weaknesses in the workers' movement and, secondly, an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the state and the ruling class generally.

He only hints at the former, and the latter is almost completely absent. The state clearly played a major part in shaping, and eventually crushing, the African trade union movement in this period. Hirson mentions, for example, the Wage Board, but in practice did it tend to heighten or to undermine militancy? And there is no reference at all to important reports — such as those produced by Smit and by Fagan — which would have helped to indicate the wider problems faced by the state in this period.

The state hovers in the background of Hirson's story, but it is never integrated into his analysis. This, I suspect, is the cause of a secondary, stylistic problem. The book often reads like a series of disconnected episodes, rather than an account with a definite theme and a clear structure.

One of the difficulties which Hirson faced was that his ability to make use of the state archives was precluded by his own history of political struggle. His involvement as an activist in the Trotskyist movement — in this period and through to the sixties — was indeed a colourful one.

Some critics have attempted to ridicule this book on the basis that it is merely a vehicle for Hirson to relive old battles. This is not a view which I share. Firstly because, on balance, Hirson's direct experience of this period is a bonus, as it provides him with insights missing from other accounts. Secondly, because it is the product of serious research, for which he was awarded a PhD.

This book undoubtedly has its weaknesses. It is, however, an important contribution to an exciting period in the history of the South African working class. It deserves to be widely read.

** Peter Alexander is a Research Associate at the African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand. **

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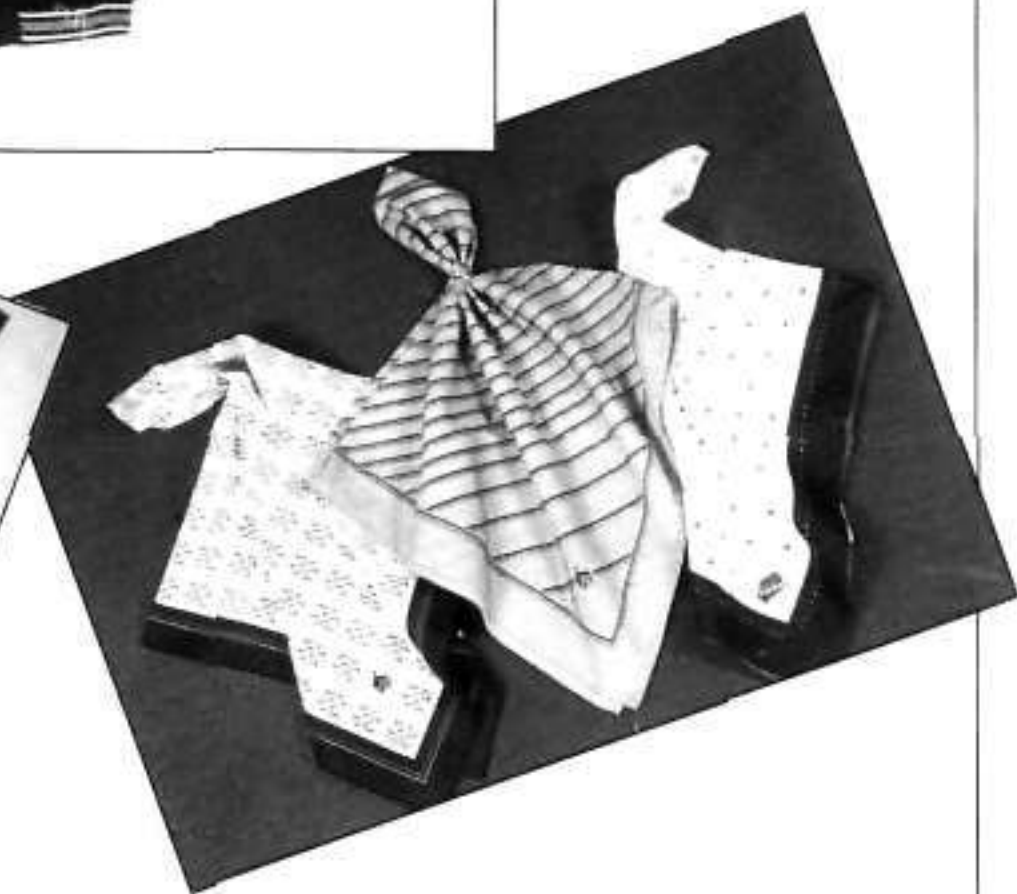
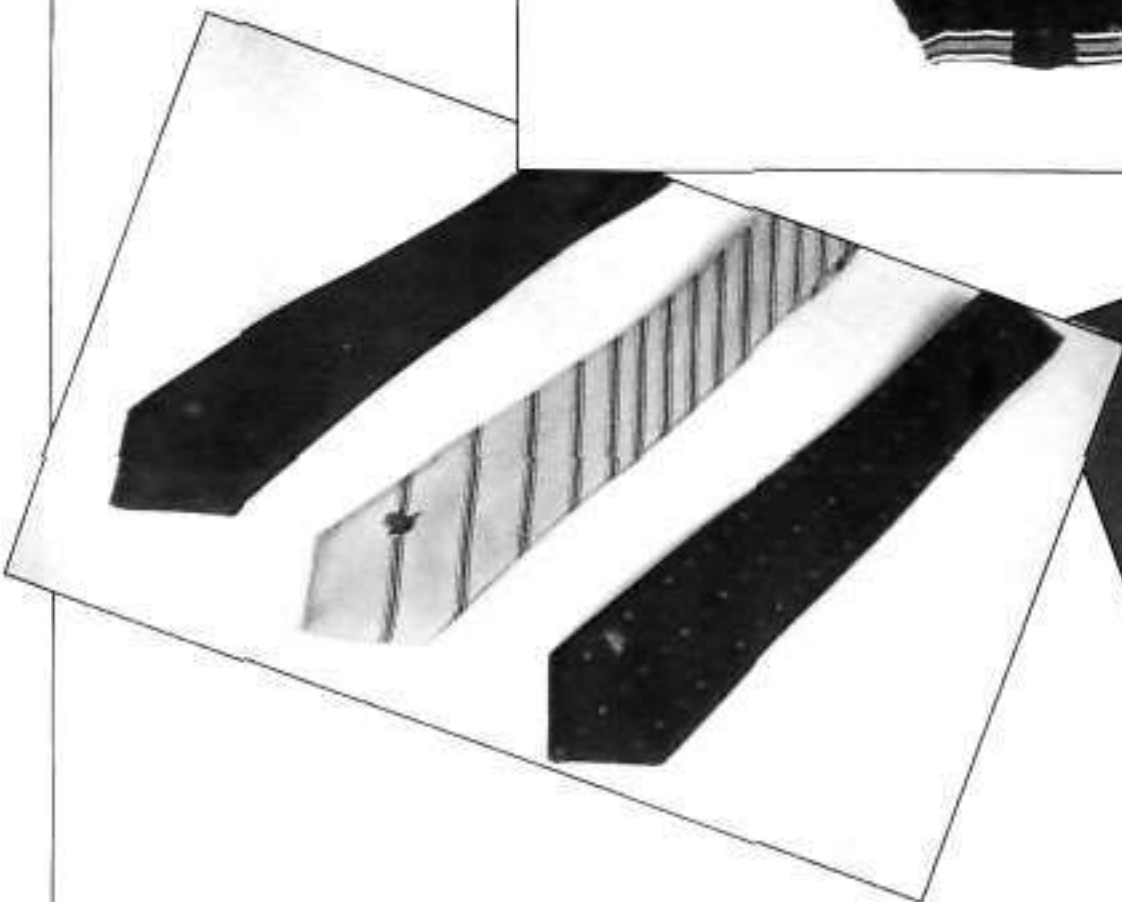
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