SUN, SEA AND RADIATION: WHAT IT'S LIKE TO MINE ST LUCIA

WORK IN PROGRESS

WIP 89 • JUNE 1993

What's left for the Left?

A cold hard look at South Africa's socialist movement

Editorial comment

Is there life in the Left?

Afrikaners seem proud of the old saying *'n boer maak 'n plan*. And never more so than in the days since the death of Conservative Party leader Andries Treurnicht. While the world speculated over the crisis facing the Right, and predicted that it would split into even more tiny fragments, the 'boers' made a plan. Drawing on the old adage, they rallied their forces around the generals (the only people they've ever seemed to trust — white men, in uniform, with guns).

Suddenly, there was a cohesive force to represent the Right.

But it wasn't just Treurnicht's demise that got the Right going. The death of another political leader — SACP general-secretary Chris Hani — had sparked massive public anger in the townships, and had been met with the barricading of many a small white mind. Fertile ground for the 'boer plan'.

The Left can learn something from the Right. Not their war-talk, their belligerence or their hate. Not their stubborness, their fanatacism or their blind faith in military solutions.

No, it's that ability to *maak 'n plan* that the Left might want to look at.

The Left might want to recognise the need for a coherent socialist programme which cuts through the rhetoric ... a programme will not only be **supported** by those on the Left, but will also be **implemented**.

The Left might also want to recognise the importance of being able to mobilise scattered, divergent forces around a common objective — in this case, **socialism**.

There are a few signs that this might be starting to happen. At the time of writing, the SACP was experiencing an injection of new members and was due to go into a 'strategic conference' aimed at mapping out a programme of action. And, according to Moeletsi Mbeki's article on page 11, at the time of his death Chris Hani was starting to push quite strongly for a broad alliance of leftwing forces to take the socialist project forward.

These are encouraging signs. But here's it's worth remembering that, like the rightwing, the Left has many sayings of its own. No, not the ones which got Peter Mokaba into trouble — more like the one Mbeki refers to in his article on Chris Hani: *Filimuntu ufesadikiza*. It means 'man is dead but the spirit lives on'.

We hope the spirit of Chris Hani, the spirit of a socialist dedicated to the poor and the impoverished, **does** live on. Because if the Left has ever needed to *maak 'n plan*, it needs to do it now. — *Chris Vick*

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PHOTO: GUY TILLIM (SOUTHLIGHT)

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PHOTO: ANTHONY BANNISTER (RICHARDS BAY MINERALS)

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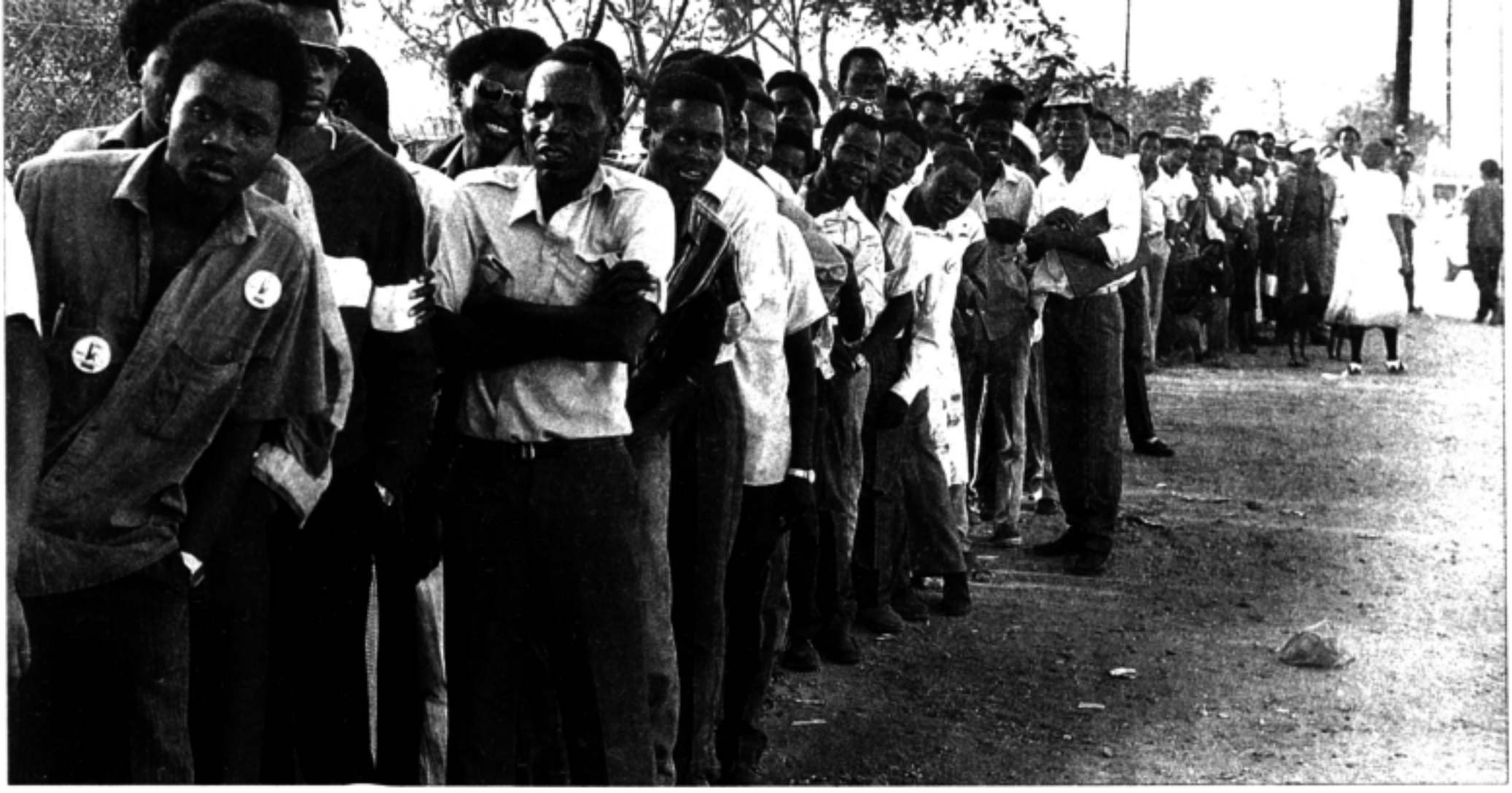


PHOTO: WILLIAM MATLALA

■ **QUEUE HERE: There could be fewer ANC supporters in line to vote than you think**

No easy road to victory

IN OUR LAST *ELECTION FOCUS (WIP 88)*, we asked a range of prominent South Africans to stick their necks out and predict the outcome of the first democratic election.

Especially striking was how all the politicos said the ANC will win at least 60% of the overall vote. Armed with a stack of polling results and his abacus, **HEIN MARAIS** wrestled the numbers and returned this sobering verdict: It will require something just short of a miracle for the ANC to win 60% of the vote. Here's why ...

ANC VOTES

Assuming:

a. 85% of 3,9 mil white voters vote
& the ANC gets 1,5% of those 3,3 mil votes
.....50 000

b. 70% of 2,1 mil coloured voters vote
& the ANC gets 12% of those 1,5 mil votes
.....180 000

c. 65% of 0,6 mil asian voters vote
& the ANC gets 20% of those 0,4 mil votes
.....80 000

Sub-total 310 000

The ANC will have to ...

● Get 80% of SA's 14,4 mil black voters to the polls, and
● Win 85% of those 11,5 mil votes
.....9 800 000

TOTAL 10 110 000
TOTAL VOTES CAST 16 700 000
ANC % OF VOTE 60,5%

Note: Voter figures based on 1992 DBSA calculations

The problem is that no poll is finding anything close to 85% support for the ANC among black voters ...

● Markinor's most recent poll of urban blacks found *70,7%* support for the ANC (that includes voters who said they'd vote for the SACP).
● A February 1993 Research Survey's poll pegged ANC support at *62%* among black voters (highest among Xhosa-speakers, at 73%).
● On average in 1992, the Human Sciences Research Council found *67%* support, outside of the TVBC states.
● The ANC's own in-house estimate is that it will win *70%* of the black vote.

This calls for a dramatic down-scaling of predictions of an overall ANC percentage vote in our first democratic general election – at least in the ranks of politicos. "Privately," confides an ANC election strategist, "ANC strategy is to go as high as possible in the 50s — the goal of 66% is there, but not as a real objective." ■

elections

Election Watch

So who's going to come out tops in South Africa's first non-racial election? One of South Africa's leading research analysts, **JAN HOFMEYR**, has agreed to help guide *WIP* readers through the campaign jungle between now and the polling date

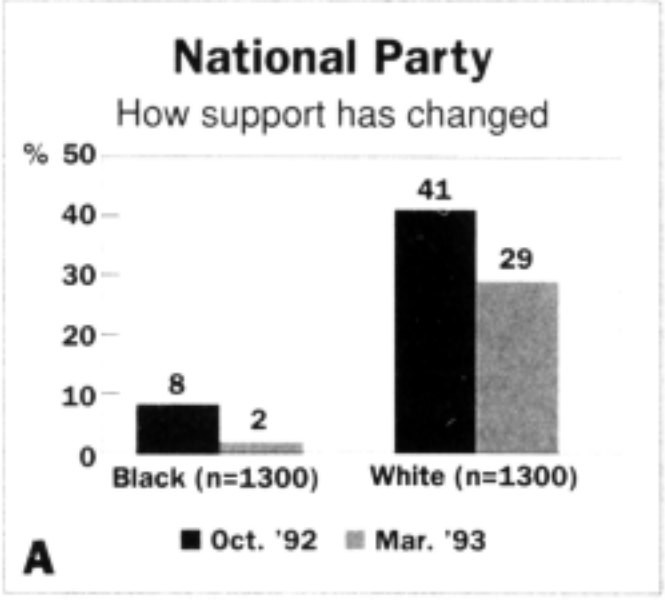
IF A GENERAL ELECTION WERE HELD now, who would win? Few people would dispute that the single largest share of votes would go to the ANC.

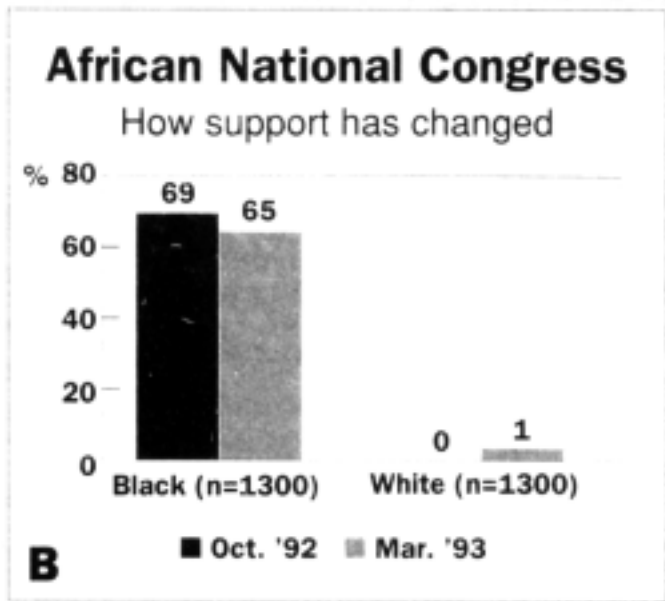
But would it win an absolute majority? And, if not, would the National Party (NP) be able to put together a coalition to beat the ANC in parliament?

Two years ago a scenario which had the NP forming a majority coalition might have been plausible. In the aftermath of FW de Klerk's early reforms, support for the man — and, as a result, his party — was fairly high.

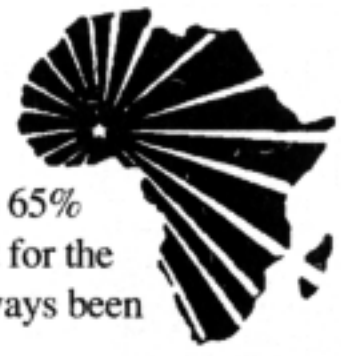
Nowadays the chances of the NP forming a majority coalition are slim. Chart A shows how support for the NP has changed among both black and white voters.

Support for the NP was never very strong among blacks. But the drop reflected in these polls is as steep as one is likely to see in polling. Among blacks, the NP has lost about 75% of its support. Even among whites, the decline in support for the NP is major. From a high of 67% in a May 1992 Markinor poll, support for the NP has dropped to about 30% in the most recent poll conducted by Research Surveys (March 1993). The plunge in NP support is so serious that the party might no longer even be the second most popular political organisation after the ANC.





How has the ANC fared? Relatively well, compared to the NP. Take a look at chart B. ANC support among black South Africans has dropped during the past year from about 75% (Markinor, May 1992) to 65% (Research Surveys, March 1993). Support for the ANC among other South Africans has always been — and remains — relatively low.



But if the "main players" are losing support, where is it draining to? The main beneficiary is the "don't know" or "none of the above" vote. In other words, an increasing number of people have become confused or have begun to think that there may be no party that deserves their support. The violence of the past year may also have encouraged people to duck political questions in surveys.

A variety of smalier parties are gaining from the ANC and NP's losses. The most important change over the past year has been the rise in support for the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) among blacks. Although the PAC still lags far behind the ANC, it is now the second most popular party. To what extent do the activities of the Azanian Peoples' Liberation Army (Apla) affect PAC support, you ask?

The answer is probably that Apla activities have helped enhance the PAC's image as a party that has black interests at heart.

However, it also puts a firm ceiling on PAC support since the number of black South Africans who believe in the sort of strategy pursued by Apla is very small.

The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) continues to register little support, even in Natal. It cannot be classed as "one of the big three" in any popular sense. As time wears on, the IFP is likely to become even less significant among black voters; the basis of its appeal is mainly ethnic and therefore strictly limited. Gradually, black voters are likely to decide that the broader appeal of the PAC is a better electoral platform than Inkatha's limited ethnic appeal.

In short, the latest polls suggest the following trends:

- The NP has very nearly blown its chances of creating a broadly based "anti-ANC" alliance.
- The electorate is generally traumatised by the political process and many people can find no party to support.
- The PAC is poised to emerge as the single most powerful electoral force beside the ANC, even though it will be exclusively black.
- The basis of the PAC's appeal is likely to remain narrow since a "non-racial" position has more support among blacks. ■

ECONOMICS

'Humanising' structural adjustment

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) has called for "a full social dimension" — negotiated by the state, labour and business — to be added to Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in Africa.

In a report to a conference of its African affiliates recently, the ICFTU notes that adjustment programmes "cannot succeed without national agreement on the measures to be taken".

Such agreement depends on "a democratic environment where decisions can be openly debated and the social partners can be fully involved. Tripartite involvement in the drawing up of SAPs is therefore a prerequisite for their success."

Other aspects the ICFTU says will make SAPs more successful include:

- Widening and reforming the tax system.
- Respect for trade union rights.
- A major role for the public sector, including active state involvement in areas such as health, education and poverty alleviation.
- Employment-intensive programmes aimed at job creation.
- Regulations to prevent misuse of monopoly power.
- Environmental protection.

Most African countries had introduced SAPs by the end of the 80s, but these had lowered living standards and increased unemployment, rather than stimulating economic recovery, says the report.

SAPs introduced so far are concerned largely with cutting government spending to provide more resources for repaying debt. State subsidies in education and health, as well as for food, fertiliser and transport, were among the first things to be cut.

"The social costs of the SAPs has been immense, with the worst burden falling on the poor and vulnerable groups, including women," notes the report.

"Per capita food intake in Ghana, Mali, Chad and Mozambique declined to 1400-1600 calories per day in the 1980s, the lowest levels to be recorded in Africa in the past 25 years."

In addition, education and health — besides being fundamental human rights — are "the key to providing the educated and healthy workforce which can achieve economic development".

Civil servants' wages had also been frozen. But "such measures have not been applied fairly to all government employees, with the higher income earners often succeeding to maintain a high standard of living while the poorer workers lose out." Some sectors, such as the military, "escape too easily from cuts in government spending".

Government attempts to privatise state-run enterprises have often had "disastrous effects on employment and production". Many enterprises have simply collapsed as private buyers were simply not interested in buying them.

Currency devaluation has also been a key element of the SAPs. But this had often fuelled inflation, as wages had to be increased to keep pace with price rises. The ICFTU suggests "national wage agreements to achieve a lasting effect on inflation".

The ICFTU also calls for a more gradual phasing out of import tariffs. Suddenly cutting these tariffs had "often destroyed local producers who were unable to compete with the flood of low-cost goods, usually from Asia".

"Some governments have [also] adopted the strategy of trying to reduce labour costs in order to increase competitiveness and boost exports," states the report.

The World Bank had provided experts to advise countries on revising labour legislation, but the International Labour Organisation (ILO) was the appropriate body to advise on labour law reform.

"Economic development cannot be achieved on the basis of repression of workers' rights," stressed the ICFTU. ■

— Kerry Cullinan

● *See page 26: Can Cosatu ride the IMF tiger?*

DIRTY TRICKS

Dead men don't tell tales

ANC INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS have been called in to investigate the mysterious death of Solly Smith, the movement's former chief representative in London.

Smith recently admitted to senior ANC officials that he had been a government spy, and they now suspect that he may been been killed by state agents because of what he found out about covert operations.

Smith, who lived alone in Odendaalsrus in the northern OFS, was found dead in his home in early April. According to *WIP*'s information, his body was covered by a blanket and he had been dead for several days.

PHOTO: PHUMLA RADU (ANC DIP)

■ **Solly Smith: Admitted being a spy**

Local members of Umkhonto we Sizwe were initially asked to investigate. They referred the matter to ANC headquarters, who assigned members of the intelligence department to investigate.

ANC HQ has refused to comment on their findings so far, and press officer Ronnie Mamoepa told *WIP* it was "premature" to give any details. He did, however, say the movement found the circumstances of his death to be "extremely suspicious".

Mamoepa also confirmed to *WIP* that Smith had been a government spy. "He came (to us) on his own accord and admitted he had been compromised and coerced into working for the regime," Mamoepa said.

There has been no formal announcement of Smith's death from the ANC, despite the fact that he held the senior position of chief rep — the equivalent of an ambassador — and was chairperson of the movement's Northern OFS region from 1991 to 1992.

The German magazine *Top Secret* recently speculated that Smith — real name Samuel Setotane Khunyeli — had been been killed because he intended to disclose details of MI activity.

"Solly Smith (was) one of the elements working for the regime's intelligence apparatus within the ANC. He was prepared to talk; therefore he was poisoned by MI agents," the magazine said.

Top Secret indicates that Smith's death may be linked to the assassination of SACP general secretary Chris Hani, which took place just over a week later — an act which it also attributes to MI agents.

Special forces

Top Secret — the magazine which first published details of Operation Thunderstorm, the programme to destabilise the ANC — claimed MI had in fact been responsible for setting up structures like the Wit Wolwe and the Orde Boerevolk.

"The man who was arrested for Hani's murder (Janus Waluz) was not only a member of the AWB. He also belongs to one of the units set up by MI and the special forces of the police under Operation Thunderstorm. As camouflage for their attacks they use the changing codenames of radical rightwing — often fictional — organisations."

The magazine also predicted a new security operation — codenamed Iron Fist — as part of the ongoing attempt to destabilise the ANC. Action considered here included singling out "militants" within the ANC and pressurising the ANC to take action against them — to try and drive a wedge between "militants" and "moderates". Targets of this activity would include members of the ANC Youth League, MK and the ANC's Intelligence Department.

Added to this are heavy surveillance and "selected assassinations" of key members of the ANC's Intelligence Department.

Operation Iron First would only kick into gear, *Top Secret* said, once agreement had been reached and signed between the ANC and government over elections, a constitution and the question of power-sharing.

However, the ANC's Northern OFS region has already noted an increase in attacks on MK members in the region. Members in the region recently disarmed two policemen they say were staking out the home of MK cadre Billy Mokoba.

● ANC information chief Pallo Jordan recently pooh-poohed much of *Top Secret*'s work, saying: "They appear extremely careless in their assertions and claims. For credibility, they come up with lots of information which is already well-known. Then they slip in startling new allegations, which have always made me uncomfortable, because they never seem to damage those they are targeting." ■

— Chris Vick

PALESTINE

Home fires burning

RISING FRUSTRATION AT THE UPSURGE OF militant resistance in the Occupied Territories is seeing the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) launch full-scale military assaults on homes suspected of harbouring "wanted" Palestinians.

Gaza Strip residents are hardest hit by this practice, which is outlawed by the Geneva Convention. The 17 assaults reported since July 1992 have driven at least 900 people from 90 homes that were rendered uninhabitable. The pretext for the attacks are usually that Palestinian suspects are hidden in the targeted homes; but in only a few cases are wanted persons killed or apprehended by the IDF.

During these assaults, the IDF typically orders residents from their homes before unleashing anti-tank rockets, heavy machine gun fire and hand grenades on the houses.

This eyewitness report describes an attack on a Gaza Strip housing project on February 12.

After eight hours, the soldiers pulled out of the housing project. They were dressed up like US Special Forces, big M-16s with grenade launchers and high-powered torches attached.

An entire block of houses had been blown to shit. What had not been blown into little pieces of concrete or crushed or burnt, they had meticulously shot up; every bit of clothing, cupboard space, fridges. Shell casings everywhere. Most houses were missing one or two walls. One second floor house was missing walls on three sides. I could see the whole camp from here. There was a crater in the living room floor with smoke from a smouldering pile of clothing on the ground floor coming up through the hole. The sofa had been blasted a few houses away into someone else's kitchen.

Next door, I stood in a house that was still burning. It was getting dark. Then I heard them coming back. The 170-odd people who live in this block of houses has been driven out by loudhailers at 4am and detained under guard somewhere nearby (we heard later the IDF had told them it was "just a routine search").

Now they were coming back to their houses and finding out. I heard an indescribable sound - a kind of collective moan, sustained, like a wail. Women and girls were picking through the rubble in the middle of the street: what on my way in minutes earlier I had thought was garbage and construction was in fact the remains of someone's life, blown into the street by these `surgical strikes'.

I turned the corner and an old man, standing with his back to me, looking through the doorway of what must have been his house, was weeping and shouting, held up on each arm by two younger men, also crying.

The Israeli authorities arrested four people and claimed to have discovered a large arms cache. Two months after the attack, they still had not produced the arms, and the arrested men had not been charged.

The Palestinian human rights organisation Al Haq has launched an international campaign to halt the demolitions and allow expelled residents to rebuild their homes. ■

— WIP correspondent

NICARAGUA

No more political daddy

ONE OF THE BY-PRODUCTS OF THE SANdinista National Liberation Front's (FSLN) 1990 electoral defeat in Nicaragua has been the unleashing of discontent with the vanguardist politics of the 1980s.

Many grassroots activists believe that traditional leftist thinking about political power — based on the requisite alliance of party and state — needs to be reworked. Nicaragua's social movements want to shift the political centre of gravity away from the state toward civil society.

Like others, the women's movement is divided by the struggle over autonomy. The organisation most associated with the FSLN is the Nicaraguan Women's Association "Luisa Amanda Espinoza" (AMNLAE), which is formally autonomous, but whose leadership consists of long-time party members. Like the party and the traditional Left, it holds that women are primarily oppressed not by patriarchy, but by the class system. AMNLAE focused its efforts during the 1980s on production and war-related work. Now it is stressing matters like female unemployment and violence against women, mounting campaigns and offering services such as health care to the poor majority.

The women's caucuses within the unions have historically been more independent of the party than AMNLAE, but their inclusion in male-dominated organisations places limits on their feminism. They acknowledge the influence of *machismo* on women's subordination, but often blame capitalist society. "Men as such aren't the problem," says Sandra Ramos of the Sandinista Work-

MOZAMBIQUE

Lessons unlearnt

IS THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) REPEATING its Angolan mistakes in Mozambique? It is perhaps too soon to tell, but some troubling similarities are already visible.

The delay in demobilisation of the two opposing armies — which was to have started immediately after the ceasefire last October — has not yet begun. The UN military observer presence is still wafer thin. And the unification and training of the new national army has also not begun.

"There is a trickle of military observers and civilian staff arriving in Maputo now and then," says a worried Mozambican diplomat at UN headquarters in New York. "This does not look like a serious peace-keeping operation."

The Rome Agreement, signed in January, ordered the establishment of 49 assembly points; but only 17 have been surveyed and none are open.

The UN Security Council agreed last December to mount a peacekeeping mission, Onumoz, with 8 000 armed soldiers. In addition, 354 unarmed military observers are expected to monitor the assembly points where arms will be surrendered to UN control and the demobilisation of fighters will begin.

A major cause in the delay has been the financing of Onumoz. The Security Council recommended a budget of R950-million to the General Assembly, but the latter's budget advisory committee expressed misgivings.

"The UN," says the Mozambican diplomat, "doesn't seem to have learned from the Angolan experience." Hostilities have not yet resumed despite the absence of monitors, but the lengthy delays are stretching the patience of both sides.

UN Special Representative Aldo Ajello expressed his frustration recently, saying: "Bottlenecks spell danger. People here are disappointed by the accumulating delays. Every day of delay makes the problem more serious and increases the risk [of renewed war]."

Botswana, Zambia, Italy, Uruguay, Bangladesh and India have each agreed to contribute a battalion of troops to Onumoz. But the Italian commitment has been bogged down in a row involving funding, while some Indian parliamentarians are questioning the wisdom of sending troops to Africa while the situation at home is so tense.

UN officials in New York, however, remain publicly optimistic that all countries will honour their commitments. Avoiding the comparison with Angola, they cite instead their largest peacekeeping operation — in Cambodia — which they say also struggled to stick to the timetable set down in the Paris Agreement. But after the UN's decision to proceed with elections in Cambodia without the participation of the Khmer Rouge, it does not seem an altogether comforting comparison. ■

— Phyllis Johnson, SARDC News

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ers' Central (CST). "It's more the class system and the government."

Both the CST and the Agricultural Workers' Union (ATC) do some consciousness-raising work through their family-planning and domestic-violence programmes, even while they tread lightly on the issue of male domination. They are also lobbying for a provision on sexual harassment in the new labour code. However, many ATC and CST programmes, which offer services for women rather than address the causes of their oppression, end up taking a band-aid approach.

In the last two years, independent feminists have emerged as a strong force with the women's movement. "Unlike AMNLAE and the union women, our collective is not a service centre," says Maria Teresa Blandon, whose group, La Malinche, has been at the forefront of autonomous organising. "We won't set up clinics and nurseries. We target patriarchy more than the government. Above all, we don't ask anyone's permission to be feminists." Blandon and others organised a national conference last year, and in August groups joined to form the National Feminist Committee.

Most of these women are critical of the FSLN's ideas about women's oppression, and fault it for its authoritarianism. "After the [1990] elections," says Ana Criquillon, "much of the women's movement said, 'We don't need a political daddy looking after us. We want to be on our own.'" Like other leftist feminists in Latin America, Nicaragua's independent feminists take women's class oppression seriously. This was evident at their conference, where workshop themes included unemployment and health as well as sexuality.

Independent feminists, however, disagree with AMNLAE and the unions, who "think only women of the popular classes are sufficiently disadvantaged to merit attention," according to journalist Sofia Montenegro. "They don't understand the patriarchal oppression and its effect on women of all classes."

But in the eyes of the more orthodox Marxist women in AMNLAE and the unions, independent feminists are too obsessed with sexism to attend to the troubles plaguing the majority of women.

"Independent feminists work up in the sky, on theory," AMNLAE vice-coordinator Rita Fletes told me. "There was this article on how to have an orgasm without penetration. That doesn't interest the market women I work with. They have more pressing things on their minds." ■

— Midge Quandt, Report on the Americas

personally speaking

Freddie du Pokoy

Freddie du Pokoy's tale is uniquely South African. It's a tale of destruction, bitterness — but, ultimately, hope. A struggle for land, possessions, birthright and memory

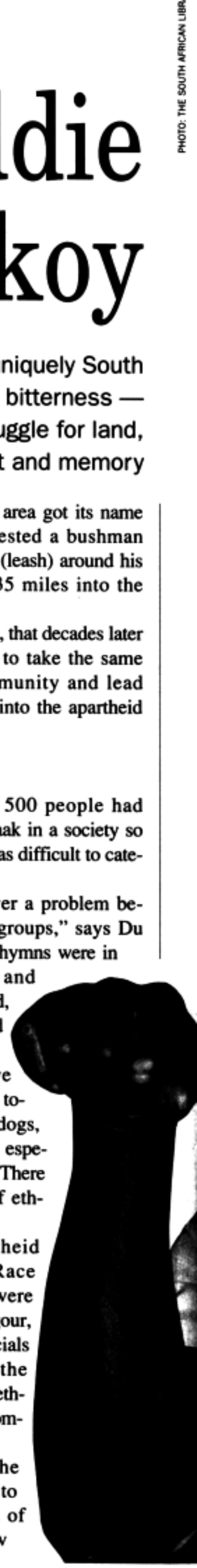


PHOTO: THE SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY

"THEY SAY OUR LAND IS GOING to be used as a reserve for rhino. Well, if I see a rhino there, I'm going to shoot him. I really love that animal — but if its happiness means more to the white man than my people's happiness, then I'll shoot him..."

These are the words of Freddie du Pokoy, school principal and now an upstanding citizen of Keimoes in the Northern Cape.

Du Pokoy lost his land 20 years ago — first to the SA Defence Force, who used it as a shooting range, and now to the black rhinoceros, which has been given refuge there by nature conservation officials.

Although he has lived in Keimoes since his forced removal in 1973, he admits: "I don't belong here. I belong in Riemvasmaak. I'm a Riemvasmaker."

The home he refers to was once farming land on the banks of the Orange River, stretching westwards from the Augrabies Falls. The area got its name because "police arrested a bushman there and tied a riem (leash) around his neck, and led him 35 miles into the desert."

How ironic, then, that decades later the authorities were to take the same Riemvasmaak community and lead them by their necks into the apartheid wilderness...

Integrated

Until 1973, over 1 500 people had farmed at Riemvasmaak in a society so deeply integrated it was difficult to categorise people racially.

"There was never a problem between the different groups," says Du Pokoy. "Prayers and hymns were in Afrikaans, Nama and Xhosa. People courted, produced children and married each other.

"As children we rode goats and calves together, hunted with dogs, laughed together and especially cried together. There was no discussion of ethnicity."

But apartheid changed all that. Race classification laws were implemented with vigour, and government officials moved in during the 1960s to oversee the ethnic division of the community.

"It seemed the government wanted to completely strip us of our humanity," is how

An eye for an eye

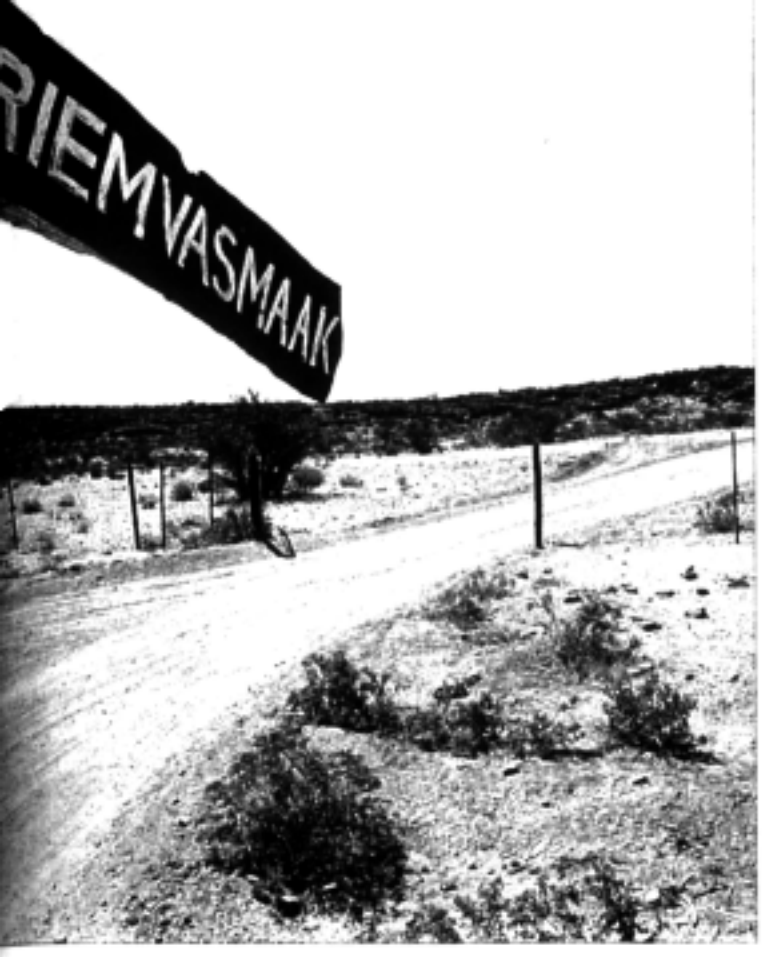
The words peace and tolerance come up often in conversation with Freddie du Pokoy.

But his tone changes when he refers to the men who initiated the destruction of Riemvasmaak: former prime ministers DF Malan and HF Verwoerd, and bantu affairs commissioner GJJ Jordaan (who ordered the community's removal).

"When I die and go to heaven, I'm going to ask St Peter one question: Where are those two creatures, Malan and Verwoerd? When he says they are not in heaven, they are in hell, I will say to him: Close the gates please — I want to go to hell. I want to go and fight them there. En gee hulle op hulle moere, man (I'll beat the daylights out of them). Because I hate them.

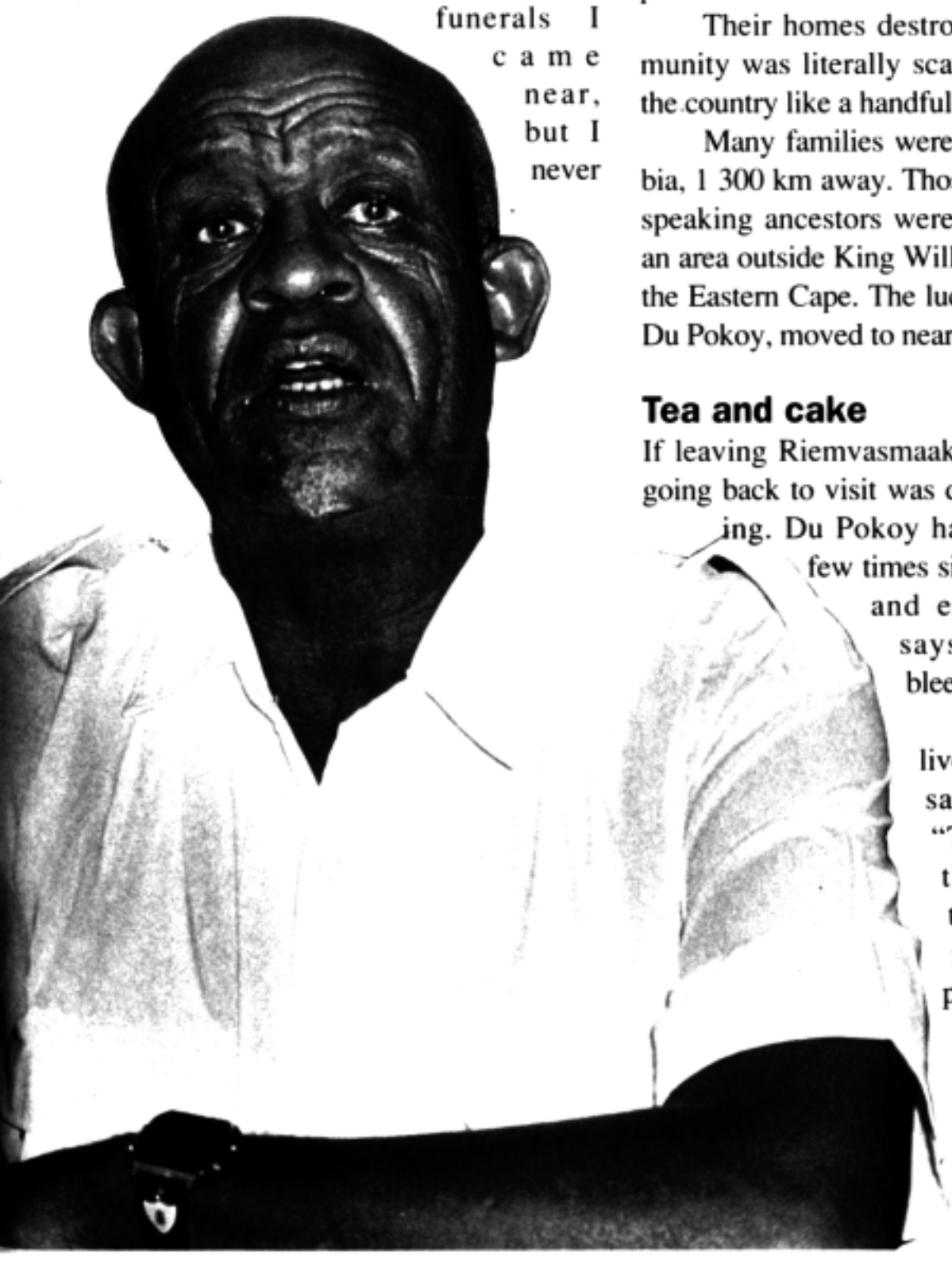
"And if I get that magistrate, Mr Jordaan, I'd like to take that — what do you call that small bomb? a handgrenade — and tie it with a rope right into his stomach, and then pull the rope so that it can explode.

"And his pieces will be strewn about, as the Riemvasmakers are strewn about today." ■



Du Pokoy remembers it. "They used to come to people and say: 'You, you're a Xhosa. You're a Damara. You're a Bushman. You're a Tswana.' We had no dignity whatsoever. Nothing. "We were often unable to be close to people we knew ... they would say to us, oh, you associate with them — you are also a Xhosa or a Zulu or whatever.

"Many of my people died in Riemvasmaak. At their funerals I came near, but I never buried them. Because I never knew who those police spies were — they could threaten me and say 'oh, this is a kaffir'."



Ethnic cleansing

Riemvasmaak was declared a "black spot" in 1973 and bantu affairs commissioner GJJ Jordaan ordered their removal. "We were simply ordered to trek. The GG (government garage) vehicles were all over Riemvasmaak. The houses were numbered. Our animals had to be sold for 'n appel en 'n ui (next to nothing).

"Scouts were sent at the government's expense to Damaraland (in Namibia) — and while they were there, they picked out the best farms for themselves!

"All our possessions were taken out of our houses and loaded onto lorries. A few rand was shoved into the hands of the home-owner. Then the officials turned around, lit a match and set the house on fire in front of the head of the house. Cruel, barbarous and unapproachable."

Their homes destroyed, the community was literally scattered all over the country like a handful of desert sand.

Many families were sent to Namibia, 1 300 km away. Those with Xhosa-speaking ancestors were dispatched to an area outside King William's Town in the Eastern Cape. The luckier ones, like Du Pokoy, moved to nearby Keimoes.

Tea and cake

If leaving Riemvasmaak was difficult, going back to visit was deeply distressing. Du Pokoy has done that a few times since the 70s — and each time, he says, his heart bleeds.

"No-one lives there now," says Du Pokoy. "The SADF go there certain times in the month and practice. Then they go away again.

"When I'm there, the soldiers allow me to move around. They even give us tea and cake. But the thing is this: I was the one who was supposed to have presented them with tea and cake. I should have been the one to say to them, 'sit down, feel comfortable, walk around. Look around, then come back and have some tea, it's okay with us.' We were supposed to be the hosts. It still hurts. They don't belong there."

Prayers for peace

On one recent trip back, Du Pokoy went in search of the remains of his old home: "Our house isn't there anymore. Only the floor is left. Where I knelt in the mornings saying my prayers with my parents, there's just an open barren floor. And where I learnt about peace, not hurting each other, I picked up some live ammunition ...

"They use the whole area for shooting practices. I wanted to go and see the place where my mother used to sit sometimes. But there was a board that said 'no entry — landmines'. Then I went to where we had kept our livestock. I couldn't go there because there's a board that says 'mortars'.

"I lost my father. I lost my mother. I lost many of my best friends, you know. But I was not so near to tears as when I went home. I stopped myself ... Dis verby, man (It's over). You must see it. Leave it, and try to forget about it."

Going back

Scattered as they are, displaced by rifles and rhinos, the Riemvasmaak people recently started to discuss ways of getting back their land.

"We have held meetings with the different scattered communities since October last year. It's very clear that the people want their land back ... they want to move back as soon as they can.

"We have lawyers who have told the government's land commission that we want our land back. The people are keen to go ... the big idea is to go and occupy the place. They think the only problem is money, because we're spread thousands of kilometres apart.

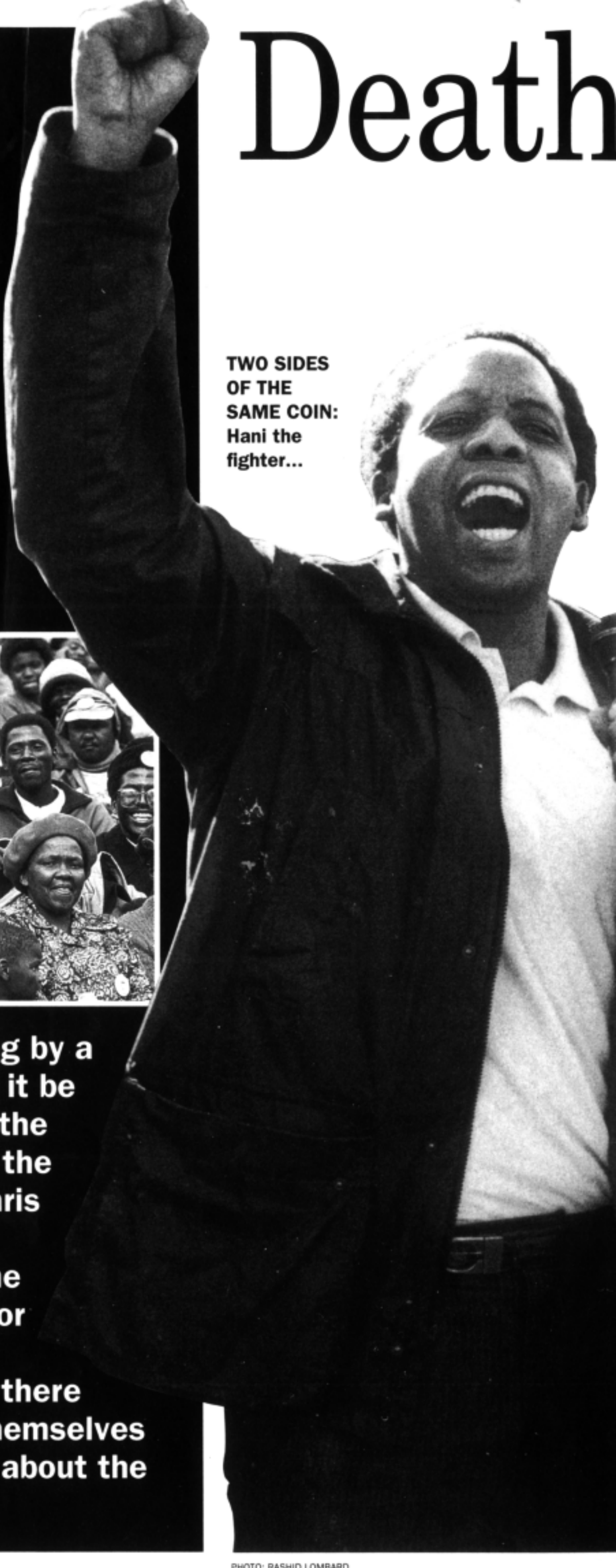
"If we do go back, it will be the happiest day in my life. I'll kiss the place where I was born. I'll kiss that soil. Because I'm really yearning for Riemvasmaak." ■

— Mono Badela & Chris Vick

What's left for the Left?

The Left has been left reeling by a series of setbacks, whether it be the devastating collapse of the socialist bloc in the East or the painfully personal hurt of Chris Hani's assassination.
So where does that leave the Left? Is there still a future for the socialist project?
Our correspondents believe there is — but only if socialists themselves are prepared to be realistic about the battles that lie ahead.

Death



TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN: Hani the fighter...

PHOTO: RASHID LOMBARD

# of a socialist

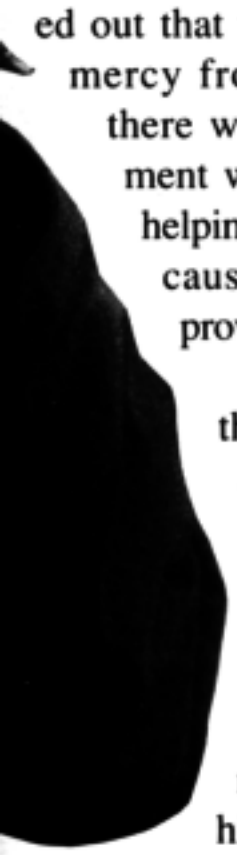
The death of Chris Hani has been seen by many as the loss of a great soldier. But, argues MOELETSI MBEKI, the Left has also lost a great thinker who was playing an increasingly important role in defining South Africa's socialist agenda

EARLY IN 1987, CHRIS HANI AND I shared a flight back from Lusaka to Zimbabwe. Chris insisted I sat next to him — and, knowing what a lively and engaging conversationalist he was, I was happy to oblige.

He had important business to discuss. The Nkomati Accords, signed three years earlier between the Pretoria regime and the Mozambique government, were posing problems for MK cadres and he was looking for alternative infiltration routes into South Africa.

Knowing that I was working as a reporter for the leading Zimbabwean daily, and was spending a lot of time in the countryside, he wanted to know which parts of Zimbabwe had extensive police activity and which did not.

I told him what I knew, and pointed out that the ANC could expect no mercy from the Zimbabweans — there were people in the government who thought the ANC was helping armed bands which were causing havoc in the western provinces at about this time.



As the flight took less than an hour, we were unable to talk about much else. But my mind keeps going back to that brief interchange when I think about Chris Hani, particularly when I read the many words written about him since he was buried on April 19.

The old Hani

The Hani who was buried was the man I spoke to on the plane six years ago. A passionate, courageous and unrelenting practitioner of the ANC's armed struggle.

And, unlike most of us, he did not just preach armed struggle. He practised it with the single-mindedness of a born-again Christian or a Muslim fundamentalist. He was what most black South Africans would like to have been but were not. This was what made him a hero in the eyes of all oppressed and politically-conscious South Africans.

His life was both heroic and tragic at the same time. As a man of letters, I think he would understand what I mean by that and, if pressed, would probably have used them to describe himself.

The armed struggle that Chris Hani gave so much of his life to never really had a chance of defeating the enemy. Alfred Nzo seemed to concede this at the ANC's consultative conference in Kabwe a few years ago when he referred to the armed struggle as being "armed propaganda".

It is a pity that the leadership of the ANC and the SACP never delved into the mysteries of how a conventional war between states differed from an armed insurrection within a state, or how these two differed from intensified political protest.

I believe this intellectual and ideological shortcoming was perhaps indicative of the way the ANC and the SACP have tended to march a step or two behind the social evolution of our country, and its attendant struggles.

The young men who founded the ANC Youth League in 1944 — Anton Lembede, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu and Nelson Mandela, for instance — recognised the fact that the ANC was falling behind the march of the people and tried to correct this through initiatives such as the Programme of Action, the Defiance Campaign and, eventually, the formation of Umkhonto we-Sizwe. But despite their efforts, either the enemy or the people always caught up and slipped past them.

The Communist Party is another story; to correct the wrong-footedness of what was then the CPSA, the Third Communist International, the Comintern and later the Communist Party of the Soviet Union started to issue it with instructions and to train its cadres in Moscow. This intervention achieved only limited results — and in the long-term it probably did more harm than good because it endowed the party with the blinkered vision and schematic formulae of the Stalinist period, deepening the SACP's inability to catch up with South African society's forward march.

Of course, these deep-rooted problems can hardly be blamed on Chris Hani. As a military activist operating within the framework defined by his leaders he could only give it his best shot — and that he did, giving the boers many sleepless nights.

His people were rightly proud of him when he lived. And when he died, they gave him the send-off he deserved.

The new Hani

But there was another Chris Hani. Hani the leftwing thinker and politician, the socialist strategist — the man who was "born" just a few months before his death.

His election as general-secretary of

... and Hani the thinker

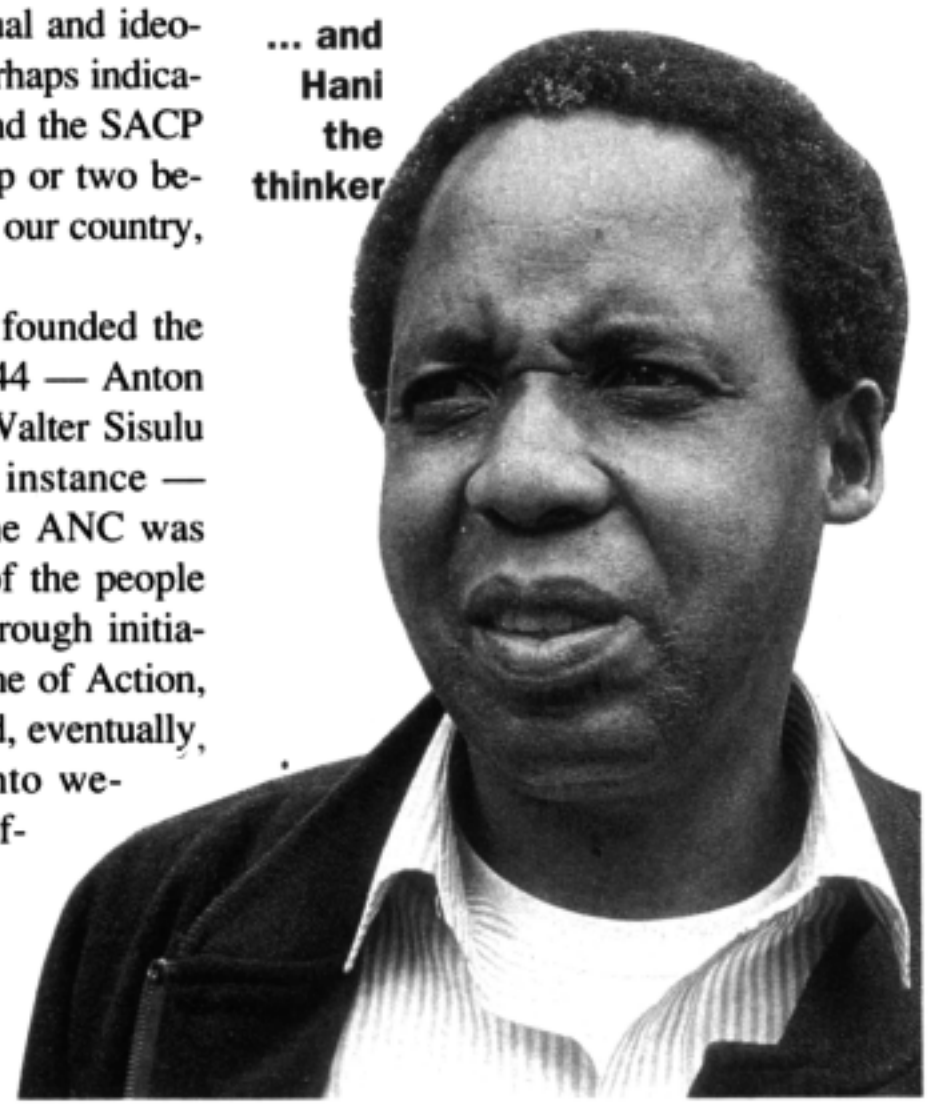


PHOTO: SALLY SHORKEND (SOUTHLIGHT)

the SACP offered Chris the first opportunity to construct his own vision as the top person.

As MK chief of staff he had been third in command, under the leadership of the late ANC president Oliver Tambo (commander-in-chief) and Joe Modise (commander).

Being in such a central position in the party opened up new areas of work. Within days of his election he was burrowing away with his characteristic energy and enthusiasm and, above all, his openness of mind and spirit. He was trying to make his mark on the SACP and South Africa as a socialist, not as a military man.

We worked in the same building in central Johannesburg and we soon started bumping into each other in the corridors and lifts.

As the threats against his life increased, so his security was tightened and he had to spend more and more time hanging around the lobby on the ground floor — presumably waiting for the all-clear to move out of the building. This was a wonderful time for me to "ambush" him and find out what he was thinking.

Two conversations stick in my mind from those random encounters. In the first, Chris told me he was investigating how sell-outs happen. As part of his investigation he wanted to know from me if the peasants had benefitted from Zimbabwe's independence. This is a pretty complex question to answer but I did my best and explained that the peasants and the black intellectuals had benefitted most, whereas wage workers — especially those in export industries like mining and agriculture — and nascent black capitalists had gained the least.

Hani was emphatic that he no longer saw the SACP as the vanguard

On the second occasion, I met Chris soon after he returned from a trip to Cuba. He said the visit had confirmed his faith in socialism.

Hani's socialist agenda

Those sporadic discussions culminated in my last meeting with Chris Hani, this time by appointment, and in his office.

It was March 24, just over two weeks before he was killed, and we focussed on a topic which seemed to preoccupy him — the future of socialism in South Africa. During our conversation, he referred time and again to the need for a conference of all Left forces and individuals to come together to try and redefine the nature of the socialist project. He suggested that I contribute a paper towards this conference.

During our discussions, Chris was emphatic that he no longer saw the SACP as the vanguard party of the working class which had the right to define what was or was not true socialism.

Another matter that seemed to fascinate him was the evolving thinking in the trade unions — and, in particular, Cosatu. He was sceptical of union efforts to try and do deals with the capitalists on macro-economic issues. Instead he stressed the need for unions to fight for democracy at plant level. He said he got the impression that this aspect of working class aspirations was being abandoned by the union movement in return for a search for deals with capital — something he did not think was feasible.

Chris was especially critical of white intellectuals in the union movement for what he said was their lack of understanding of the class character of the ANC. He described the ANC as representative of both the working class and the middle class, and dismissed the notion — which he said he sensed from white intellectuals — that the ANC will sacrifice the interests of the black working class if given an opportunity.

Chris Hani's life as a strategist for a socialist South Africa turned out to be very short indeed. Filimuntu ufesadikiza. Man is dead but the spirit lives on. ■

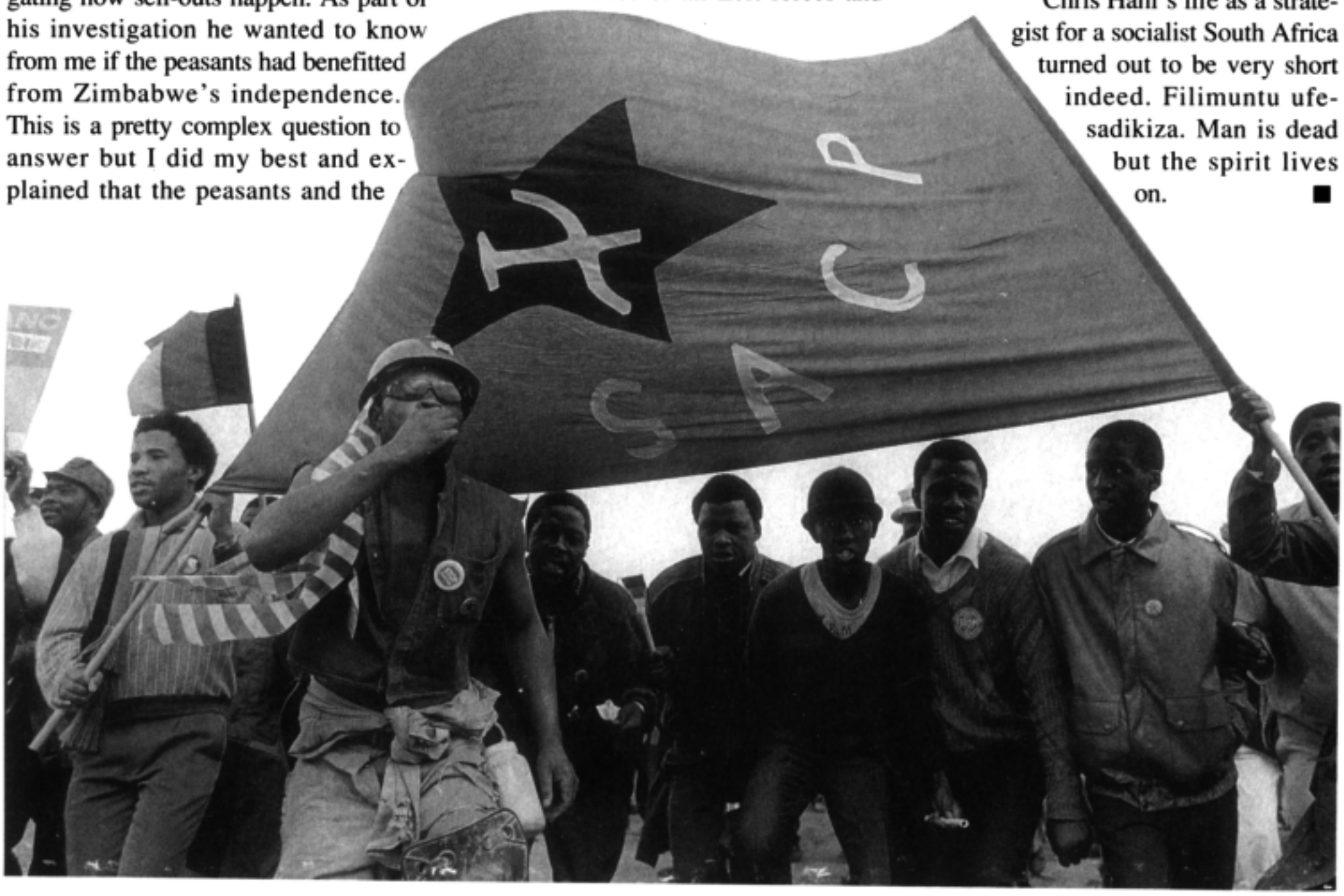


PHOTO: PAUL WEINBERG (SOUTHLIGHT)

PHOTO: ANNE DAY (SOUTHLIGHT)

We need more than group therapy

WIP columnist **JEREMY CRONIN** looks at the impact and effects of the mass action that followed Chris Hani's murder

ON THE EVE OF THE FUNERAL, along with thousands of other South Africans, I sadly filed past the open coffin of Chris Hani. Those I have seen previously lying in state looked composed, almost reassuring in death. On this occasion, the experience was horrible. The finality of what had happened came home absolutely. In life, comrade Chris' face was like his personality — lively, generous, cheeky, always about to be distracted. Now he was dead. And death did not become him.

The assassination on Saturday April 10 is a terrible blow to our people, our liberation alliance and, of course, to the SACP in particular. As an individual, comrade Chris is irreplaceable.

But it is not upon this loss that I want to dwell here. Rather, it is to reflect on the tumultous weeks that have followed his death.

To some extent, a new political situation has come to prevail following the assassination. We still do not know if this new situation will be more or less enduring, whether it will slip back, or (worse still) degenerate into a spiral of chaos. It depends, in part, on our own capacity to accurately analyse the strategic situation and to act effectively within it.

Rolling mass anger

A vital element of this is the huge wave of mass anger and mobilisation which followed comrade Chris' assassination. On Wednesday April 14 and again on the day of the funeral, some four million workers stayed away from work. Cosatu considers these two days to mark a new peak in stayaway statistics. On the Wednesday, an estimated 2,5-million people took part actively in countrywide demonstrations, memorial services,

pickets and other mass activities. The funeral rally and service were probably the largest ever held in our country.

These events were all pulled together in a matter of days and clearly relied enormously on the spontaneous self-organisation of hundreds of thousands of people.

This huge mass involvement and the general mood of those involved can be attributed to two factors, which are partially related:

- The enormous popularity of comrade Chris ("a fighter for the workers and the poor") and the resultant mass anger and outrage at his killing.
- Pent-up mass frustration and a general sense of disempowerment produced by the drawn-out transition period and our over-emphasis on a (probably inherently elite) negotiations process.

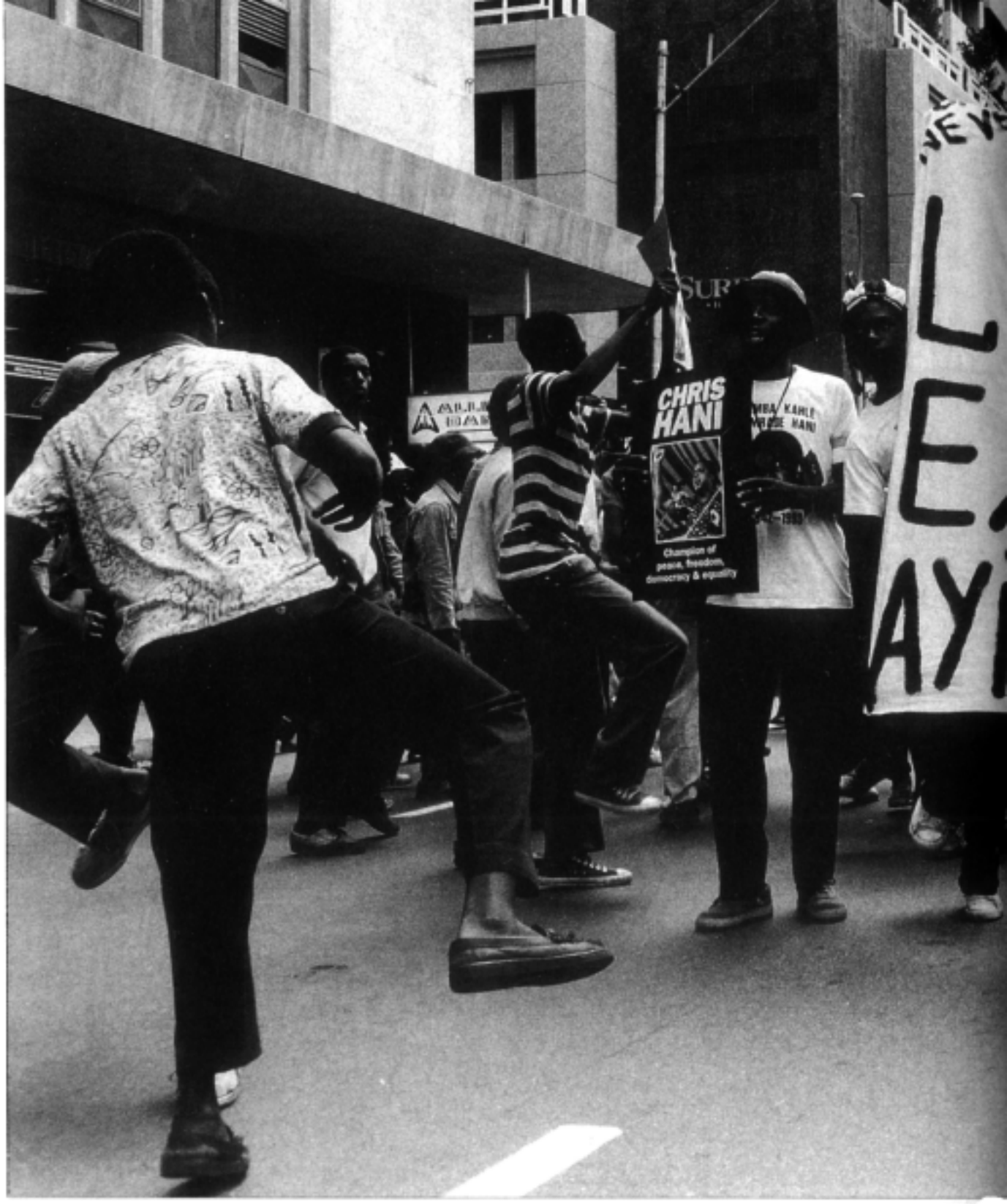
Abstract demands must be given content at township level

For the great majority of our people material conditions have, if anything, deteriorated in the past three years.

So the mass mobilisation had a dual character. Once more (more than at any time since the initial mass response to the 1990 release of the leadership) millions of South Africans came out to express their support for the ANC-led alliance. But in doing this, a very significant number were also trying to tell the leadership something about their sense of frustration (which cannot just be explained away as short-lived anger at the assassination itself).

In their initial public responses, the leaders of the alliance correctly guarded against the principal immediate threat posed by the assassination. Insofar as the assassination was part of a far-right conspiracy, it was certainly an attempt to derail the democratisation process. The leadership correctly underlined the need to pursue negotiations and to make real tangible progress.

Indeed, it was only the ANC alliance that was able to offer any leadership to the country as a whole in the first days after the murder. For at least several days after the assassination, De Klerk lost his presidency in all but name — while Nelson Mandela had to be given extensive time on SABC-TV with presidential messages to the nation. De Klerk's attempts to regain his footing — to present a "law and order message" by focussing on violence and looting on April 14 — was less than convincing.



■ **BEYOND THE DEMAGOGUES: Some slogans struck a popular chord, but provid**

Passive resistance?

But if the alliance leadership provided national leadership in the first few days it was less successful in providing constituency leadership. The leadership failed to adequately connect with the mood of millions of mobilised South Africans.

We did not associate ourselves sufficiently with the anger experienced by the people ("You have a right to feel angry", rather than "I am angry or "We are all angry"). Some of us called — correctly — for discipline. But it tended to sound like a largely passive discipline that was being called for — "let the negotiations proceed and await their results".

Above all, we seemed confused by the huge mass mobilisation, as if we didn't quite know what to do with it. In the past, there have been tendencies to see mass mobilisation as a tap to be turned on and off. On this occasion, everyone of us in leadership seemed to be united in seeing mass action as a drainpipe to channel off the flood of emotion more or less harmlessly.

But were there alternatives?

Some were tempted — by the popular mood and by the failure of the alliance leadership — to seek alternatives in demagogy (of the "one settler, one bullet" variety). This kind of demagogy certainly struck a popular chord in the days after the assassination, but it failed absolutely to provide any strategic guid-

PHOTO: NIGEL DENNIS (ANC D

negotiating demands (a transitional executive council with joint control over armed formations, for instance) need to be given content at the township level itself.

Let me take one example from recent weeks.

In a number of major mass actions, including the funeral itself, there was a creative interaction between National Peace Accord structures, thousands of MK marshalls, MK units in uniform, international monitors and the SAP. To some extent (unevenly of course) and in embryonic form, we saw elements of joint control over policing.

But we need to broaden our understanding of the demand for joint control of the police beyond a simplistic, statist, formal conception that reduces it to some multi-party cabinet-level committee. And we need to connect a more mass-based understanding of joint control to the initiative — launched by Chris Hani himself in the week before his murder — of forming township Peace Corps co-ordinated by the national peace structure.

Millions of mobilised South Africans deserve more than drain-piping and demagogy. Or better still, South Africa needs millions of mobilised South Africans.

Without them, freedom will be no more than, as Chris Hani once put it, the freedom of the flag and the anthem. ■

dance

ance. If anything, it played directly into the hands of a regime which was desperately looking for an argument to give itself a vocation in life. The regime found this by portraying things as if there were radicals on both ends of the political spectrum — and a moderate, even-tempered government in the centre.

Theory and practice

So are there real alternatives to drain-piping popular mobilisation, or simply pleasing it with demagogy?

The huge mass mobilisation provoked by the assassination, with its undercurrent of mass frustration, presents us with major possibilities — but also with a difficult challenge.

The new situation is not absolutely new. Our own capacity to hold the initiative has been dramatically increased, while De Klerk's has diminished. But we are not faced with the task of inventing absoutely new demands, or an absolutely new process of transition. Rather, the new situation provides us with the opportunity to realise demands we have been making over the last period more effectively, more rapidly, in greater depth and, above all, with greater mass significance and involvement.

The response to the undercurrent of mass frustration must not be demagogic. Rather, the sometimes distant and seemingly abstract

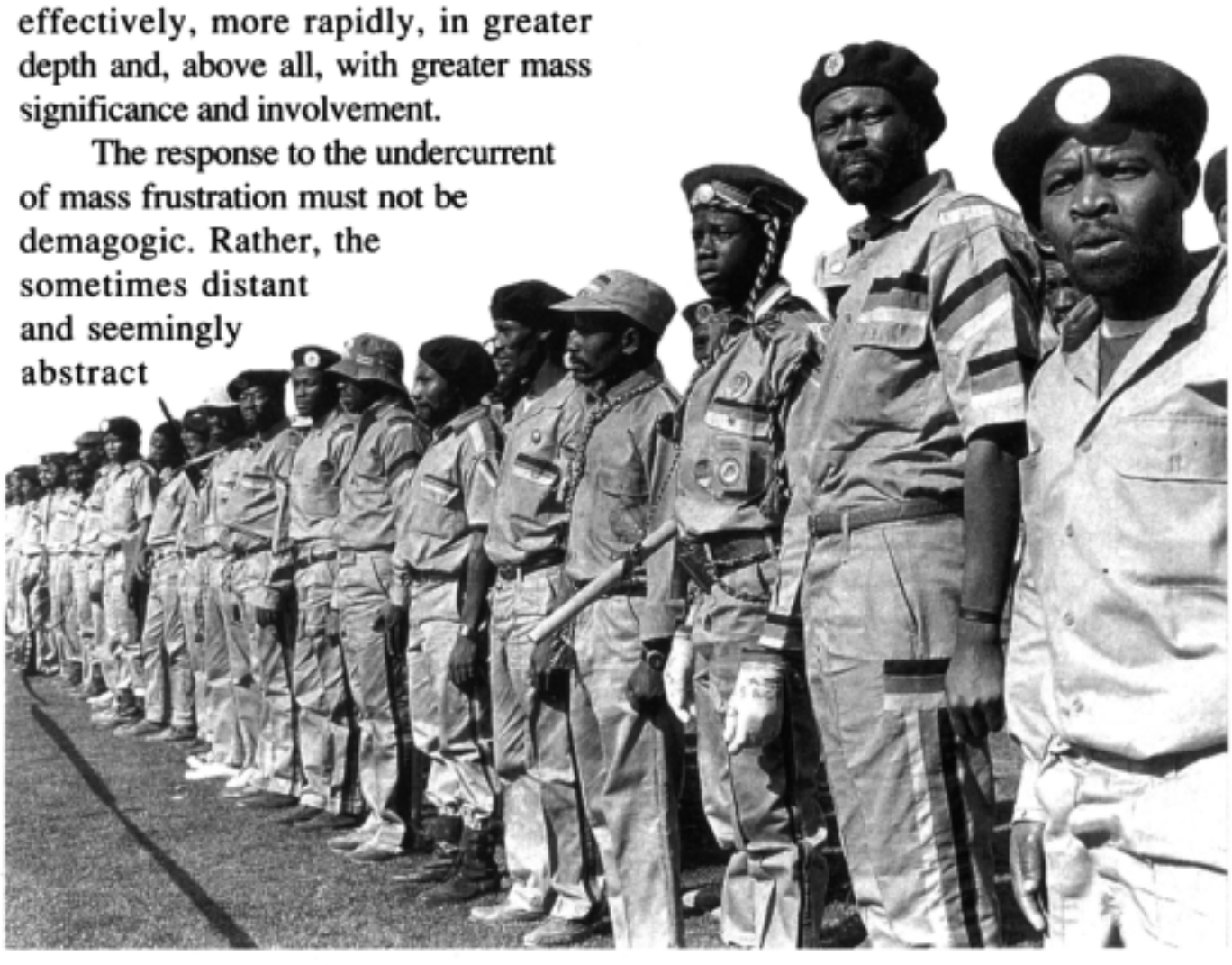


PHOTO: SAMSON SELEPE

cover story

PHOTO: NIGEL DENNIS (ANC DIP)

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?: The Left needs a party which can cater for a range of socialists — whether

Theory of a special

SINCE 1989, THE SACP HAS BEEN tested by a double challenge. On the one hand, the implosion of the Soviet bloc regimes shook the party's moorings, deprived it of allies and funding, and triggered a debate about Stalinism that had direct bearing on its own identity, capacities and practices.

At the same time, the party tried to find a footing on the slippery political terrain of the "new South Africa". It had to respond appropriately to constitutional blueprints *and* to vicious massacres, all the while subject to competing pressures for militancy and moderation. Above all, the new political context explored the relationship between working class interests and national liberation, asking — in effect — how the party defined for itself and its members a role as a socialist grouping.

The SACP has a major role to play in rebuilding the Left. **COLIN BUNDY** asks if the party can meet the challenge of change

How did the SACP fare with this formidable test? An interim verdict is that it has been more successful tackling the first aspect than the second. The party has responded to the death throes of actually-existing Stalinism with a resilience, flexibility and seriousness that deserves respect. By conducting an unprecedented self-criticism, it also opened itself to external examination. It has elected a talented leadership with a rich mix of experience in mass, labour, underground and exile politics. And, above all, it has founded several hundred branches and recruited over 40 000 members.

t-soldiers, workers or intellectuals

The future of the left: Realism or defeatism?

Many *WIP* readers will have read articles or joined in discussions asking: "Is there is a future for socialism?" Some have already decided the answer is no; others wish that positive answers were more convincing; and a few simply insist "yes, of course" as an article of faith.

To all of them, I recommend the same reading: a thoughtful and precise attempt to grapple with the question, written by American health scientist Richard Levins. In the article, *Eulogy Beside an Empty Grave: Reflections on the Future of Socialism*, Levins argues: "The starting point is the acknowledgment that all who struggle for a humane, cooperative and supportive society have suffered a defeat of immense proportions."

The defeat, he argues, lay in:

- **The failure to demonstrate a superior way of life — more democratic, rational, creative and fulfilling.**
- **The absence of an international movement with a strategy to overthrow capitalism.**
- **The replacement of bullshit Marxism by bullshit liberalism as the dominant discourse in the East.**
- **The squandering of the support of tens of millions of people for revolutionary change in China, East Europe and elsewhere.**

But even as we acknowledge the scale and sweep of the defeat, Levins points out, we should not lose sight of the victories won in the past. "The socialist movement and the labour movement ... established elementary rights for the working class and moved the masses of the world to become actors in political life." And the successes achieved by Russia, China and Cuba in economic development and redistribution were phenomenal by world standards.

Where, asks Levins, does this leave the Left? We are living at a difficult moment, "when revolutionary optimism looks like a cruel joke". We have no prospect of quick victory or even a clear model of what that victory will look like.

That leaves us in the role of the rearguard. The Left is left defending the aims of 150 years of struggle, acknowledging the reality of defeat and evaluating the reasons for it, regrouping and preparing for the second wave of revolutionary upsurge. It is an agenda of years and decades.

Why continue then? Firstly, because "capitalism's half millennium has shown itself incapable of creating a humane and just world"; secondly, because capitalism is an integrated system in which the correction of particular abuses will create new ones; thirdly, because the collapse of old approaches makes possible new forms of struggle for liberation — "the struggle for *what might be* against *what is*".

I find this perspective of *rearguard realism*, plus the rejection of defeatism, to be extremely valuable.

— Colin Bundy

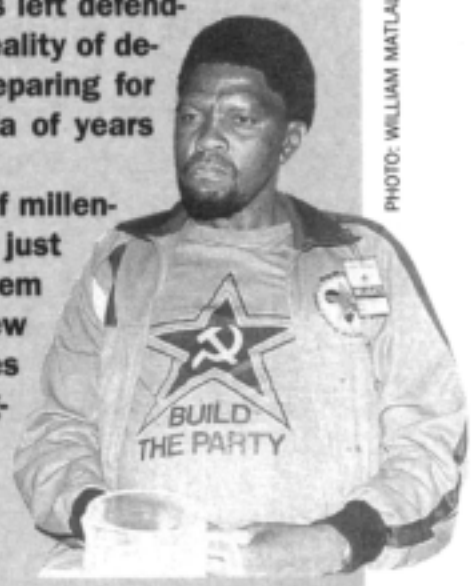


PHOTO: WILLIAM MATLALA

type

Yet a gap persists between the popular enthusiasm which the party has excited and its ability to translate this into a distinctive political role. As Devan Pillay noted in *WIP 80* after the SACP's Eighth Congress, the party's major problem remained that its "activists had no clear sense of what to do as party members, which they could not do as ANC, Cosatu or civic members". Karl von Holdt agreed: the Congress had "failed to define a clear strategy for the SACP or the Left in SA".

This dilemma pivots on the party's alliance with the ANC and its tactical consequences. The alliance has been central to the history of the party over the past 40 years; since the mid-1960s the relationship has approached the point of symbiosis. Throughout this period, a theoretical position was developed which explained and justified the focus of the party's energies on national liberation.

Strengthening the ANC

As early as 1954, the underground party leadership was defining its main role as the strengthening of forces led by the ANC — and accepting that class struggle would effectively be subordinated to the national question. This was elaborated in 1962 as Colonialism of a Special Type (CST).

There has been intense debate in the party since Joe Slovo circulated his *Has Socialism Failed?* pamphlet in early 1990. But it has focused largely on political malpractices (bureaucratic, authoritarian, anti-democratic) and their remedy (political pluralism and civil liberties). The central theoretical assumptions of CST and National Democratic Revolution have scarcely been opened to reassessment. (Intriguingly, in a

speech in July 1991, Slovo wondered aloud whether the concept of CST "can still hold in the old way" in the light of rapid changes. But neither he nor the party has seized the nettle.)

In fact, the only visible change is that national democracy is now construed in far less radical terms than before. Slovo no longer argues that "true democracy" requires "complete destruction of the white state and the economic base on which it rests", nor that national liberation implies "the expropriation of the owners of the means of production". The question may be put fairly: can negotiations deliver "true democracy" — or are they decolonisation of a special type?

Can negotiations deliver 'true democracy' or are they just decolonisation of a special type?

The party's theoretical immobility affects its practice. The alliance with the ANC and the overlapping leadership continue to blur the SACP's role. The party continues to frustrate many of its own members with its inability to forge an identity for itself as a working class party with a programme, practice and policy that asserts such an identity.

At the Eighth Congress, it declared its independent role within the alliance — and sought to make it concrete through two official campaigns. One was against hunger, homelessness and health care deficiencies; the other was for solidarity with Cuba. It must have been unintentional, but the choice of campaigns provided a sardonic commentary on a party torn between orthodox socialist symbolism and everyday populist platforms. It is not surprising that Cosatu shop stewards in a national survey declared — by eight to one — their preference for Cosatu over the party as champion of working class interests.

New consensus for the new SA?

The tactical hesitancy of the party should be set in the wider context of a loss of nerve and realignment of aims and tactics. Firstly, and crucially, the dynamics of anti-apartheid politics shifted decisively away from mass protest and visions of insurrection to negotiation and visions of an interim government.

By its very nature, negotiation involves concessions; the pursuit of agreement tends to move partners towards centrist, compromise positions. This was a major factor in the rightward drift of the ANC alliance's politics. It was underlined by the extent to which rank and file alliance members became "spectators, Codesa-watchers" (Peter Mokaba's phrase), demobilised and discontented.

A parallel shift occurred within the radical intelligentsia, especially elements close to the union movement and broadly Charterist in their political sympathies. This came about partly because of domestic factors and partly because of doubts and hesitancies imported from overseas.

The third major development took place in the labour movement itself: the shuffle towards a "social contract", the growth of bureaucratisation that accompanied more centralised structures and centralised bargaining, and the weakening of workers' control within the unions.

Baldly stated, there has emerged a kind of consensus about the political and economic prospects for "transformation" and "reconstruction". This consensus operates especially among those who have been located broadly within the ANC-led alliance *and* who identified themselves with a call for a socialist future. At the risk of over-simplifying, it holds that:

- SA does not offer revolutionary possibilities at present. Neither the internal balance of forces nor the international conjuncture provide prospects of replacing the capitalist order.
- Because the transfer of power will be a negotiated outcome and not a revolutionary one, there are objective limits to the redistribution of power and wealth. SA will remain a capitalist society — but one in which capital is subject to scrutiny and regulation both by the state and other social interests.
- Economic policy must aim simultaneously at dynamic development and lessening inequalities ("growth through redistribution"). Selective state intervention will "reshape the orientation of the economy", altering the direction of investment and of production.
- Given the international hegemony of neo-liberalism and the limits of a negotiated "state of national democracy", transition to socialism is not practical politics. Instead, socialists must engage in a "war of position" in the trenches of civil society, setting themselves incremental but realisable goals. The task of socialists is to "deepen the process of democratisation".

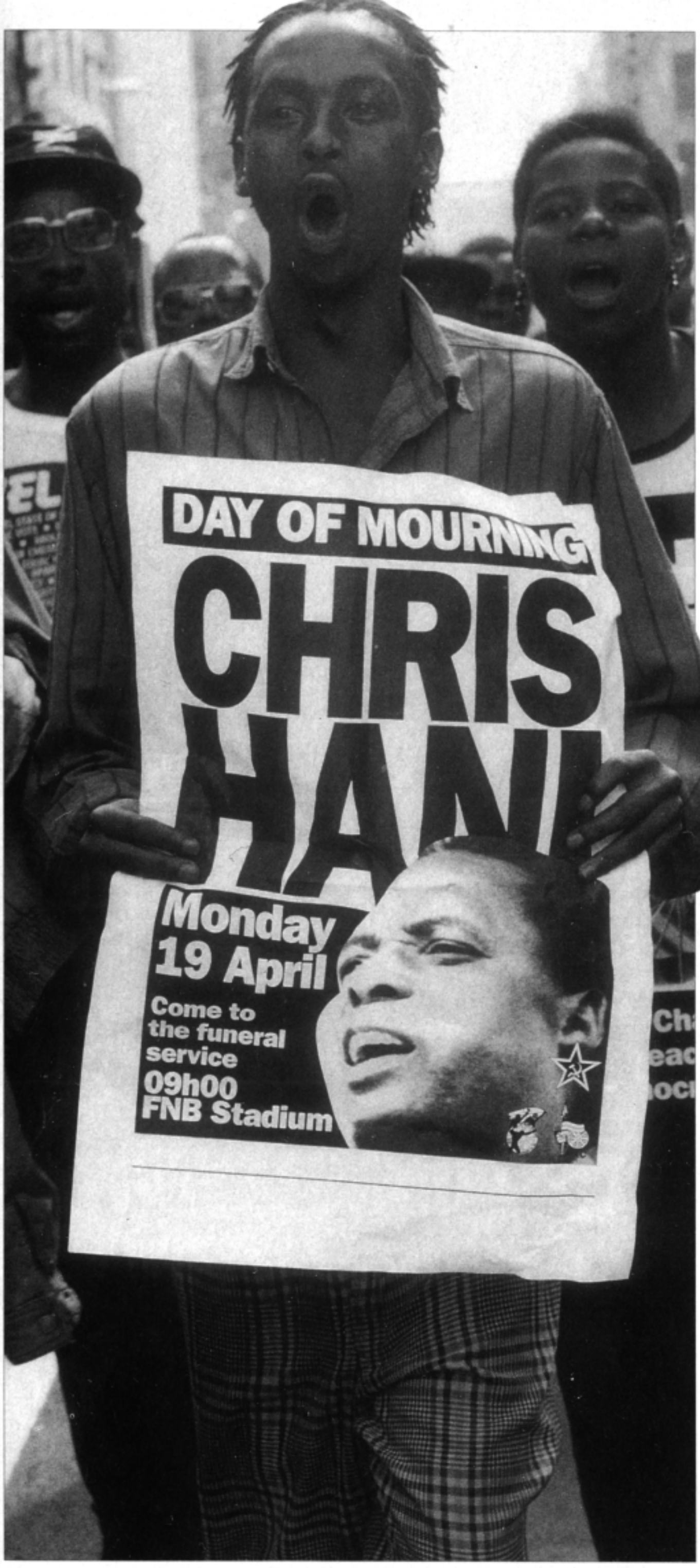
The political strategy that flows from that assessment has been described as a struggle for "structural reform". John Saul (a Canadian Marxist and for years one of the most acute observers of our region) has drawn on Andre Gorz and proposes that to qualify as "structural", a reform must meet two criteria. It must not be an end in itself, but should "implicate other 'necessary' reforms that flow from it"; and it must not be delivered from above, but be rooted in popular initiatives.

Eddie Webster and Von Holdt have endorsed this concept, but renamed it "radical reform". The balance of forces between capital and labour, they argue, leads not to revolution "but to compromise and radical reform". They look forward to a "labour-driven reconstruction of the SA economy", based on powerful worker organisation *and* on entry by the unions into corporatist (or tripartite — state, labour, business) structures.

Capitulation, not contestation

The problem is that this project tends all too easily to lapse into defeatism. Most items in the new consensus — whichever way they are dressed up rhetorically — are about accommodation and capitulation, not about contestation. If one takes the two defining criteria for structural reform and applies them to specific positions or proposals that are being pushed locally, many of them turn out to be much more cautiously self-contained or cavalierly top-down and technicist than Saul advocates.

Above all, as Saul reminds us, Gorz stressed that "the bourgeoisie will never relinquish power without a struggle and without being compelled to do so by revolutionary action on the part of the masses". Surely, this remains an essential ingredient of any coherent posi-



■ FROM ENTHUSIASM TO ACTION: There's still a gap between the enthusiasm of party activists and the role to be played by the SACP

tion for South African socialists: the recognition that a socialist transition means the replacement of rule by one class by that of another, and that this is not going to happen through negotiations or corporatist arrangements.

Class struggle is no abstract concept. It is a palpable reality for the majority of South Africans. So is racism and racially-defined deprivation. Class exploitation and national oppression are intertwined. But the theoretical challenge of the apartheid era will persist in the post-apartheid era: to determine when and how they overlap and complement each other, *and* when and how they are analytically distinct.

Our political practice stems from that theoretical distinction. South African socialists must guard against the tendency to postpone or shelve the battle for socialist ideas on the grounds that national liberation necessarily unlocks an automatic gateway to socialism. This poses a special challenge to SACP members. Party orthodoxy, at its most complacent, still tends to assume that the butterfly of socialism will emerge naturally from the cocoon of national democracy.

Any advance towards socialism will require that major sectors of the working class — because of their lived experience — are consciously hostile to capitalism and do not believe that their interests can be met within existing social relations. It requires also that there is an intelligentsia that supports working class aspirations. And it requires a political vehicle through which intellectuals can reach workers and through which workers can reach intellectuals.

Many will remain unconvinced. "Let's be *realistic*", they say. Socialism hasn't worked, and would-be socialists are doomed to defeat, tilting dejectedly at the windmills driven for the rest of history by capitalist energies.

Instead (many on the SA Left now seem to accept) a milder, "more humane" capitalist order can secure a decent future for the majority of South Africans. Deracialised bourgeois rule will meet the aspirations of exploited and oppressed people. SA can somehow be loosened from its economic history, and can enter a future resembling Sweden or Taiwan. Does *that* seem like realism? ■

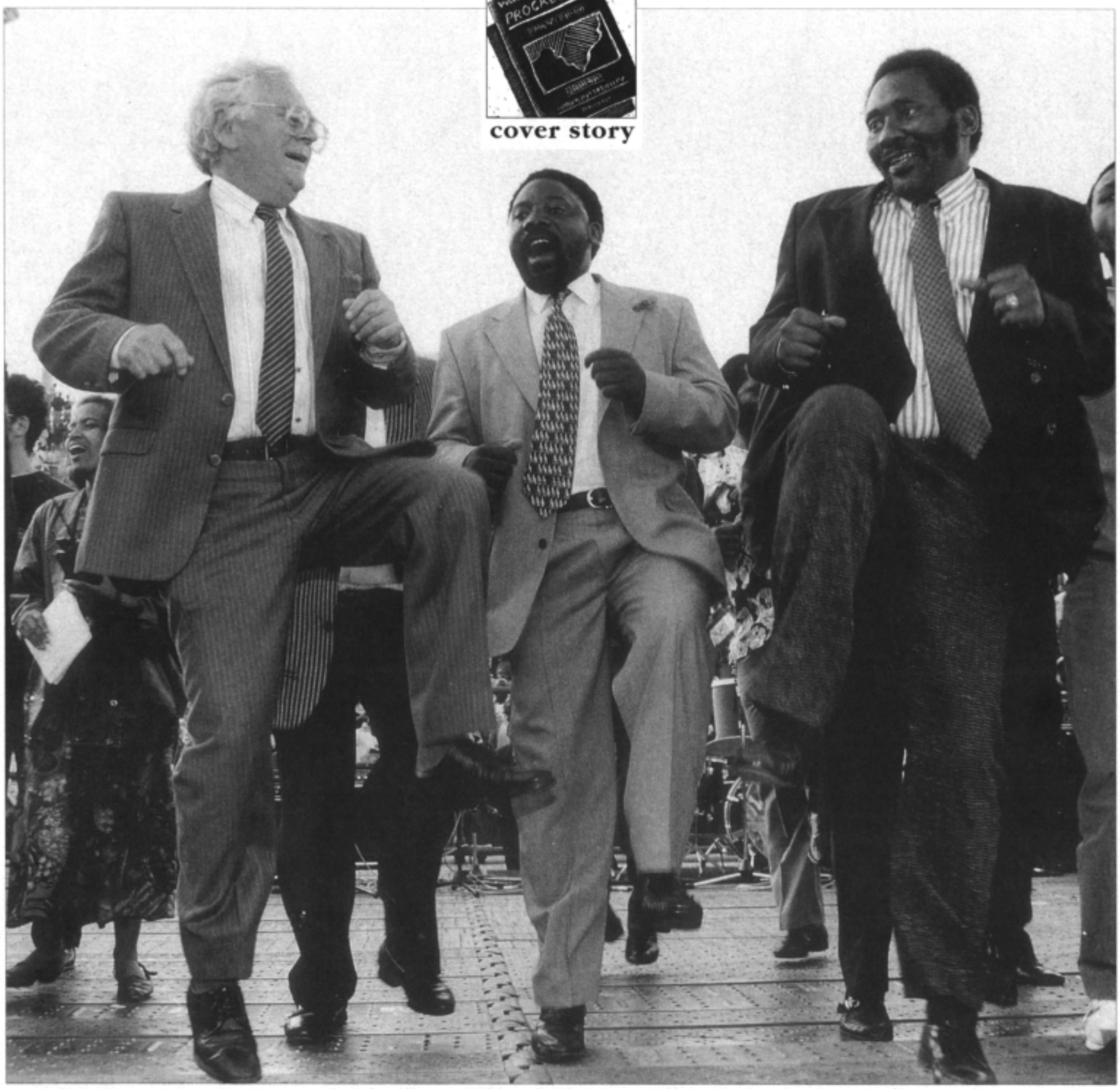


PHOTO: NIGEL DENNIS (ANC DIP)

One step forward...

SOUTH AFRICA'S DEMOCRATIC AND Left politicians have engaged in a real retreat. The collapse of the centrally-planned systems of the communist bloc, and the fact that 1990 began a process of negotiation rather than revolutionary seizure of power, meant that the old reform versus revolution framework offered no model on which to build.

The 1990 turning point found the Left without a coherent socialist strategy, and it has not yet recovered.

Where is the Left heading? **LAURENCE HARRIS** is worried that the answer lies somewhere between 'radical reform' and corporatism — and he has little faith in either option

Still, an earnest debate has developed. It starts from the premise that, instead of reform being ridiculed as a "dirty word", "structural reform" or "radical reform" represents a step on the road towards socialism. The main proponents of this position (John Saul, Eddie Webster, Karl von Holdt and others) attribute to it an in-built dynamic that proceeds toward a socialist society ... as long as it is not "self-contained" and is rooted in popular initiatives.

The argument has its attractions. The potential for such structural reform lies in the fact that the old forms of apartheid were shattered by precisely

those popular initiatives, of trade unionists and communities, that are a defining feature of the strategy. The growth of powerful black unions from shopfloor struggles in the 1970s to the 1985 launch of Cosatu is well documented. Despite the inevitable problems that weaken trade union democracy, Cosatu's socialist commitment remains founded on its shopfloor and community roots. At the same time, the rise of community power groups in urban struggles over housing, education and infrastructure achieved real gains and formed the basis of the United Democratic Front (UDF), whose campaigns helped destroy the legitimacy of the old regime.

Rolling reform

Since popular initiatives brought down the old system, can they not now be harnessed to create a new society that moves towards socialism on the basis of a rolling process of structural or radical reforms?

Embedded in the notion of structural reform are two presumptions:

- Reform strategies can be constructed to carry the movement towards further reforms.
- They build on popular initiatives in such a way that they "leave a residue of further empowerment" which automatically strengthens further struggles.

It sounds attractive. But there is no such thing as a set of changes that flow from earlier changes. Mass struggles can heighten consciousness and broaden the space in which to act, but the "residue of empowerment" is easily erased by the potent cleansing agents of reaction.

The South African reality belies the claim that the country shall move towards socialism along a path of radical reforms. On the important question of popular participation, grassroots initiatives and organisation *did* achieve the great political victories of the past decade and more. But the ability of popular bodies to achieve further gains is undermined by their weakness.

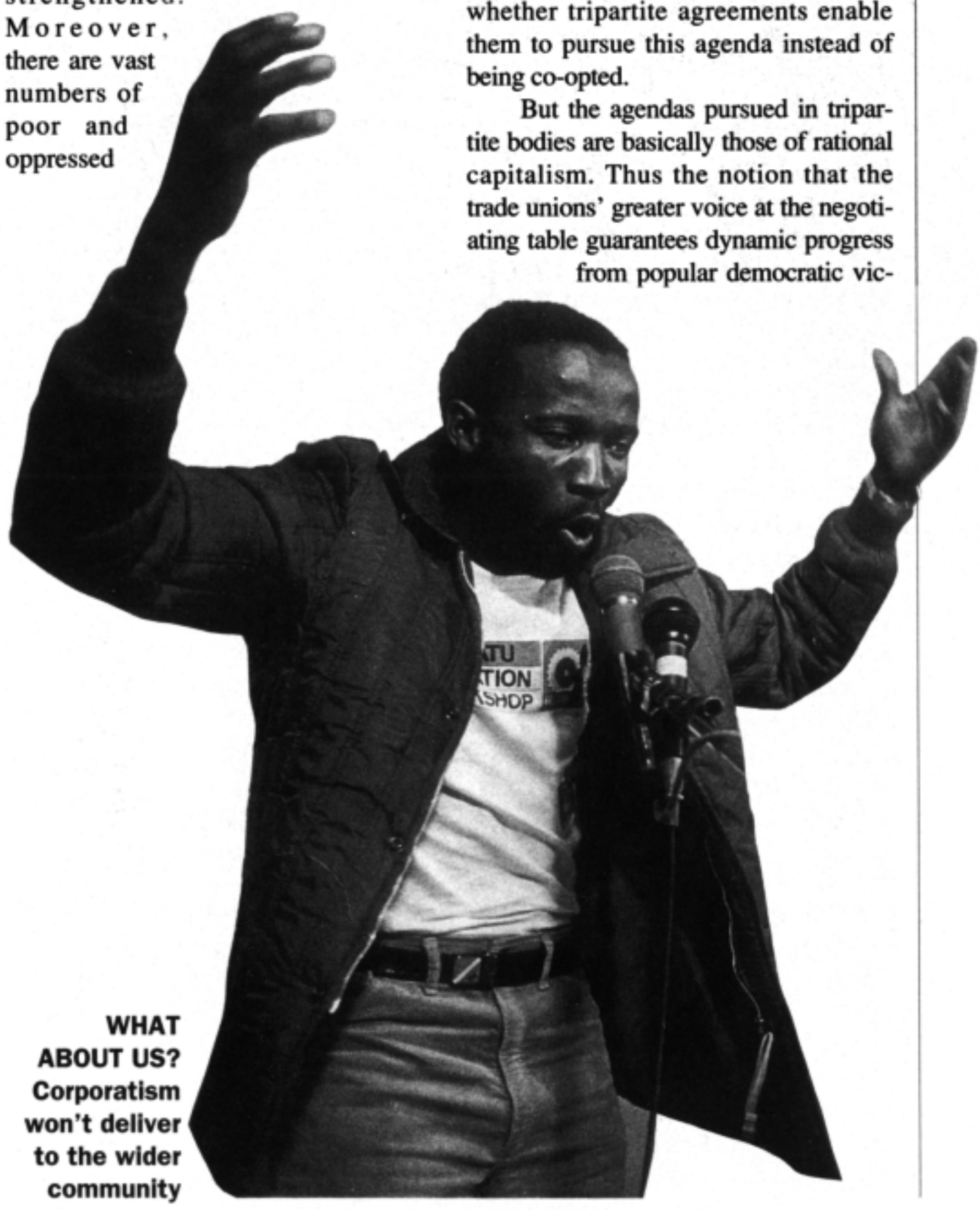
It is almost a decade since the civics effectively took over and administered the townships as popular bodies. Today they are fragmented, weak, and no longer enjoy the same popular support; they have been weakened by the process of national negotiations and, above all, by the terror unleashed in the townships. Trade unions retain their shopfloor structures and extensive shop-steward system. But, as one would anticipate in any country, acute economic crisis has forced them into defensive struggles. As unemployment worsens, their power-base weakens and employers' hands are strengthened. Moreover, there are vast numbers of poor and oppressed South Africans who are not represented by the civics and trade unions and who are outside any significant radical popular initiative. The largest — and arguably most hegemonic — organisation with roots deep in every community is the reactionary Zion Christian Church.

Has the Left given up hope of socialist reconstruction?

What about structural reform's other central premise, that reforms link into a chain of long-term socialist transformation? The reality of social and economic reform in SA consists of progress measured and shaped by increased tripartism — forums for discussion and decision-making between the state, business and trade unions or civic organisations.

Several Left intellectuals present this is as the core of a new socialist strategy. But socialists with experience of corporatism in other countries do not always share that enthusiasm. One problem is determining the agenda the popular forces are to follow, another is whether tripartite agreements enable them to pursue this agenda instead of being co-opted.

But the agendas pursued in tripartite bodies are basically those of rational capitalism. Thus the notion that the trade unions' greater voice at the negotiating table guarantees dynamic progress from popular democratic vic-



WHAT ABOUT US? Corporatism won't deliver to the wider community

tories to more socialist gains has no basis in reality.

As important is the political question of whether the business-union arrangements themselves leave room for the Left to avoid co-option. Webster and Von Holdt pin their hopes on constructing a new kind of unionism — "strategic reform". But their definition of this innovation is similar to the corporatist forms of unionism that helped bring the labour movements in Britain, France and Germany to heel as allies of capital.

"Strategic reform", as another writer has noted, "calls for conscious intervention at the macro-economic level, and the setting of goals such as low unemployment, low inflation, and social development."

Following similar lines, SACP and Cosatu economist Alec Erwin goes further in order to address the problem that the unions represent only one section of the people. He proposes that corporatist strategy must be backed by a broad coalition, traversing the whole of civil society and united behind a Reconstruction Accord.

One can argue that corporatist solutions have much to recommend them because they can bring strong gains to the working class and wider sections of the population, as well as to capital. Perhaps, but that does not warrant the claim that structural reform is a strategy of moving towards socialism — unless we accept that corporatist Britain, France and Germany were socialist societies.

The Left direction

If it is a mistake to believe that the current tripartite negotiating forums and strategies represent advances in a socialist direction, can they at least succeed on their own terms and deliver the benefits associated with corporatism? Several conditions are required, but none seem to be present in SA.

First, the coalitions involved must be capable of holding together. In simple models of corporatism, the coalitions cohere because all classes and groups gain. But the idea that the whole of SA will gain from the construction of a new SA is seriously at odds with reality.

Coalitions built on that assumption will fall apart. Thorough reconstruction involves great social transformation that produces losers as well as winners. As the coalition for change degenerates into conflicting interests, corporatism becomes unable to deliver the gains to the working class and wider community.

Thorough reconstruction involves great social transformation that produces losers as well as winners

Even when corporatism has been accompanied by sustained high growth, capital accumulation and improvements in working class conditions (such as post-war Europe), this could not be attributed to the "settlement" or "compact" itself. In the European experience, international conditions were crucial. Growth was accompanied by a huge transfer of resources in the form of Marshall Aid, international regulation and stabilisation of financial markets and a regulated steady expansion of world trade markets, driven by strong growth in the United States' hegemonic economy.

A corporatist treaty in SA will emerge into a very different world: the international financial system is volatile and fragile, the growth of world trade has slowed, conflict between trading blocs is unlikely to benefit SA, and there will be no influx of resources comparable to Marshall Aid.

Since those conditions are likely to prevent high-flown compacts between capital and labour from delivering the fruits associated with social democracy, the third condition for the success of corporatism — tangible results — will not occur. As a result, we will either see conflict over the control of production and distribution of resources intensify and undermine new arrangements, or corporatist arrangements will persist as a shell under which old and new business elites operate without opposition.

Along with that, reconstruction in all but the most powerful countries is monitored and steered by powerful international forces, like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Their support for capital ensures that when corporatist arrangements weaken in the face of economic crisis, the perceived interests of capital will prevail.

Webster and Von Holdt envisage that "radical reform" will enable unions to intervene at the macro-economic level and set goals "such as low unemployment, low inflation and social development". But who can doubt that, when choices have to be made, the multilateral institutions will put their power behind low inflation at the cost of social development or employment?

Short-cuts to socialism

The conclusion is rather distressing. The South African Left has given up any hope of socialist reconstruction in the foreseeable future and is settling for a corporatism which itself is in danger of failing.

Why this has occurred deserves analysis in its own right. The answers must include the following:

- Historically, South African socialists had to subordinate their aims to those of national liberation.
- The Marxist culture of the movement was, for so many years, marked by a *faith* in socialism rather than debate, education and contestation.
- The terror unleashed in the townships has undermined the Left's ability to organise.
- Big business has launched an exemplary campaign of persuasion and education to hoist its conceptions of reality and change to pre-eminence.

The short-term prospect is one of sharing power to administer the existing structure, into which some reforms can be introduced. It is a scenario that bears uncomfortably close resemblance to Joe Slovo's 1976 words, when he spoke of a national struggle that "is stopped in its tracks and is satisfied with the co-option of a small black elite into the presently forbidden areas of economic and political power". ■

● Laurence Harris teaches at the University of London and participates in the Macro-Economic Research Group (Merg). This is an edited version of a talk presented to the *Rethinking Marxism* conference in Massachussetts last November.

dossier

Facts and figures

■ Number of printed shooting targets ordered by SA government the week after resumption of multilateral talks: 56 800

■ Number of firearm licenses issued in last three years: 588 437

■ Complaints laid against members of SAP in 1992: 6 865

■ Number of people who died in police custody in 1992: 114

■ Rank of "suicide" as cause of deaths in custody, according to SAP: 1

■ Rank of "other causes", according to SAP: 2

■ Percentage of black adults with "negative feelings towards SAP": 64.
Percentage who view SAP as "enemies of the people": 9

■ Value of posters depicting "terrorist weapons" destroyed by government because "demand no longer exists": R1,4-million

■ Amount paid by SADF to owner of farm on which "bombs fell and caused damage": R1-million

■ Value of phone bill left unpaid by Winnie Mandela: R19 000.

■ Duration (in days) of non-stop 087 phonecalls R19 000 could buy: 4

■ Duration (in days) of "introductory overview" to a policy speech by KwaZulu Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi during March 1993: 6

■ Duration of entire speech: Two and a half weeks

■ Number of illiterate South Africans: 8,3 million

■ Estimated number of magazines published in SA: 550

■ Instances major US media mentioned Angola in Jan/Feb 1993: 142

■ Instances major US media mentioned Yugoslavia in same period: 1 929

■ Cost to Richards Bay Minerals (RBM) of Environmental Impact Report on mining of St Lucia dunes: R4-million

■ Anticipated annual income from the mining operation: R460-million

■ Jobs lost in agriculture industry in 1992, due to drought and in anticipation of extension of labour rights to farm workers: 100 000

■ Percentage of Agricultural Development Department's budget used to subsidise "white" farms: 40%
Percentage of these subsidies earmarked for farm workers' housing: 2%

■ Cost per room to build a five-star hotel in SA: R750 000

■ Number of five-star hotel rooms in SA: 2 137

■ Percentage of Africans in Western Cape living in formal housing: 29

■ Amount paid by government to each of 29 political office bearers in 1992 to live in their own homes: R100 000

■ Members of parliament eligible to buy new cars this year: 119

■ Estimated cost of golden handshakes and pensions for tricameral parliament politicians: R850-million

■ Percentage increase in economic crime over past six years: 80

■ Number of South Africans who earn more than R450 000 annually: 998

■ Number of people arrested in Witwatersrand Jan/Feb 1993 on suspicion of being "aliens": 4 747

Sources: Telkom, IDT, Dept of Law and Order, Africa News, Procurement Administration, Business & Marketing Intelligence poll, Auditor-General report, Business Day, Dept of Agriculture, SATOUR, CPA, Dept of Finance, Sunday Times, Witwatersrand Attorney-general

– Compiled by Hein Marais

debate

Let's have some action!

Action for change — revisiting civil society

Whoever proposed that the term 'civil society' be banned might have had a point. But before the concept becomes irreparably abused and emptied of meaning, we need to rescue it, argues
GRAEME BLOCH

COMBATTING POVERTY, INEQUALITY, and social and cultural disintegration requires a dynamic and vibrant sphere of civil activity where the energies and potential of communities are encouraged and released.

The debate on civil society grew out of a real need to assert the continuing independence and combativeness of popular social organs such as trade unions, civics and women's organisations. These had proven themselves historically in political and social struggles. Coordinating fora such as the UDF provided glimpses of the creative possibilities of unified but diverse constituency-based initiatives.

■ **LEFT OUT OF THE DEBATE: Discussion of civil society often**

PHOTO: CHRIS LEDOCHOWSKI, SOUTHLIGHT

There were also the negative lessons provided by countries such as Zimbabwe and the Soviet Union. There, organs like trade unions were forced into submission by centralised and increasingly corrupt state apparatuses that were unchecked by democratic party politics or social forces.

There was a crucial need to open up a debate that could build on the powerful lessons thrown up by recent experiences. Instinctively, the need to defend the social space termed civil society was understood. But at the level of theory it proved more difficult to get to grips with the needs of a new and changing era.

Links with the state

A crude summary might identify two opposite tendencies that have emerged in the debate. Both of them make the same critical mistake: they limit their discussion to civil society's relationship with the state.

● Blade Nzimande has argued in various articles for popular organs to strengthen the armoury of the masses in struggles against capital and reactionary power. He sees civil society as an adjunct to state power, and links its fighting capacity to a semi-insurrectionist approach aimed at achieving and enhancing centralised (state) power. Nzimande's style of argument tends to summon classical texts and draw readers into a tight Leninist frame of rhetoric and reference. He is weak, however, on issues of diversity and autonomy, and provides little clue as to the role of culture in ensuring social cohesion. His is a society of intense and searing contradictions, and his solutions are combative, politicised and centralised.

● Another view argues for the autonomy of civil society organs. The state remains the central reference point, though in a different way. The state itself is the "enemy", and civil society is expected to combat its excesses. Civil society's role is limited to that of a watchdog or, paradoxically, it is expected to aggressively try and access state resources on behalf of sectional interests.

Frequently civil society is identified with specific organisations, quite often only those with a given blend of rhetoric and history. "Lacking" authorisation, mandates or political credentials, competing groups and interests are shouldered aside. All sorts of self-appointed watchdogs vie for power in the sphere and name of civil society.

One suspects that this view has less to do with checking power in the interests of democracy, than it has with ensuring that resources are spread in certain directions. It is really about the

practical politics of ensuring (self-legitimated) access to elite power and management.

This perhaps explains why this view seldom develops an expansive view of civil society that includes the whole realm of "unaccredited" interests of the masses. It might also be why the view does not focus on organisations' internal conditions that can enhance democratic participation. As long as certain structures' relationships to the state and elected government representatives are antagonistic, their contributions to democratic initiative and grassroots development is taken for granted.

PHOTO: ROGER MEINTJES, SOUTHLIGHT

The fact that autonomy from state power is sought in order to empower and enhance independent mass-based community initiative is forgotten. Also overlooked are the ways in which state power itself enables and frames development processes.

Many funding and development agencies seem to apply a version of this approach. Again, particular organisations (perhaps "representing" sectors) are identified with the field of civil society. The conditions and practices within organisations — whether they are democratically organised, who they reach, and the particular effects of funding processes — are often ignored. The insistence on "technical", "professional" and "non-political" processes on the other hand often leads to a refusal to fund and support the organising efforts within community-based structures. Contestation and challenges to power relations are avoided. The result is the "depoliticisation" of development strategies in a technocratic and naive way.

Numerous questions arise. Civil society is not taken to *involve a relation* with the state. And yet, if one looks at development issues, the state is at least a partner and central stakeholder in social advancement programmes. It may even set the terrain and have a critical influence shaping a positive environment for other actors in the field.

The great virtue of Nzimande's position is that it does not allow issues of power and difference to slip from the agenda. Vigorous programmes of social development (both private and public) do not operate in a historical vacuum. The coordination of popular struggles and programmes will clearly involve struggle within the state and civil society, plus interaction, communications and negotiation between those spheres.

A broader canvas

At the same time, we need a far more expansive vision of civil society. There are areas of widespread and popular activity that only intersect marginally with the state. Literally millions of people participate in activities of religious organisations. Culture, music and sports unify and cement social relations. They are not somehow insulated against the power of the state. But they are very distinct, constructed worlds lived by people and social groups, ones that often have a great deal of permanence and resilience.

Recognising the rich variety of social activity means being serious about the many seams that stitch human existence together. It is here that the weaves and patterns of society develop in a myriad ways that are not always accessible to the activist, reformer, funder or missionary. A conception of civil society that incorporates an acknowledgment of these spaces will have important consequences for development strategy. For it is often there that one encounters the release of popular initiative and the powerful capacities of the oppressed for autonomous organisation.

Perhaps the person who suggested that the term civil society be banned had a point. In some ways it has become a hindrance to refining strategies for development. It too neatly divides up the spheres of human activity, and too easily provides cover for a range of vested interests.

Any strategy for development no doubt starts off with structural and historical limits. Race, class and gender biases cleave our society. But it does not mean that these are the only realities or contradictions that bring people together to tackle their difficulties.

Just as the UDF allowed groups to organise themselves and struggle around areas of their own immediate concern, so social movements can bring together people around specific issues, negotiate identities, form organisations, stake claims, put forward views, implement programmes and so on. In a variety of fields, more or less temporary links can be established around issues that affect people in different ways at different times.

Challenging power involves struggle, tension and debate along lines and around issues that reflect the richness of human existence and desire. Some of them relate to and depend on state power. Some are private or domestic. Initiatives may be national and inclusive (for example, a national campaign to overcome illiteracy) or small-scale, partial or temporary.

But this requires a view of civil society that enables action for change and development, that unfreezes the current terms and boundaries of debate, and allows for an expanded vision of human activity and creativity. Is it not time we developed such a view? ■

Can Cosatu ride the IMF tiger?

With the ANC and Cosatu embracing the World Bank and IMF, JOSEPH HANLON asks if South Africans are being foolhardy in assuming they are a special case

'WE WILL BE POWERFUL enough to be able to tell the IMF what role we want them to play,' Cosatu general secretary Jay Naidoo told a recent meeting at the University of Durban-Westville.

In doing so, Naidoo joined a string of South Africans who argue that this country will be the first in the world to be able to successfully ride the IMF/World Bank tiger. They point out that the Bank and Fund are acting differently here, being more open and talking with the liberation movements, trade unions and non-government organisations as well as government.

Bank teams seem to accept the need to redress the heritage of apartheid, for redistribution and job creation, and for rapid improvements in health, education and housing. And there seems an amazing acceptance of popular participation in decision making.

But Naidoo is also joining trade union leaders and politicians in many other countries who thought that they, too, would be the first to beat the IMF.

They all lost — and the Bank and Fund have continued to impose structural adjustment policies (SAPS) on all other countries because those institutions have become much more sophisticated in recent years. Three techniques are key.

- First, the Bank is involved in so many aspects of the economy and such a range of projects that few participants have an overall picture. Decisions seem to be taken in many different places.
- Second, the Bank and Fund now follow the alternating soft and hard approach much used by interrogators: the subject is first softened up by the sympathetic partner, and only later hit by the hard man.
- Third, the Bank and Fund mix openness with obsessive secrecy.

Soft hearts first

Thus the Bank has learned to send the most sympathetic people to make the initial contacts and do the first sectoral studies. They often understand the needs of the poor, they consult broadly, and they often see participation as important. And they are technicians who have a strong commitment to improvements in their sectors — health, water, housing or whatever.

But in the end, these sympathetic people have no power.

And it is the hard men in Washington — who negotatiate in secret only with top government officials and ministers on the framework agreement — who override all other agreements. They also negotiate on the so-called macroeconomic issues like devaluation, free trade, and limits on government spending, debt, and subsidy. There is no public discussion and no popular participation in these talks. Nor is there any representation from those involved in sectors such as health, either from the country or the Bank.

Only after those overriding agreements have been made do the colleagues of the soft men return. Although still friendly, they stress they are not bound by verbal commitments and even formal reports made by previous teams. They understand the need to spend more on health and education, but stress that spending must fit under the already agreed cap. Sectors are forced to compete. Health care can be improved only if money is stolen from education or food subsidies.

Participation will still be encouraged, but only at a very limited level. For example, people will not be asked if they want to pay school fees, but there may be discussion about the balance between secondary and primary school fees.

Sabotage!

Whole projects can be sabotaged by the financial cap. Thus, in Zimbabwe the Bank and Fund did not oppose land reform. But a cap on the number of civil servants meant that essential surveyors, agricultural extension officers and other staff could not be employed, which effectively limited land reform.

In Mozambique, the Bank did not oppose universal primary education, but the spending limit meant that not enough teachers could be hired to allow all children to go to school.

New conditions appear, especially involving the use of the private sector. New stress is put on two-tier systems of social services where the private sector

provides for those who can pay, and the public sector offers only a much diminished "safety net" for the others.

As part of encouraging competitiveness, transnational companies are given preferred access to the country, weakening, rather than strengthening domestic capital. (It is notable that when Zimbabwe finally accepted a structural adjustment agreement, there was a sharp fall in share prices on the Zimbabwe stock exchange. Local labour and capital are both hit by the Bank's emphasis on open economies.)

Poor won't eat less

"Efficiency" arguments are used to direct funds to those who are better off and who can make "better" use of the money. Low income housing is transformed into middle income housing, because the poor are said to be "unwilling" to eat less so they can spend more on housing.

These changes take place bit by bit and in different areas, so that the overall impact is never obvious. Each step seems sensible and necessary in itself. But these changes will turn any reconstruction accord into a meaningless document without ever directly contradicting it.

And yet, the Bank and Fund cannot be ignored. Some agreement with them will be essential, not on economic grounds, but because political acceptance from the United States and its allies will not be forthcoming without it.

The Bank and Fund now follow the soft and hard approach used by interrogators: The subject is softened up by the sympathetic partner, then hit by the hard man

Three things are required to reduce the damage that the Bank and Fund will do, and to maintain the momentum of reconstruction.

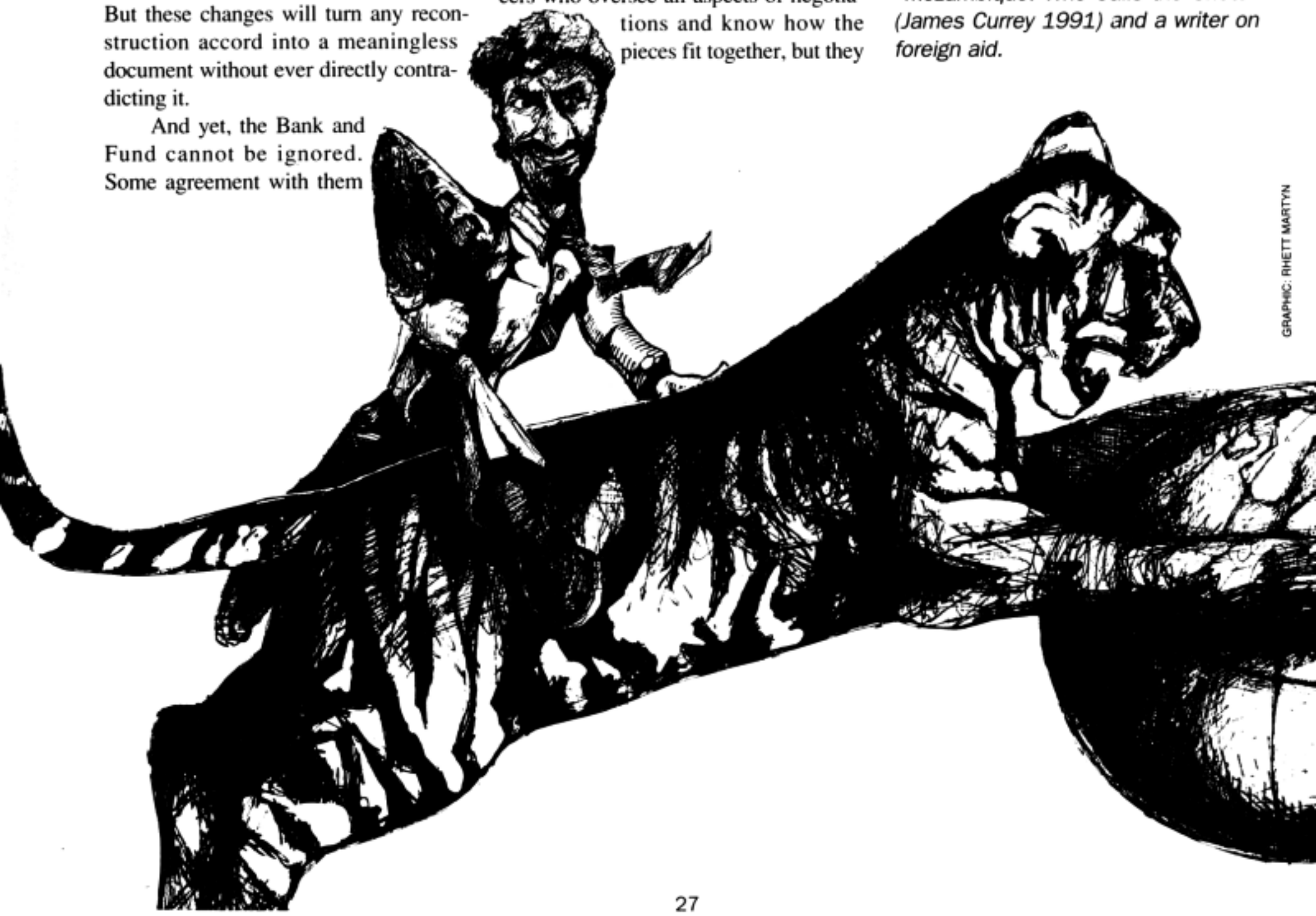
● First is to avoid fragmentation. The Bank and Fund have country desk officers who oversee all aspects of negotiations and know how the pieces fit together, but they encourage separate ministerial talks on the ground. South Africa needs Bank and Fund desk officers, probably in the president's office, who can similarly keep tabs on the disparate negotiations.

● Second, money should be borrowed from the Bank only if absolutely essential. Housing can be funded from local borrowing, for example. Where foreign loans are needed, such as to import capital goods, the hidden costs of World Bank loans often make it cheaper and less politically constrained to borrow commercially, for example with Eurobonds, than to borrow from the Bank.

● Third and most important is humility. South Africa may be different — but it is not unique. South Africans should try to learn from the dozens of other countries with years of experience negotiating with the Bank and Fund.

South Africa could be the first country to "tell the IMF what role we want them to play", but only if it learns from those who have already tried and failed. ■

● *Joseph Hanlon is the author of "Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots" (James Currey 1991) and a writer on foreign aid.*



GRAPHIC: RHETT MARTYN

Africa's liberal deceit

Robbing the poor to keep the rich happy

Who's to blame for corruption in Africa? **CLAUDE GABRIEL** argues that the world's financial institutions are just as responsible as the individuals who decide to line their own pockets

PHOTO: OFEIBEA QUIST-ARCTON (FOCUS ON AFRICA)

■ **HOW MUCH IS LEFT IN MY SAVINGS ACCOUNT? Zairean president Mobuto Sese Seko, beneficiary of Western interventions**

REMEMBER THE 70s? THEY WERE Africa's boom years, a time when most of the continent experienced a surge in exports and easy access to the world's financial markets.

African countries had the backing of the industrial powers, which supported investment based on debt — guaranteeing additional markets for producer goods like cocoa, coffee and wood.

This was the epoch of the dream of industrialisation, the building of enormous factories, massive development schemes and grand talk about the new economic order and technology transfers.

The dreams persisted into the next decade, even as the sun of neoliberalism was rising in the West.

Then, world market prices of African raw materials slid and demand stagnated. Technological reorganisation in the imperialist countries and changes in world trade flows sharply changed the continent's position in the international division of labour. Very few African countries escaped the effects.

What followed might be termed the Great Demolition Job. Thanks to structural adjustment plans (SAPs), external foreign investment in 1990 made up only 6.8% of international trade flows, compared to 24.6% in 1982. Africa's share of direct investment fell from 10.3% to 4.7%.

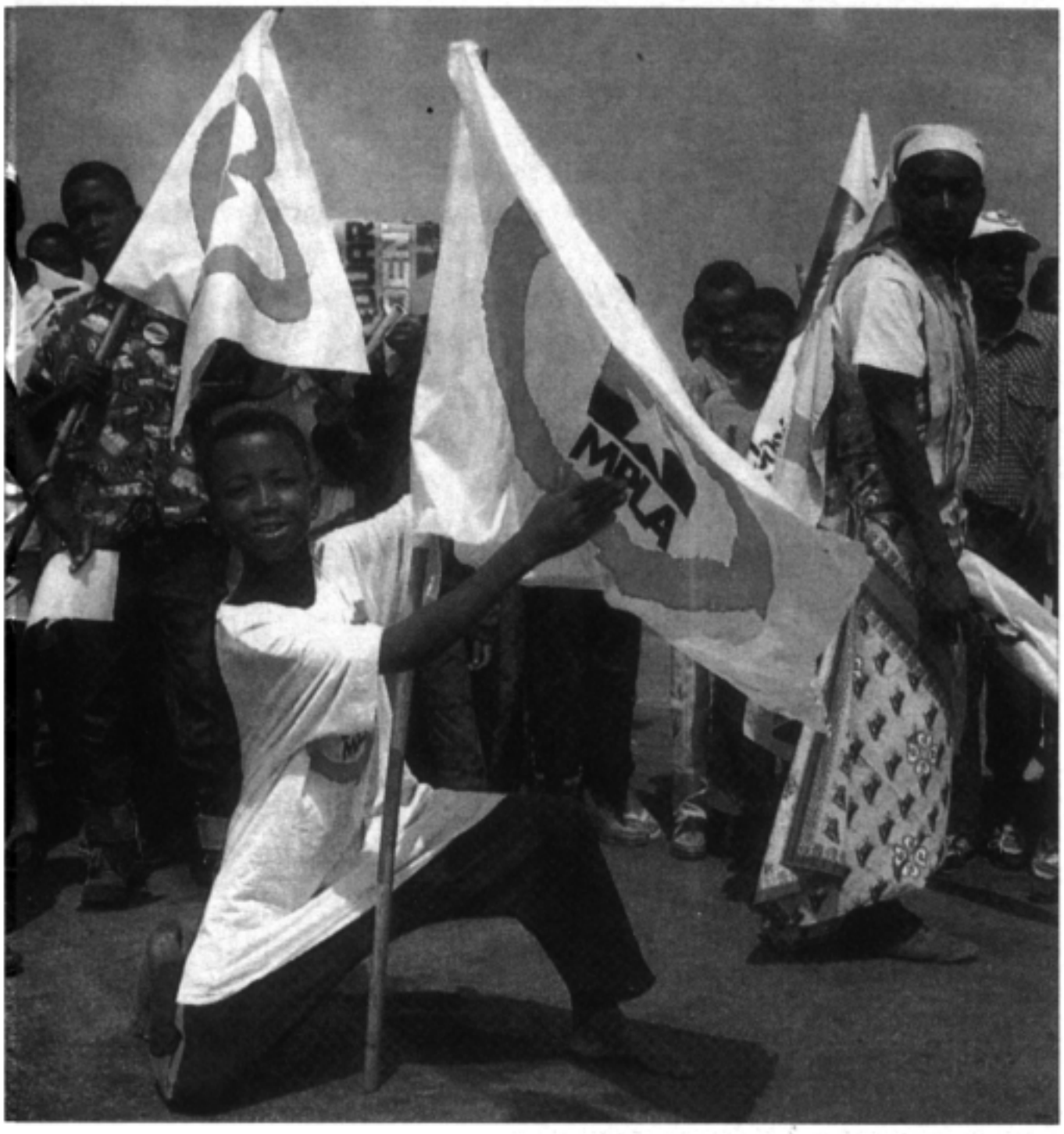
On top of this, Africa's share of world production dropped through the floor: with 500-million inhabitants the continent's total gross domestic product is today lower than that of Belgium. Social and political turmoil joined the economic crisis.

Surprised?

It is odd to see international institutions suddenly "discovering" the corruption that rots post-colonial Africa, because the political systems set up at independence always worked with the blessing of foreign donors. These systems shared two complementary features:

- The general redistribution of foreign aid through the public sector, the army, and through ethnic and family networks. It made use of resources that the regime controlled through its day-to-day management of foreign aid and export income. It also meant permanent jobs in the administration and privileged aid to the villages of this or that minister.
- The looting of public wealth by the ruling cliques. The 1980s saw a decline in the patronage "industry", but the continuation of the ransacking of state coffers. Widespread patronage was the main means of maintaining social cohesion and lending legitimacy to the regime. There was a cascade of redistribution, and various social layers benefitted — even if in unequal and oppressive ways. This pattern of private

PHOTO: ANITA COULSON (FOCUS ON AFRICA)



■ **RAISE THE FLAG: Too often, colonial governments have handed over to equally exploitative regimes**

management of public property went into crisis in the 1980s as stagnation and structural adjustment plans slashed state income.

The social shock was immediate and intense, in rural villages as much as the towns. Social differences sharpened while all classes and layers were hit: peasants' income fell, white- and blue-collar workers lost their jobs due to privatisation, state employees were booted into the informal sector as part of trimming the public sector, students left university with no hope of finding jobs, and parts of the urban petty bourgeoisie lost contact with the patronage networks. It would have taken huge increases in foreign aid to maintain the old model of social and economic regulation.

Whatever the constitutional systems and whatever democratic openings were granted, the ruling groups faced generalised social discontent.

Plenty of strings attached

Alarmed by the rapid deterioration, international institutions have tried to get a grip on the situation by using aid with strings. At the outset there was no intention to link the structural adjustment plans to democratisation — this is a recent and opportunist development. However, during the 1980s African governments began to be pressured into fundamentally changing their modes of socio- economic management.

We now have wide experience of the doctrinaire character of those commands, which confuse the private and predatory management of the state with the size of the public sector. The need for such a sector, especially in a post-colonial context, is ignored.

The cliché "the over-bearing state" implies that corruption will be reduced by limiting the state's economic role. Privatisation is said to impose different management criteria, setting off a virtuous spiral.

The argument does not hold for Africa. First, the low savings level and extreme weakness of local capital makes privatisation very risky. In many cases it is the regime barons who take over; what was nominally public becomes a private monopoly. Meanwhile, nothing fundamental changes. The rush for short-term profit, speculation and low levels of reinvestment are the main features of the African private sector.

To find the real problem one needs to look beyond the "over-bearing state". There one is confronted with the social nature of the regimes. The aim of the battle for democracy must be to begin to tackle the problems of underdevelopment and poverty. And it is from this point of view that we should look at the reality and limits of the present "democratisation process" and opposition forces in these countries.

Most of these countries have experienced major popular mobilisations in the course of their political crises. The urban population has mobilised and tended to support opposition parties and trade unions.

Yet with very few exceptions the political opposition and "democratic" forces have not based their programmes on the demands of their supporters.

A dispute among elites

There is much talk about the rule of law and civil society, but this is not matched by concern for the social needs of the majority.

Moreover, some of these forces' strategists prefer to pursue "pressure group" politics rather than lay the foundations of an ideologically defined party. In many cases opposition politics has degenerated into a dispute among elites, with many figures from the old regimes popping up in "oppositional" guises.

Opposition groups seem unaware of the structural constraints of economic dependence. There is an element of masochism in their efforts to demonstrate competence in fulfilling the axioms of the IMF and World Bank. They habitually identify the totalitarianism of the outgoing regimes with the size of the state sector — their democratic programmes are thus marked by acceptance of the structural adjustment plans. An example is the economic programme of the Kenyan opposition, drawn up with the help of the German Friedrich Naumann Stiftung; it includes privatisation and public sector jobs cuts.

Zambia is another eye-opener. The country was presented as an example of peaceful transition and the renewal of the political elite. But a year after coming to power, President Frederick Chiluba and his Movement for Multiparty Democracy has run into problems. The ruling party is split, popular discontent has revived and the government is being denounced as the tool of powerful businesspeople. The public has noticed the

number of figures from the former regime who have "drifted" into the new one. Two months ago, a state of emergency was declared.

Chiluba's government took as its first task the privatisation of 300 enterprises. Despite this, racketeering and corruption continue openly and the public is experiencing no relief. Recent by-elections saw a 70% abstention rate.

Developments are similar elsewhere. In the Congo, the election of Pascal Lissouba has done nothing to change old habits of unprincipled dolling out of favours. In most cases the Western embassies have been promoting their proteges, influencing debates and providing constitutional expertise.

Even the most radical opposition groups seem to lack an overall grasp of the global relations of domination that underpin the present crisis. Notions of managing dependence have replaced references to an anti-imperialist project. It is a curious contradiction at a time when the working population is engaging in independent actions.

What about the workers?

Part of the reason is the international crisis of socialism, but there is also a lack of strong traditions of an independent workers movement like those of Latin America. So, while the economic crisis sharpens discontent, it has not as yet led to a better understanding of the incompatibility of different social interests. The West has been trying to plug the cracks. In Zaire, they tried to bring to life a coalition between Mobuto Sese Seko's clique and its main opponents. In Togo, they have promoted cohabitation by propping up the dictator Eyadema while seeking allies in the elected "opposition" government.

Battles for democracy and development have to be undertaken together

The Western powers are moving pragmatically, giving whole-hearted support neither to their erstwhile client dictators nor to the opposition. They prefer a compromise between the two. The results are clear: in Zaire, Togo, Madagascar, Kenya and the Cameroon, the dictators have manoeuvred, stalled and won valuable time. In the Ivory Coast, Malawi, and the Central African Republic, the old system staggers on through repression. Indeed, in Kenya, Ghana and the Cameroon the old regimes have managed to win "democratic" elections.

Battering ram

In many cases the opposition surged forward on the basis of mass mobilisations — before reverting to the pragmatism demanded by electoral competition. After being used as a battering ram, the popular forces were excluded from making the fundamental constitutional choices.

These changes have brought intense debates, among them endless arguments about whether democracy is a precondition for development or vice versa. The answer, of course, is obvious: the battles for democracy and development have to be undertaken together. The real problem is to decide *what kind of democracy and development*. We have to define the social nature of the project.

There are some basic benchmarks here. For example, is it conceivable that these countries can escape from underdevelopment without real efforts to change the position of women? Subsistence agriculture, the environment, the informal sector, population, protection of children, the networks of cooperation — all this is the "women's world". But women have had little or no role in the national conferences, and opposition groups have shown hardly any interest in this essential dimension of society.

There are a whole range of other crucial issues: freedom of the press, union independence and democracy, control of the income of elected representatives, reductions in military spending, access to education for all, barriers against capital flight, cancellation of the foreign debt, the organisation of peasants and attention to their needs, secularisation of the state and so on.

Tribalism

Then there is the proliferation of political parties, which raises the question of "tribalism" that divides the political field into a throng of lobby groups fighting for the spoils.

These occurrences have two very different origins. One is the desire of part of the population to decide its fate. The other is racketeering based on regional or village networks. All too often, the second takes advantage of the former.

Ethnic conflict is often presented as a permanent feature of political life in Africa — as the opposite of modernity. In fact, the most ridiculed expressions of ethnicity are a product of the capitalist crisis, of competition between racketeers and of the social nature of the neo-colonial state.

Liberia, Somalia and Chad present perfect examples of conflicts that are modern products of economic and political dislocation. It is growing poverty that produces such fragmentation. The smaller the surplus product to be divided the more violent the disputes over it.

When local production collapses, market exchange can continue only by siphoning off food aid and pillaging of rural areas, thereby fuelling ethnic and clan conflicts.

Africa may be marginalised, but it is nonetheless for all that a victim of the dictatorship of the world market. Serious democratic thinking needs to take this fact as its starting point. ■

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All work and no pay

Putting unpaid labour on the books

Debbie Budlender

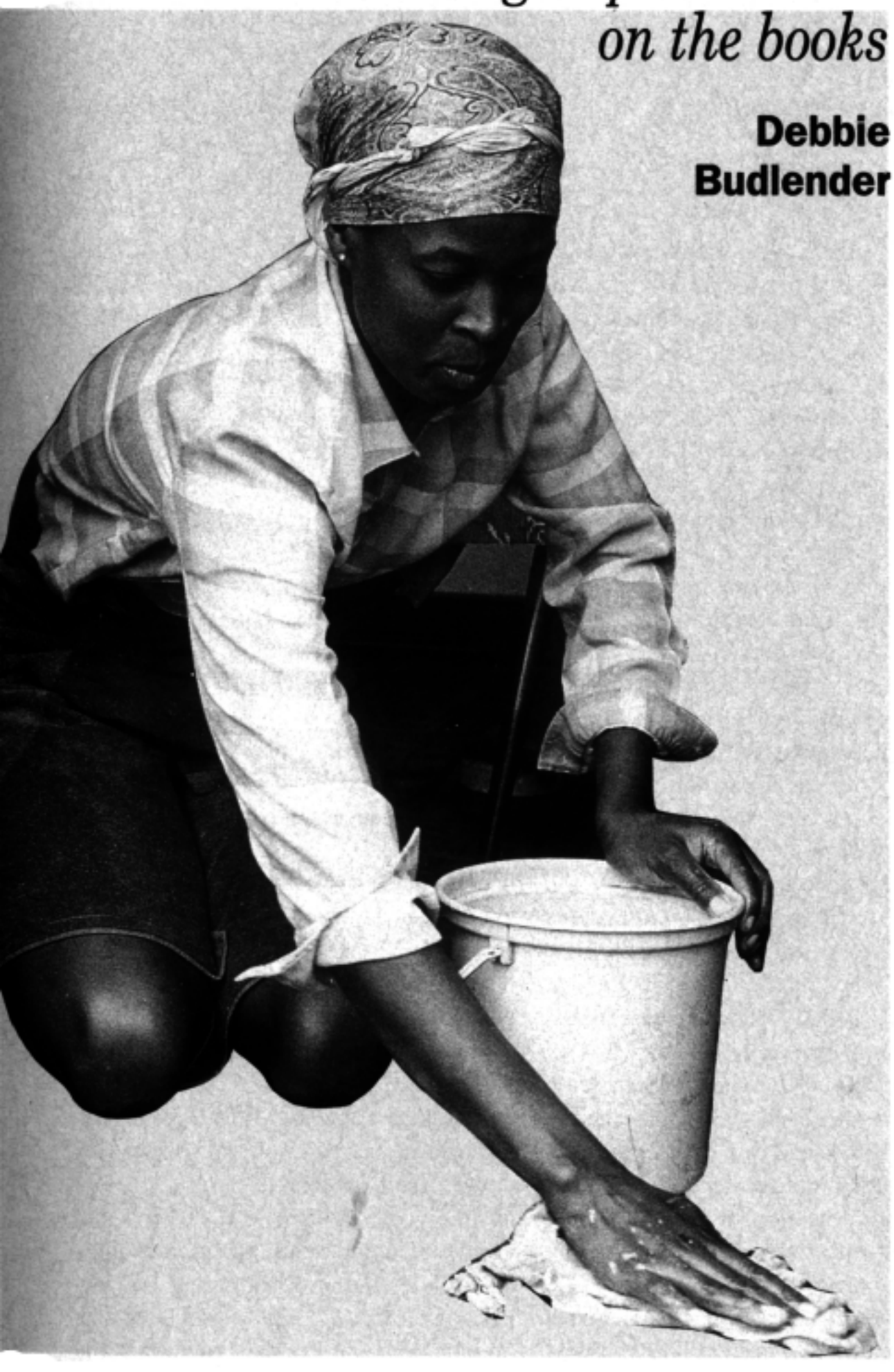


PHOTO: GILL DE VLIEG

BURIED IN THE BUNDLE OF POLICIES adopted by the ANC in May last year was a ground-breaking commitment to acknowledge the central role of unpaid labour in our economy:

Economic planning will take into account the contribution that unpaid labour makes to the creation of wealth. The ANC will progressively introduce an additional set of national accounts, reflecting the value of unpaid labour.

Couched in such technical language the move might seem unremarkable. But it is, in fact, a major step forward. Although unpaid labour has been noted and discussed internationally for several decades, no other country has managed to incorporate it into its national accounts or into macro-economic and other policies. If the ANC follows through on that policy commitment, we will have a world first on our hands.

In April, the first modest but concerted step was taken when the ANC's Emancipation Commission and Research Department joined the Macro-Economic Research Group (Merg) to host a workshop on unpaid labour. It was a small exercise attended by about 30 people. The aim was to pinpoint the questions — "to set the research agenda" — rather than provide answers. And what hit participants squarely were the far-reaching implications of this neglected area; many came away puzzling how they could have ignored such a central phenomenon in society.

They realised that by ignoring unpaid work, macro-economic policy ignores, underestimates and fails to value and reward much of the labour of women.

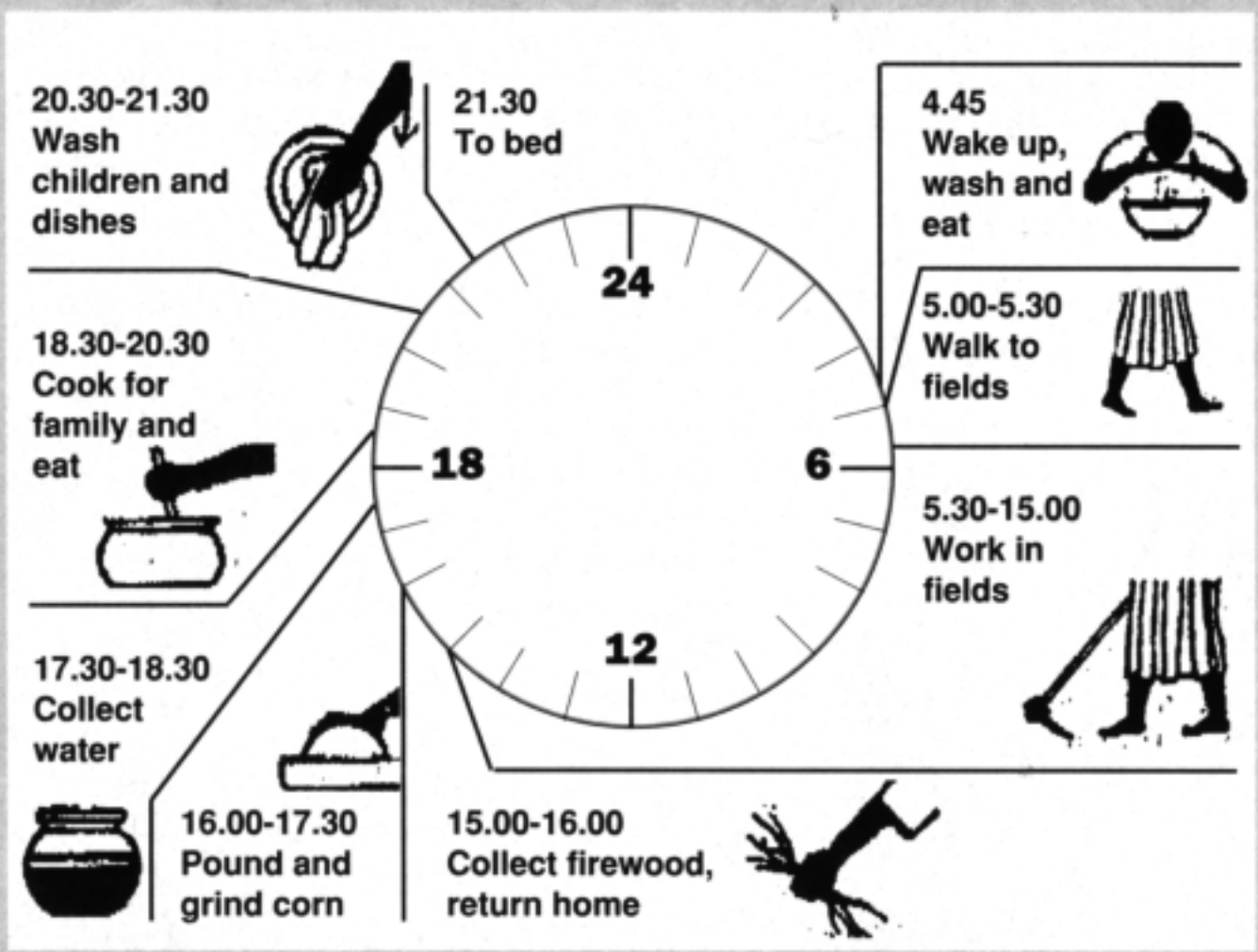
Romanticising the unpaid economy

But, once unpaid labour is recognised, what then? The workshop did not, for example, call for wages for housework; it did not, in the words of Diane Elson, seek to "romanticise the unpaid economy and demonise the paid one". Rather, it aimed to make visible the extent and range of unpaid labour as well as the links between paid and unpaid labour. Francie Lund summed up the concern when she said that any macro-economic model that fails to include gender and unpaid labour will simply "not get it right". Not only will the policies be inequitable, they might end up undermining or sabotaging their stated objectives in unforeseen ways.

The demand is not that unpaid labour become paid labour, but that it be "costed in" for planning and policy. This might sound like window dressing, but it is not. Most macro-economic models and planning acknowledge and measure only monetary transactions. Money is the *de facto* measure of value. So

A woman's work is never done

A day in the life of a typical rural African woman



"Have you many children?" the doctor asked.
"God has not been good to me. Of sixteen born, only nine live," he answered.
"Does your wife work?"
"No, she stays at home"
"I see. How does she spend her day?"
"Well, she gets up at four in the morning, fetches water and wood, makes the fire and cooks breakfast. Then she goes to the river and washes clothes. After that she goes to town to get corn ground and buys what we need in the market. Then she cooks the midday meal."
"You come home at midday?"
"No, no. She brings the meal to me in the fields – about three kilometres from home."
"And after that?"
"Well, she takes care of the hens and pigs. And, of course, she looks after the children all day. Then she prepares supper so that it is ready when I come home."
"Does she go to bed after supper?"
"No, I do. She has things to do around the house until nine o'clock."
"But you say your wife doesn't work?"
"No. I told you. She stays at home."

when labour is unpaid, it is "valueless" because it costs the society "nothing".

Linked to this is the assumption that the supply of unpaid labour is infinite — the monetised part of the economy can demand and depend on as much labour and production from the unpaid sectors as the monetised part needs. The problem with this reasoning is that economic policy ends up being constructed on top of a fallacy.

Labour, even if unpaid, is not costless, either for the individuals or the society. Take these two examples ...

On a personal and practical level there are problems for the individual (usually a woman) who is expected to perform a limitless amount of domestic work, while being required also to become more active in the formal sector, as well as fill gaps caused by privatisation of some social services and cutbacks in others (eg., looking after infants, nursing family members). Research in industrialised countries has shown how cuts in state care and pensions for the elderly place an added burden on the younger female relatives of the aged. In SA, because of extreme poverty, the family may not always be able to bear this burden. As Lund pointed out, "black elderly people speak forthrightly about how the thing that keeps them from being thrown away is their old age pension".

On the broader, societal level, we run into problems if we assume that the subsistence sector and the people who depend on it can continue to survive without input from the monetised sector. Catherine Cross concluded: "(In SA) subsistence agriculture appears as a paradox, an option that is highly valued against emergencies, but one that fewer and fewer people are willing to attempt. It is a potentially high-paying production option able to confer a degree of self-respect and personal sovereignty, but it carries such a high risk at present that the labour and cash investment both appear uneconomic. In spite of these limitations, it is desperately important to the poor who routinely attempt it with wholly unpaid labour."

Several international participants highlighted how structural adjustment policies (SAPs) often bring on both sorts of effects. As Elson put it, "unpaid labour may play a vital role in absorbing the 'shocks'" as the economy — and the people within it — try to 'adjust' to structural adjustment. But, as millions of people can testify, it is wrong to assume that there is an inexhaustible supply of unpaid labour. Research in countries subject to SAPs shows worsening of the nutritional status of children, and sharp rises in child and infant mortality.

Adjusting to adjustment

Elson described the transition or adjustment to SAPs as a period "marked by falling incomes, rising prices and rising unemployment for a substantial number of people". The South African participants found the descriptions a little unnerving — if this is what the medicine does, what happens when the country is already suffering the side-effects before taking the medication?

On a practical and individual level, taking account of unpaid labour entails changes, big and small. A few of the more obvious examples illustrate the range of implications:

- In divorce settlements a value would need to be imputed to all the labour time which the woman spent caring for and rearing the family. This would be added to time both partners have spent earning

What is unpaid labour?

It includes:

- **The large group of people, mainly women, who are engaged in subsistence agriculture**
- **Domestic labour, unpaid when performed by wives and other family members, and underpaid when performed by domestic workers**
- **Unpaid work in the informal sector**
- **Volunteer work**

cash in the more formal economy, when deciding on the division of assets.

- In social security provisions, maternity benefits, workmens (sic) compensation, and other benefits would be calculated on the basis of a value which incorporates an imputed amount for unpaid work both in the home and elsewhere.
- With taxes it could mean considering women's reproductive work in the home as a tax which women pay in unpaid labour rather than cash.

For now, however, we are looking at reflecting unpaid work in the national accounts. This is important because labour force statistics and national accounts provide the information which enables the planning and other authorities to understand trends and developments, and to devise policies that will remedy them. In a progressive society the statistics are used to ensure that state policy helps distribute the burdens and benefits of society more equitably.

By taking account of the burden of unpaid labour, we take account of the hardships of some of the most disadvantaged sectors of the population.

In SA there is so little concern about unpaid labour that people engaged in subsistence agriculture are not even included in official labour force statistics — they are regarded as "unemployed"! Race, class and gender combine to make them invisible. This despite the fact that as early as 1966 the International Conference of Labour Statistics recommended that labour figures include "all persons of either sex who furnish the supply of economic goods and services", whether or not the work was rewarded in money.

Emancipation

Why is the ANC's Emancipation Commission so interested in the question of unpaid work? Because it is mostly, though not exclusively, women who perform it.

Pam Reynolds' findings in rural Zimbabwe are instructive. She found that women spent 20% of their time on childcare, girls 33% and boys 4%. Women spent 4,5 hours daily on household tasks, 8,5 hours if farming time was included. Even in the off-season, women worked 5,5 hours while men put in 2,5 hours.

But the cost is not measured only in time. As Reynolds noted: "Labour is a curtailment of movement for women. It is a curtailment of opportunities. Life is restricted by work and there is little surplus time. Men have surplus time but no incentive to do the work because it has been feminised."

The gendered nature of unpaid labour is probably more acute in SA than in most other countries. Influx control and migrant labour means that subsistence agriculture is heavily women-dominated.

Alice Amsden, an international participant in the Merg conference, noted that the focus of Merg's project is to correct the faults of the past. Doing that, she urged, means changing our mindsets. Until now, Merg — like the rest of the country — understood history in terms of apartheid but not gender. Our understanding of the nature of oppression cannot be limited like this.

PHOTO: GILL DE VLIEG

■ WHO CARES? There is so little concern about unpaid labour that subsistence farmworkers are not even included in official labour statistics

A global problem

Some countries have already taken steps towards recognising the contribution of women's paid and unpaid labour — for instance the Dominican Republic, Argentine and Paraguay. The Indian government has put a good deal of effort into redressing the undercounting of unpaid labour.

Undercounting also occurs in first world countries. In Germany it is estimated the official Gross National Product (GNP) will increase by 30-50% if domestic work were included. Research in Spain suggests that the unacknowledged burden of unpaid domestic work weighs heaviest on low-income groups.

In SA we now have taken a small step forward on this front. The Merg/ANC workshop exposed the fact that there are still a lot of questions to be asked and answered.

Most people seem to agree that the unpaid labour accounts will be separate and supplementary to the more traditional set of national accounts. This raises the potential of the accounts being marginalised or simply ignored. Achieving a set of accounts will be a technical battle. But ensuring that the need for additional accounts (and their implications) are recognised in the form of policy will require ongoing political struggle. ■

When green turns to white

The money-spinning plan to stripmine sensitive dune forests at Lake St Lucia has ballooned into SA's biggest ever environmental battle. So why does HEIN MARAIS have the feeling we've been here before?

AT 1 500 PAGES, THE ST LUCIA Environmental Impact Report (EIR) packs enough data, in-depth research and expert opinion to bend any book shelf *and* twist a few arms.

But, like the broader controversy over Richard's Bay Minerals' (RBM) multi-billion rand stripmining bid, it has a blindspot big enough to hide a dredger.

Touted as the most comprehensive environmental impact study ever undertaken in SA, the R4-million EIR contains 23 specialist studies that scrutinise aspects as arcane as the impact of mining on "the sense of place". Yet those hefty volumes devote barely 10 pages to the views of communities who live around the disputed area.

Start-up research done two years ago did include interviews with about 18 local residents. But the editor of the EIR, Brian van Wilgan of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research Council (CSIR), admits that "it became clear that we weren't making contact with real people".

Other assessments are balder. "Nothing was done in terms of telling people what was happening," says Bonga Mlambo, a consultant for the Rural Liaison Project, established recently to redress the omission of local residents from the debate. The *Weekly Mail* has quoted RBM's public relations chief, Barry Clements, declaring: "I don't know who these people are. You will have to ask the consultants. We have not had any negotiations with them."

PHOTO: GILL DE VLIEG

■ **THE WHITE STUFF: Environmental debates are often the domain of middle-class whites**

A small oversight

Environmentalists, too, have basically disregarded local residents. "It was nothing deliberate, but the people haven't been foremost in the minds of the Campaign for St Lucia (CSL)," says one activist.

For a four-year-old controversy of this scale, the "oversight" is distressing. Cited most often is the claim that the communities are difficult to locate and gain access to — because most of the original residents were forcibly removed from the disputed area, which snakes along the Natal north coast between Cape Vidal and St Lucia.

The removals occurred between 1956 and 1974, but have been poorly documented. At least two major removals occurred within the disputed area, when workers of what was the Department of Forestry routed settlements from forests or land slated for forestation. "What we normally did was give them a small amount of money and some hut poles to create new dwellings," remembers forester Neville Perry.

A total of 5 000 people were forced from their homes. According to Doug McFerren, another forester who participated in the removals, records were kept but they "ended up on top of a roof at Mission Rocks". Some records were salvaged and moved to the regional forestry office in Eshowe, but the district officer there seems less than keen to rummage through them. "With this new SA stuff, you know, we don't want to go digging up old bones," he told *WIP*.

That hard data is needed to buttress the land claims which two of the forcibly removed communities are now trying to get off the ground.

The people next door

But it is relatively easy to track down and consult the dispersed residents, say researchers and journalists who have begun interviewing people on recent

field trips organised by Earthlife Africa.

And to consult those residents who work at RBM you need only make the 2,5 hour trip from Durban. Yet it wasn't until a year after the environmental campaign was launched in 1989 that workers were even contacted, prompting union organiser Mike Mabuyakhulu's bitter comment that "some of our members are wondering if these groups think it is more important to save insects and animals while we have to sacrifice jobs and wages".

That disregard, suggests ecologist Shamala Naidoo, seems linked to a fear that local communities might choose mining over conservation. Having been removed from their homes and land — often several times — to make way for state conservation projects of the Parks Board or Department of Forestry, such a choice would be understandable.

Interventions by Earthlife Africa and other activists seem to have repaired some of the damage. Since late 1992 there have been consultations with representatives from the ANC, the National Union of Mineworkers (which organises RBM workers) and local *indunas*. Still, says Earthlife's Brian Ashe, "locals, whether white or black, don't understand what ecotourism is". There are now plans to arrange intensive information and consultation sessions with communities in the next few weeks "to empower them to decide what they want".

Now hear this

RBM, meanwhile, saw the gap and took it. "We've been having ongoing consultation with [local] people regarding the RBM proposal," says public relations official Piet Maree. This "consultation" seems rather novel, however: since September 1992 RBM has shepherded at least 100 *indunas* and *inkosi* from as far away as Eshowe through its public relations presentations. "We were approached by a Mr Gwala, an adviser to the Chief Minister of Kwazulu, and he made arrangements for these leaders to visit RBM," Maree told *WIP*. (Inkatha has come out in support of the mining project; the ANC opposes it).

The upshot is that the most systematic "consultation" of communities to date has been their exposure to RBM public relations pitches via their chiefs. When Ashe met with local residents over Easter, he discovered that "they thought the mining was going to start next year". In fact, mining — and the promised jobs — won't materialise until 1999. "They've basically been told very little," says Ashe.

Meanwhile, the CSIR has charged the Rural Liaison Project with finding "out who the community is, and what its interests and concerns are," says Van Wilgan. According to Mlambo, the basic plan is to locate the affected communities, tell them about the EIR, and channel their ideas and concerns into the review process.

It is uncertain whether the views collected will then take precedence in the eight-week review process or whether they will simply be stirred into the broth of comments solicited from the public. Van Wilgan says "that's up to the review panel" — a five-member team, none of whom can claim to represent the local community, that will study public input and make a final recommendation to the cabinet. Asked whether the project doesn't have the feel of a damage-control exercise, Mlambo offered plainly: "I'd rather not be the judge of that."

Van Wilgan's complaint about the "difficulties" involved in consulting residents — "the problem is that a lot of them don't read English or don't read at all" — confirms how effortlessly communities are kept out of the loop of power and decision-making. The ease with which the press (with the commendable exception of Eddie Koch's coverage in the *Weekly Mail*) has screened out the views of local communities from the debate echoes the many silences committed by it during the apartheid era.

■ BLACK, GREEN AND WHITE: The green movement needs to be part of the broader struggle

PHOTO: GILL DE VLIEG

The problem with people

But the St Lucia debacle also reveals some of the handicaps that are hauled into battle by South African environmentalists.

Contradictions like class (middle class), race (white), culture (largely Western, urban) and language (English) have not smoothened their interventions.

As well, the framing of the struggle for St Lucia as a clash between conservation and development is out-of-date and downright inappropriate. The conservationist approach — with its notions of sanctuaries, guardianship and preservation — remains fundamentally patronising and conservative. It entails no concept of democracy, because *fauna* and *flora*, self-evidently, have to be spoken *for*. And human beings, typically, are not part of the problem — they *are* the problem.

In contrast, groups like Earthlife Africa view humans not as an imposition on the environment, but as an integral part of it. Hence its (belated) efforts to democratise the battle for St Lucia by consulting and involving local residents.

Environmentalists have their work cut out for them. Only two months were set aside for public comment on the EIR. Then the process again passes into the world of panelled rooms and dreary expertise, though there was some hope at the time of writing that the period might be extended.

Still, the St Lucia debacle will soon have dimmed in our memories. Local residents will be fending off misfortune in one of the poorest regions of SA. RBM will have finetuned its corporate performance — adding to its vigorous pursuit of profit the doting care of a social benefactor and a greased public relations machine.

But win or lose, the environmentalist movement will have arrived at a benchmark. Hereafter, it will either be lugging its legacies along as it tilts at windmills. Or it will be seeking out its commonalities with other, often broader, struggles for democracy and justice. Here's hoping the latter course prevails. ■

Sun, sea and radiation

Workplace struggles at Richard's Bay Minerals

RBM has done a good job of convincing the public that it's a responsible employer. But MARK COLVIN and GARETH COLEMAN find RBM's workers are less convinced

FOR A CORPORATION THAT CLAIMS to contribute 0,5% of South Africa's gross national product (GNP), Richard's Bay Minerals (RBM) has kept a pretty low profile.

Even if you had heard of RBM, you probably did not know that it has been mining sand dunes on the Natal north coast for the last 17 years, or that it is one of the world's biggest producers of titania slag, or that it quietly exported to a sister company in Canada throughout the sanctions years.

But that changed when RBM launched a bid to stripmine sand dunes east of Lake St Lucia in a world-renowned wetland area. In order to counter vigorous opposition from environmental and conservation groups and tilt a hesitant public opinion its way, RBM launched a massive public relations campaign. In full-page ads it has punted the strip-mining operation as a harbinger of jobs and better living standards to the area.

Good and clean and fresh?

But what is it like working for RBM? As always, it depends on who you speak to. Senior technical and health & safety managers say the company does what it takes to prevent occupational diseases and accidents. But workers, most of whom belong to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), see life at RBM differently.

At RBM's plant in Richard Bay, many of the workers are exposed to monazite, an ore that contains the radioactive compound thorium — the only alternative to uranium as a source of nuclear fuel. Workers are exposed to direct radiation, and also breathe in radioactive dust.

Management is adamant that everything possible is done to shield workers from health risks. It monitors radiation levels according to international standards and regularly informs workers of the results. Workers, however, speak of sloppy housekeeping practices and poor communication around the hazards.

Management disputes this, but workers we interviewed complained that they had been told little of the hazards associated with handling monazite. One worker asked: "Why is it only now that they tell me that I can get cancer from this stuff when I have been working with it for 12 years?"

Management regularly pins up on a public notice board the radiation levels measured among workers. But none of the workers we interviewed seemed to have a clue what the figures mean.

Part of the problem lies in the exclusion of workers from health and safety decisions. As one health and safety officer put it, a "cascade of instructions comes down from committee to committee".But it only reaches workers once a month when they are told what to do by their superiors. Most of the workers we questioned claimed never to have heard of management's health and safety committees.

Clearly, the current health and safety system appears not to have the support of workers. Similar problems exist in RBM's industrial relations system, where retrenchments, training and social responsibility programmes are being hotly contested.

In the midst of RBM's claims that stripmining the St Lucia dunes will create more than 150 new jobs and maintain 300-400 current ones at its smelter site, RBM has been retrenching workers at the Richard's Bay plant. NUM officials complain that the company is being less than frank about why and how workers are retrenched — it simply briefs the union when a worker is about to be laid off.

At the forefront of RBM's recent PR campaign is its social responsibility programme in the surrounding communities. The head of industrial relations, Piet Roodt, is involved in various peace structures in the area. And RBM is involved in initiatives ranging from education to health care and small business development.

But these projects occur on the basis of very little consultation with workers — although the company says it briefs the shopstewards' committee annually about new projects. Workers we interviewed saw themselves as responsible for creating the wealth spent by the company, and hence deserving a say in how that money is spent. Yet, when they challenge management about the distribution of finances, they are told (in the words of a shopsteward) "that RBM is a private company and therefore does not have to divulge the state of their books".

In many ways, RBM fits the paradigm of major companies in the new South African context. One the one hand there is an abundance of smooth talk, a recognition of the challenges that confront it and the claims that, as Roodt put it, "everything is negotiable". On the other hand, the reluctance to take up challenges is almost palpable.

A recognition that union's role needs to expand seems checked by the company's aversion to create mechanisms that will facilitate wider and deeper worker participation in decision-making. Behind the huge discrepancies between workers' and management's views of life at RBM lies a contest over who gets to decide what — and it is a contest the union seems unlikely to sidestep. ■

● Mark Colvin works with the Industrial Health Unit at the University of Natal. This article is based on interviews with over 50 RBM workers, the shopsteward committee, individual shopstewards and management representatives. Soon after Colvin and Coleman visited the RBM plant to research this article, workers reported several changes in safety regulations and access control.

Playing on the world stage

■ A London-based multinational corporation, Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ), owns half of RBM's shares. The remaining 50% is owned by Gencor. During the 1980s an international campaign targeted RTZ for the dangerous working conditions at its uranium mining operations in Namibia.

■ RBM's main competitors in terms of output are in Australia, but it controls 25% of the world market in titanium oxide, 31% of rutile, 28% of zircon and 25% of ductile iron.

■ RBM employs about 2 500 workers, most of whom live in the Esikhazeni and Ensaleni townships in the Richard's Bay vicinity. This makes RBM one of the major employers in the area.

The springcleaning of culture

IVOR POWELL concludes his three-part exploration of the imprints of white patronage and liberal ideology on black South African art, and detects some signs of redemption

■ **Phutuma Seoka's Thin Man**

IN THE EARLIER INSTALMENTS OF THIS article *WIP* 87 & 88), I scanned some of the ways in which the oddities of our society have written themselves into the history of black South African art.

Evidence abounds of the break which occurred between the traditional forms of African artistic practice and the urban art forms very loosely bundled together as township art — in terms of both form and guiding consciousness.

Less obvious is the fact that it was economic rather than expressive impulses that led black South African artists to work in Western modes. The demands, prejudices and ideology of the market for which the artwork was destined, shaped the work.

This market was, and remains, overwhelmingly white. Gallery owners I spoke with said black buyers make up less than one percent of their clientele for black art. Some of them spoke candidly, though "off-the-record", about the direct pressures which the marketplace has brought to bear on black artists and their work.

"During the early 1970s, 'X' (a very well-known graphic artist) brought in a new batch of work to his dealer," one gallery owner told me. "The work was exploring abstract forms and was quite different from the stuff he had been making before. The dealer sent him away again, saying he had no interest in this stuff. He told 'X' to bring in more of the stuff he was doing before if he wanted to sell."

The artist heeded the advice and went back to the tried, trusted and marketable formulas. Ironically, it was precisely his abstract and animist work that later earned him international recognition — once tastes had changed enough.

Paint by numbers

Similar stories are legion. One artist told me that in the 1970s he was contracted by a leading gallery of the time to produce work, the dimensions and subject matter of which the dealers specified in detail. Another artist was that told his township scenes were "very nice", but he should avoid depicting such well-dressed people. Yet another was advised not to draw rows of houses, only shacks. And so on. (I am deliberately not naming names here. Nearly everybody was implicated and no purpose will be served now by recriminations.)

All this is undeniable. But, in a way, such direct interventions are not really the point. More important are those far deeper, and far more structural, cultural considerations. The easiest way to approach them is by discussing their effects.

One of the distinctive features of the bodies of urban black art is how little of the realities of their putative subject matter they reflect. To a great extent these works — at least until the 1980s — conspire to create a series of fictions about the life they are supposedly exploring.

I have already noted the almost complete absence of motor cars or other symbols of acculturation towards the more technological end of Western civilisation. By contrast one is struck by how many bicycles there are in the paintings and drawings, and how often horse carts and various beasts of burden are represented. Similarly, we have any number of workers, "hewers of wood and drawers of water", as the unlamented Hendrik Verwoerd called them. But it is extremely rare to find intellectuals, white-collar workers and consumer items depicted.

A word of qualification is required, though. In works by Gerard Sekoto and George Pemba, mainly from the 1940s, a much wider range of motifs sometimes figure. Pemba painted a number of fine portraits of civic leaders, academics and other prominent community figures. His versions of domestic life are often more reminiscent of the American genre painter Norman Rockwell than of later township art. Sekoto paints white policemen raiding compounds, and his vision of township life at the time owes much to the American jazz age with its snappy dressing and desperado culture.

Big wheels

Most remarkably, the Soweto painter John Koenakeefe Mohl as late as the 1950s was capable of marching to an

■ **John Muafangejo's Lonely Man (top) and The Battle of Rorke's Drift (above)**

entirely different drummer. A remarkable painting of his, dated 1958, can be viewed at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. It shows an eccentrically fore-shortened rickshaw leaving in its wake a bunch of flowers as it moves off into the middle distance. And coming towards the viewer is the snazziest, sleekest, most stretched-out goddamn huge American car you will ever see.

The painting was, one assumes, conceived as some kind of allegory of the old and the new the traditional and the Western. The motif of the car, and particularly its depiction, evokes and celebrates social aspirations.

It is precisely this unabashed celebration of the new proto-yuppie society which runs through Mohl's work that sets the image so wildly at odds with those of most of his township counterparts.

But something else also sets Mohl apart. Unusual for a black artist, throughout his career he worked for a small circle of mainly black patrons. He was illustrating their visions of themselves in works like "The Rickshaw" and "The Lost Bunch", not that of an alien buying public from the northern suburbs.

But such rule-proving exceptions aside, the art of the townships, especially in the apartheid era, was distinguished by its detachment from contours of lived reality. Virtually everywhere you will find the same set of fictions, the same kind of mental editing. The townships are reduced to the stereotypical or the picturesque — or to mere patterns.

Images of progress or acculturation are carefully avoided. Figures tend to be distorted in ways that primitivise them: it's either big eyes and big lips or a kind of amorphous stone-effect. They are frequently labouring or gambling, often demonstrating the sense of rhythm they are meant to possess. Poverty and hunger are rendered as often as not as picturesque states of being, conveying a mood of sentimentality rather than outrage.

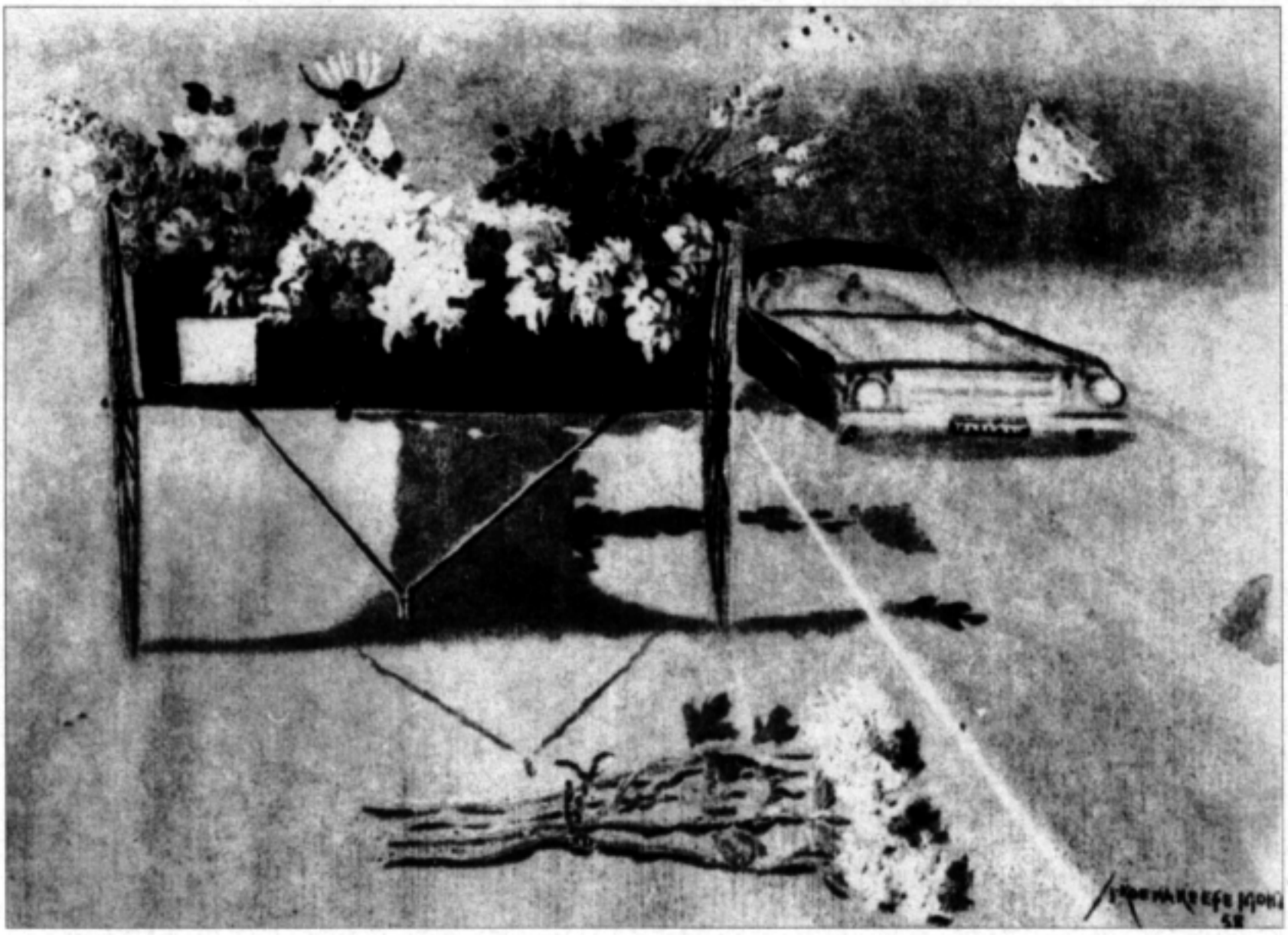
White perceptions

Even in the work of the so-called protest artists, one sees portrayed a parade of victims, bereft of clues, coded or not, as to what reduced them to that status.

What we find depicted is not lived reality, but successive stages in the perceptions of whites — alienated from that reality and saddled with guilt and psycho-cultural agendas of their own.

I am generalising, of course. In the work of many of the artists schooled at Rorke's Drift in the 1960s and 1970s a somewhat different dynamic is at work. The Namibian John Muafangejo, I'd argue, especially transcended the limitations of the situation. Muafangejo depicts whites as freely as blacks, shows outright racial brutalities as often as pastoral idylls.

Such exceptions attest, perhaps, to the nurturing effects of the mission environment. But it is worth reminding ourselves that the major market for the work emanating from the mission school was not local but overseas liberals. Nevertheless the Rorke's Drift school bred its own orthodoxies of more or less mute medievalism, plus a naive



■ John Koenakeefe Mohl's The Rickshaw and the lost bunch

and childlike primitivism. In those respects it, too, fits into the grooves of white cultural hegemony.

Once again the effect of the shaping white hand is registered. Indeed, this has been the sole constant in the remarkably poignant history of black art in this country — from its beginnings in the first decades of the century all the way through to such initiatives as the Thupelo Art Project.

My intention is neither to trash the interventions of generally well-meaning whites nor to denigrate the work produced by the emerging black artist class.

It is important, however, to note that the emergence of artmaking by blacks in SA came about as a result of various sorts of "missionary processes". Some of them, like Rorke's Drift, were overtly Christian and appropriately were rooted in a vision of African devotionalism. Others were stylistic missions within the arts, pushing the kind of primitive expressionism which took form as township art proper and in the styles which (rather unconvincingly) came to be labelled protest art in the 1960s and 1970s.

There followed, in the 1970s and 1980s, the abstract expressionist mini-revolution centred largely around the Johannesburg Art Foundation and later the Thupelo Project. In many ways this was the most fraught and ironic of all the waves of intervention in the brief history of black South Africans' artmaking. The philosophy of abstraction (particularly in the modes developed by the critic Clement Greenberg in art) is laudable and apparently redemptive enough within the context.

To cut through an enormous load of theory, its basic impulse is to mythologise the process of artmaking as a confrontation between the artist's consciousness and the material. So it makes sense to introduce it into a lopsided situation in which black artists were working in this country. It takes, or so the theory would have it, the artist back to the zero point of artmaking, and allows something to develop from there.

Redefining black art

I would stick my neck out and claim that the project is bearing fruit. Artists like Pat Mutlao and Sam Nhlengetwa (who have been closely associated with the ongoing Thupelo workshops) have begun to construct interesting and potentially valuable alternatives to the orthodoxies of black artmaking. They have started the process of redefinition.

But the belief that abstractionist preoccupations are free of ideology is naive in the extreme. A prime feature of the abstractionist ethos is precisely its neutrality, its basic silence as regards social and political realities.

It is perhaps not insignificant that the orthodoxies were first convincingly challenged by the introduction of work with strongly African traditions determining its modes, forms and meanings. It was during the early and mid-1980s (particularly with the Tributaries exhibition of 1985) that the work of a range of rural sculptors, working in remote areas of Venda and Gazankulu, entered the cultural mainstream.

Resting heavily within traditional attitudes and styles, yet specifically registering the influence of Western civilisation, these so-called "transitional" artists came from an entirely different space. They depicted whites and blacks in exactly the same way — whether naturalistically (as in the work of Noria Mabasa) or outrageously (Doc Phutuma Seoka) or mystically (Jackson Hlungwane). They did cars and trucks and doctors and politicians and whatever else they felt like capturing.

But more than just doing or sculpting these things, they *owned* them in their consciousness and interpreted them from their own perspectives. And though the "discovery" of the rural sculptors promised has not yet proven to be the anticipated renaissance, it was enough to break at least some links in the chain.

Curiously, but somehow appropriately, the work of these same sculptors used to be on sale as game reserve curios. ■

■ **OUT OF AFRICA: Colonial interventions disrupted nation-forming in Africa**

The black man's burden

The black man's burden: Africa and the curse of the nation-state, by Basil Davidson (Times Books, New York)

IT HAS BECOME FASHIONABLE TO DISmiss the arguments of those who would assign blame for Africa's woes to the West as rank apologists. In many circles, merely citing the destructive meddling of Europe or the United States is enough to see you classified as nostalgic.

But Basil Davidson's new book serves as a timely and piercing reminder that if the continent's post-independence history has been full of home-grown failures, it would be more than rash to let the West forget its part of the responsibility for Africa's enduring poverty and carnage.

One of the central strands in *The black man's burden* is that Europe's invasion of Africa brutally disrupted a process of nation-forming that he asserts was well under way. With designs of conquest fancily wrapped under the more noble banners of commerce, Christianity and civilisations, Europeans imposed structures of their own design which have struggled to assert their relevance ever since.

Although many examples are discussed in the work, Davidson draws heavily from the Asante kingdom of Ghana, which maintained quasi-parliamentary tradition with annual meetings of elders, policed their roads and operated a "complex network of administrative communications".

European travellers to Africa in the mid-19th century saw undifferentiated chaos, justifying and even compelling the wholesale importation of "Western civilisation" as an organising rationale. But for Davidson, the Asante — like some 60 other ethnic groups around the continent — already boasted the attributes of a nation-state.

"It had a given territory, known territorial limits, a central government with police and army, a national language and law, and beyond there, a constitutional embodiment in the form of a council called Asantemen," he writes.

Britain's invasion of Asante in 1874, however, marked the beginning of the end of this autonomous political development. Although the Asante were able to resist for some time, nothing could stop Britain's all-out drive for territorial ownership.

"With this, as events have shown," Davidson writes, "the whole scope for possible development into modernising structures was stopped dead, and could not be started again so long as colonial dispossession continued."

An introductory anecdote quotes the former secretary-general of the Organisation of African Unity, Edem Kodjo, on this alienation: "There may be few African frontiers today across which, day by day, night by night, people do not take themselves and their goods in complete defiance of the constitutional law."

Davidson then provides a stirring account of how the imposition of newly-contrived structures in the place of old ones has fed the institutionalisation of tribal clientism as the prevailing system of "government" on the continent — whatever ideological inspiration Africa's leaders might claim.

The rest is depressingly familiar: "Soldiers evidently incapable of tolerance or mercy rode to power as champions of this or that 'ethnic group', even when actual ethnic differences had little or nothing to do with their coercions or plunderings," he writes. "Politicians harvested the spoils of kinship-manipulation with an ingenuity of crime and corruption that rivalled anything of the kind managed elsewhere. Presidents outrageously enriched themselves; governments mocked the most elementary justice; officeholders turned themselves into licensed profiteers."

Throughout this, Europeans raised few objections — although the United States (with its only recently-ended Cold War obsession) can share much of the blame. By pursuing what he sees as a policy of consistently opposing "radical innovation" — even when the evidence clearly showed how tragically wrong the chosen route had been — Davidson assigns intellectual authorship to Washington for much of the continent's stagnation. ■

— Howard French

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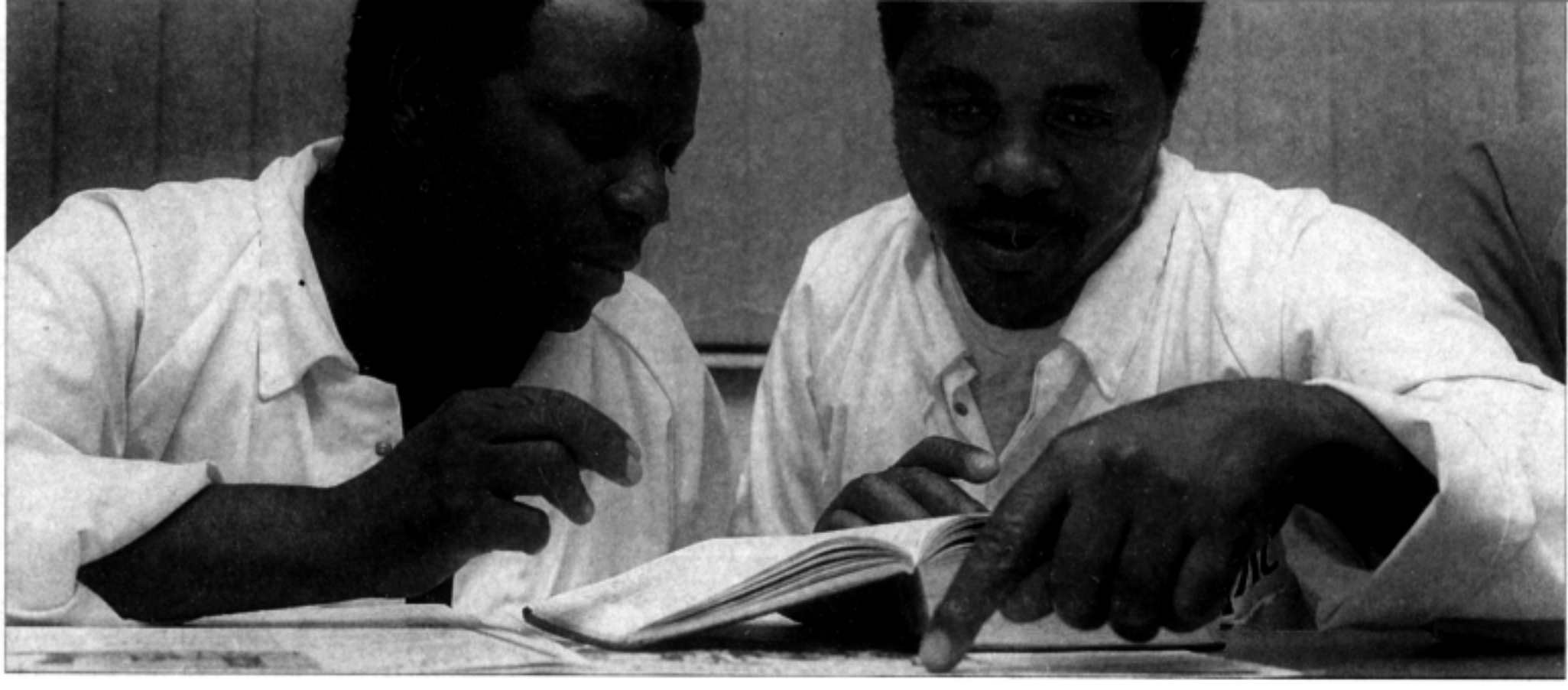


PHOTO: PAUL WEINBERG

■ **EACH ONE TEACH ONE: Negotiating the transition period**

From protest to development

The Organisation as an Employer, Human Awareness Programme booklet series
Reviewed by **STAN DE KLERK**

THE HUMAN AWARENESS PROgramme, a non-profit organisation in operation since 1977, and having the objective of "building capacity" in non-governmental organisations (NGOs), has recently updated its booklet series entitled *The organisation as an employer*.

This series has been around for a while. In the words of HAP, it is intended to help organisations negotiate "the present turbulent phase with its shift in emphasis towards reconstruction, as a result of many NGOs shedding old modes of operating and coming to terms with the demands of a new era of struggle".

This is a tall order; the task of reconstruction in the NGO sector which historically has had close links with "the people" is awesome given the aftermath and continuing ravages of an oppressive system.

Despite the scope of their task, HAP has managed to go beyond the rhetoric to produce a series of booklets which are very practical and seriously attempt to confront at least some aspects of the task of reconstruction.

Those in the know are fully aware of HAP's solid and indeed enviable reputation as an NGO capable of developing training materials. These booklets serve to confirm this reputation.

The series consists of seven books which deal with a whole range of organisational development issues. In all seven, the writers show an understanding of their target audience — namely "those organisations working towards creating a democratic society in SA". The style of writing is simple and accessible. There is none of the obscurity that often characterises manuals written by ivory-tower academics.

Case studies

The books all make extensive use of the case study approach to illustrate some of the more complex concepts. Having tried out some of the case studies in a training situation myself, I can vouch for their effectiveness.

There is an inherent danger in presenting rather abstract concepts in clear, accessible language; it can often lead to reductionism. Fortunately, in the HAP booklets, the tendency towards reductionism has been avoided. The booklets are easy to understand and there is no trivialisation of the issues raised. So while they do sometimes exhibit a lack of depth on some complex issues, this never spills into reductionism.

In the cases where serious issues are not explored enough, one is left with the desire to pursue things further by accessing material which deals with issues in greater depth. This is not because of the booklets' inadequacy, but rather because they tend to encourage self-initiated learning.

The only gripe I would have with the booklets is their sequence. Logically, book 5 (which deals with disciplinary & grievance procedures) should be the second in the series, as it follows on after the issues dealt with in book 1 (becoming an employer). But this would have been my own personal preference — it is not a transgression of an accepted norm in the educational materials development process.

In conclusion, then, these booklets are an absolutely necessary reference for small to medium-sized community-based organisations and NGOs trying to negotiate the transition from "protest mode" to "development mode". I therefore have no qualms in recommending them to all organisations interested in improving their organisational effectiveness. ■

● *De Klerk is director of the Leadership Institute*

The HAP series

1. Becoming an employer: Drawing up employment contracts
2. The right person for the right job: Recruitment & selection of staff
3. Integrating new staff members: The staff introduction process
4. Supervision: Mentoring & delegation
5. Disciplinary & grievance procedures: Dealing with staff behaviour
6. Staff & development training
7. Teaching & learning: Education in organisations

Ethnicity and political rewards

The word "ethnic" is sometimes naively used to mean "indigenous" or "of black people" or "of the third world". Surprisingly, Paul Forsythe committed this error in *WIP*87 by referring to Natal as "ethnically homogenous". There are at least four social and cultural groups in Natal and, elsewhere in his review, Forsythe acknowledges the existence of other ethnic groups by observing that, in the proposals of Inkatha and the Natal/KwaZulu indaba, social group identities other than the Zulu "are not specifically catered for outside constitutional and individual rights".

Natal is not ethnically homogenous; it is not a special case; and a political settlement based on "ethnicity" is therefore unlikely to prove any more useful in this province than anywhere else in South Africa.

There is nothing in the political settlement offered by the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) for either Hindu or Muslim (and these should be regarded as separate political groups). The Zulus form the majority in Natal, however, and there would be some case for the IFP settlement if it did, indeed, cater for their needs. But a sizeable proportion of Zulus feel it doesn't, and that is one reason why Zulu is now fighting Zulu.

The townships of Natal are almost all enclaves of KwaZulu, and it is there that the political philosophy of the IFP is made manifest.

Zulu township dwellers are faced with potholed roads, a sad lack of urban facilities, long distances to walk with no public transport. The police force is notorious for its brutality and the police are slow in arriving, even when called in a mater of urgency. They may, in fact, not arrive at all since they have a stated policy not to intervene in cases of "politically motivated" crime — though it's hard to see how they can determine the motive behind a crime without first investigating it. Children go to schools that suffer from a severe shortage of buildings, furniture, books, stationery and teachers, so a teacher may well face a class of 80 with no desks and no writing materials.

IFP priorities are demonstrated by the fact that the KwaZulu budget for law and order is the highest in all the independent homelands, and that on education the lowest; and this allocation is made by the KwaZulu government.

— Jean Middleton, Durban

The firm believers

I would like to respond to Costa Gazidis' letter (Cronin is a charlatan) in *WIP*87.

As a communist, I know the SACP should support the national liberation movement unconditionally. But this does not mean we must do so uncritically.

Jeremy Cronin is a South African communist and he therefore has a duty to contribute, strengthen and warn timeously — without fear or favour of criticism from people like Gazidis — against counter-revolutionary forces which want to weaken and destroy the ANC.

But maybe it is wrong to blame someone like Gazidis. He is a "firm believer" who only seems to recognise what lies behind the walls he has built around himself. He is prevented from exploring the limitless truth which lies outside these walls. It is important that we all accept reality and do not let our "certainties" distort our perceptions.

— Thobile Maso, Transkei

Unprofessional innuendo 1

In *WIP*88 ("Double jeopardy: How popular is the IFP really?"), Hein Marais speculates about current support for the IFP. And although every pollster would, given the array of methodological difficulties of polling in SA, sympathise with his "bafflement" at what the figures really mean, I must take issue with Marais on his reporting of certain HSRC results.

Contrary to Marais' statements, the actual reports referred to — reports which were provided in full to him — are consistent and clear. According to our polls (and our database spans two years and more than 10 000 interviews) average support for the IFP in South Africa — excluding the TBVC states is around 10%. This translates into approximately 1,5-million voters of which the vast majority are, of course, Zulus. This is 10,3% of the estimated 14,5-million voters in SA (again excluding TBVC) and is approximately 15% of the estimated 10-m black voters.

Marais, unfortunately, consistently confuses the estimated 14,5-m voters in SA ("national states" excluded) with the estimated total voters in the whole of SA (21-m).

The HSRC has always stated that our figures do not cover the "national states". Short of undertaking extensive surveys in those areas, and I am not aware of such surveys, one can only speculate on how the inclusion of these territories would affect the percentages. We have consistently resisted this temptation.

Allow me also to comment on Professor Mark Orkin's interpretation of these figures. First, it is unfortunate that a scholar of his standing did not avail himself of the facts in this case. Not only was Information Update — this particular polling project — started before Professor Lawrence Schlemmer joined the HSRC, but a close reading of the material provided to Marais will show no "miraculous doubling" or "increase" in IFP support at any given time over the past two years. It has remained very stable around the 10% I referred to above.

Also, I must admit to being very disappointed at Orkin's insinuation that I, as project leader and author of these articles, would be "intimidated" or "coerced" by Schlemmer to change the data in any way. Not only is this a personal attack on my professional integrity, but it also suggests — and again without any factual basis — that the HSRC intentionally distorts data to serve the interests of particular political groups. As far as the latter issue is concerned, I would like to repeat a previous public invitation of mine, namely that anybody is welcome to re-analyse any of these datasets and establish whether the HSRC reports are biased or not.

— Dr Johann Mouton, Centre for Science Development, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria

Unprofessional innuendo 2

I refer to the article in *WIP*88, "Double jeopardy: How popular is the IFP really?" I could not be contacted for an interview because I was moving from one position to another at the time and had no option but to suspend or defer most commitments. For that I am sorry.

I was neither in charge of our survey research nor involved in the survey methodology of the polls in question. Hence I cannot add to what Dr Mouton has said.

Professor Mark Orkin, however, obviously believes otherwise, with absolutely no shred of evidence to back what I can only describe as quite unprofessional innuendo. Orkin has achieved an academic position in which he really does not have to indulge in baseless conspiratorial reasoning.

Does he really think I have the superhuman powers of persuasion to manipulate the research of a separate division of the HSRC under the control of a senior colleague like Mouton?

However, I draw some comfort from the fact that I can send copies of Orkin's jibes to critics of the HSRC, in the IFP and other parties, who also think we wilfully underestimate their support and overestimate the support of their opponents.

— Professor Lawrence Schlemmer, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria

● **Hein Marais replies:** I repeat to Dr Mouton my gratitude for having provided to me the "actual reports" ("in full" is a touch hyperbolic), for it was those very reports that alerted me to the discrepancies in poll findings of IFP support, in particular the mysteries of HSRC's tallying.

Unfortunately, though, his note does not reduce my "bafflement".

Nothing he writes contradicts my conclusion that the HSRC's own figures reveal real national IFP support to be way lower than the 10 to 11% ritually quoted, and that the sporadic *caveat* "excluding the TBVC states" serves mainly to hide this fact.

Anyway, the HSRC does not "always" state that its "figures do NOT cover the 'national states'". Mouton, for example, does not alert readers to this in the version of his "Patterns and trends in 1992" he faxed to me. In fact, he writes that "approximately 10% of the *total population* [my italics]" supports the IFP (p 7). As I'm typing this, I've randomly selected an *HSRC Information Update* (Sept 1992, it turns out), to find on p54 under the heading "Methodology" no such warning, though there is a "sample graph" which states that 72 interviews were done in the TBVC states.

Mouton knows as well as the next pollster that IFP support in the TBVC states is miniscule. One doesn't have to "speculate", as he claims, to know this: HSRC polls show that IFP support among, for example, Sotho and Xhosa-speaking voters barely reaches the 1% mark.

My notes recall him saying in one of our conversations that, if the TBVC states were included, his "ballpark estimates" would give "the IFP 7 to 8% ... of the total vote"; he was kind enough to add, in handwriting, to one of his faxes his early prediction that the IFP would take 7,5% of the vote in an election. We're talking about a 30% "drop" in IFP support that's papered over with the occasional announcement, "excluding the TBVC states". Doesn't he find that a little "misleading"?

Re my alleged "confusion": from where comes this estimate of "14,5 million" voters in SA outside the TBVC states, which is at least 3 million lower than in *any* of the voter estimates I've encountered? When we spoke, he had no quarrel with the fact that I was using Development Bank numbers (which show 21 million voters in SA or 17.7 million if you exclude the TBVC states).

Interestingly, both he and Lawrence Schlemmer ignore Mark Orkin's query about the HSRC's decision last year to increase by 6% the number of rural Zulus as a percentage of all black voters — which pushes up IFP support at least another 2%. Surely such a dramatic methodological adjustment deserves some clarification? And, by the way, nowhere in the notes of my interview with Orkin or in the report will you find him accusing Mouton of being "intimidated" or "coerced" by anyone — those are Mouton's words.

I am pleased, though, to have elicited at last from Schlemmer a response to my numerous phonecalls and faxes. ■

PHOTO: ELMOND JIYANE (DYNAMIC IMAGES)

■ **ON THE MARCH: Just how widespread is Inkatha support?**

FATAL ATTRACTION

As other commuters scurried by, sneaking looks and prattling nervously, your fearless rumour-hound surrendered to the pull and drew alongside the formidable figure that stomped across the tarmac in combat boots, beret and camouflage uniform.

It was there, sniffing jet fuel fumes and marching close enough to read the label on Winnie Mandela's web belt that it dawned how distracted and obsessive the press tends to be. Haunting her, accusing her of fomenting plots, of deluding her supporters. Grilling her about conspiracies, about love affairs, missing funds and the hardships of multiple home ownership and high telephone bills.

No, there on the tarmac, as she strode into the south-easter, *Left Behind* wanted the answer to only one question. If those weren't shoulder pads under your uniform, Winnie, could we borrow your workout video sometime?

HOW TO FIGHT CRIME AND WIN REALLY FAST

It took a gravity-stricken apple to clear Isaac Newton's mental block. A hot bath did it for Archimedes. Heroin loosened Charlie Parker's creative spirit.

For Ms H Floren in Somerset West, all it took was a cross-cultural heart-to-heart chat with the char. And the answer to our *horrendous* crime problem came to her in a snap! Easy. This is what she told the *Cape Times*:

"My char tells me that petty criminals in her community are prepared to do any little crime and get caught for the privilege of getting free board and lodging at Pollsmoor Hotel! If criminals had to pay to be in prison, they would think twice before committing a crime."

Kobie Coetsee, give this person a job.

EARNEST, COMMITTED AND LATE, THEY SPED UP THE HILL

A true fable. Call us, we'll prove it. Just don't say we didn't warn you.

There they were: three lefties, earnest, committed and late. Speeding to work. Their eyes glinting with the anticipation of small victories and a warm lunch. Up the hill they go.

Up ahead, another vehicle shyly approaches a stop street. And drifts dreamily on until Wham! right into the lefties. Our three friends scramble out, tracing the bruises and bumps as they sprout, thinking, "Shit, now we're really late, plus we've got to be polite to the cops too".

When, from behind a spout of steam emerges a suit, then a voice, thick as a filofax, apologetic as a sucker punch. "Halow," it says.

Yup. Another World Bank consultant. His first day in SA. Still figuring, "All you do is watch the right. The left will take care of itself." Guess who was insured. Guess who walked up the hill.

WE'RE SORRY, ALL OUR LINES ARE BUSY RIGHT NOW

As a liberation movement, the PAC's record is, well, a touch *modest*. Though, when it comes to running a tight ship, it has no equal — remember what the man said: *One* settler, *one* bullet.

But has the time not arrived to loosen those purse strings a little?

Staff at the SA Democratic Teachers' Union (Sadtu) recently were at the end of their tether. They had spent weeks trying to locate an appropriate PAC official with whom they could chew the fat over aspects of the education crisis.

The PAC's Jo'burg office directed them to Cape Town. Who steered them back up-country. Who said "Sorry, he's overseas, please call so-and-so." Who said ... you get the drift.

Eventually, someone spoke the magic words: Education Secretary. "Where do I find this person?" panted the Sadtu sleuth.

"Dial this number in Pretoria, and ask for the Education Secretary," came the deadpan but polite instructions. "It's a public phone, OK? But if you let it ring, someone will answer and you just ask them to call the Education Secretary for you." ■

PHOTO: PHUMLA RADU (ANC DIP)

■ **WINNIE MANDELA: Jane Fonda meets Cher Guevara?**

Reconstruct

A Work In Progress/New Era supplement issue no. 8

JUNE 1993

Training for transformation

THE LAUNCH OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEGOTIating Forum (LGNF) is a victory for the SA National Civic Organisation (Sanco). Civic associations have finally been acknowledged as legitimate local representative structures by the authorities.

But this victory will be hollow if the organisation and its allies do not have the capacity to participate fully in the working groups.

This means there is an urgent need for training and support, both of Sanco's LGNF delegates and civic association members generally, to allow them to make meaningful contributions to rebuilding the system of local government.

The victory will also be hollow if Sanco is not able to take its constituencies along with it in the negotiating process. Sanco is still weak as a national structure and all kinds of tensions exist between local, regional and national structures.

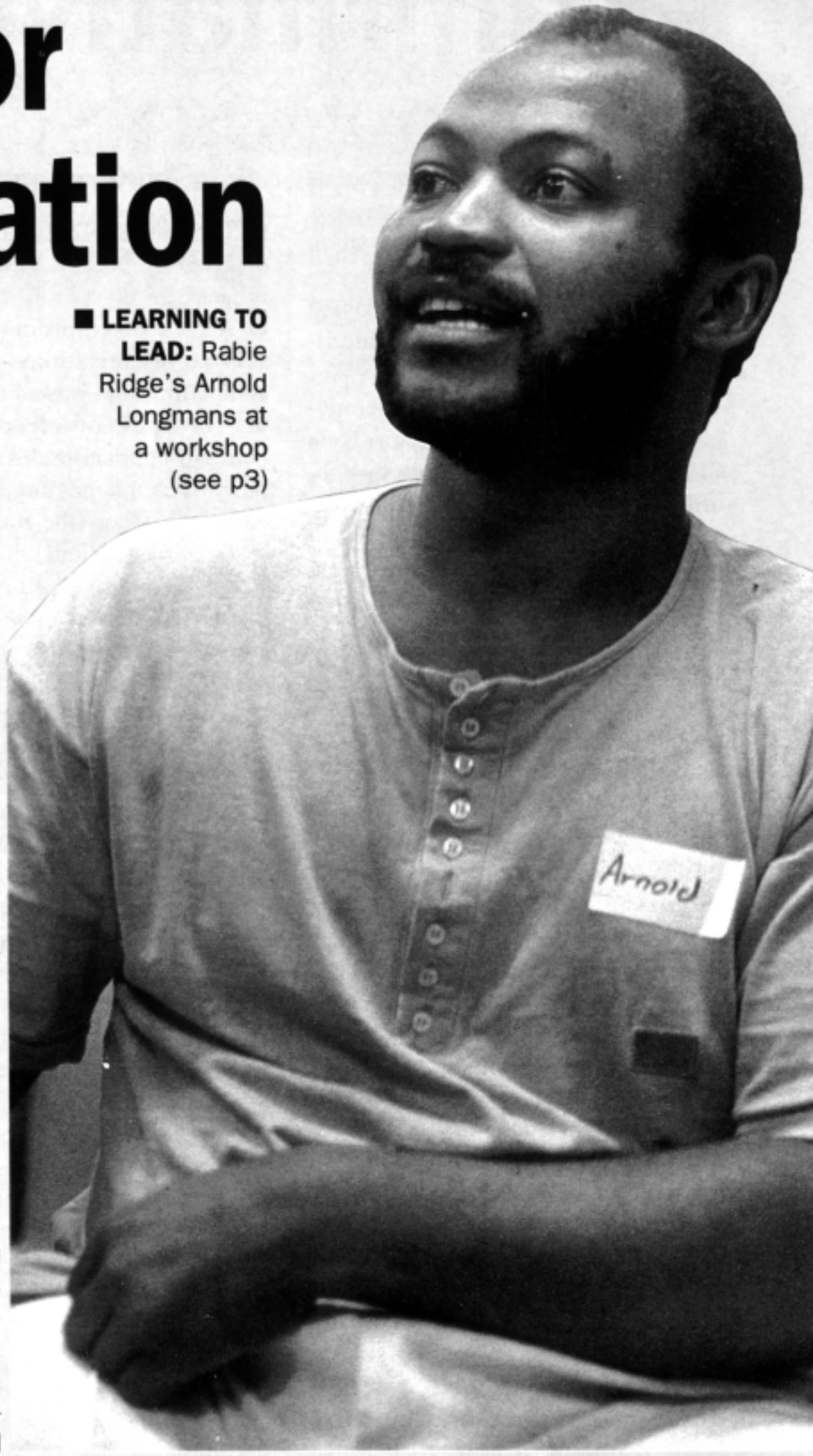
At a local level, most civic associations cannot legitimately claim to represent their community. At best, some civics may represent a particular sector of their community, such as shackdwellers or people living in brick houses.

Centre for Policy Studies' Steven Friedman argues that the term "community" is "virtually meaningless".

"In reality, 'the community', like 'the people', invariably includes a wide range of people with differing interests and values," says Friedman.

"Claims to have consulted or negotiated with 'the community' would, presumably, imply that all these interests and values are represented in the process, a daunting task which is unlikely to be accomplished easily."

This means organisational training is also crucial if civic leaders are to be effective in organising all — or most — sectors of their communities. ■



■ **LEARNING TO LEAD:** Rabie Ridge's Arnold Longmans at a workshop (see p3)

FOCUS ON TRAINING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

CONTRIBUTIONS

Reconstruct **was initiated by the Urban Sector Network to raise issues related to urban development. Contributions should be sent to:**
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Braamfontein 2017

Implementing affirmative action

By Kerry Cullinan

THE URBAN SECTOR NETWORK (USN) has resolved to meet regularly with Sanco and Cosatu to discuss what kind of affirmative action and training is needed and how it should be implemented and monitored.

The Foundation for Contemporary Research's (FCR) director, Kam Chetty, has agreed to oversee this co-ordination. Chetty believes training needs will be driven to a large extent by the needs of the Local Government Negotiating Forum (LGNF). One of the forum's working groups deals specifically with training, and will need input and back-up from service organisations.

There is some frustration with the small scale of training within the USN, and the network is looking into setting up a larger training initiative together with an academic institution.

If the initiative is accepted, it could lead to 150 people being trained in the fields of NGO management, development management and training management over 18 months.

Where are the Africans?

The decision to intensify training was made at a recent USN conference, where Sanco's Lechesa Tsenoli and the ANC's Thozamile Botha urged the network to pay more serious attention to training and affirmative action.

"What is happening to organisations? Why do we not see Africans rising in organisations?" asked Tsenoli. Botha also said it was a problem that the USN was dominated by whites, and said blacks had to be trained urgently.

Tsenoli said problems community organisations had with service organisations included:

- Lack of community control over funds collected by NGOs in the name of the struggle.
- The failure of NGOs to encourage community organisations to be self-reliant.
- A lack of co-ordination between service organisations, which led to competition and wasted resources.
- The lack of clear boundaries between political issues (the responsibility of community organisations) and technical issues (the responsibility of service organisations).

Can't afford it

Most USN members have no clear policy on affirmative action, although they generally try to employ blacks or women when posts become vacant. However, many NGOs complain that skilled black people generally demand salaries that NGOs cannot meet.

The Development Action Group (DAG) has tried to overcome this by giving one or two bursaries a year to African people to study town planning. Once their course is over, the bursary holders are obliged to work for DAG for a certain period.

DAG also has an internship programme, where it sponsors community activists to attend a six-month Housing and Community Development course at UCT. The interns are based at DAG while they attend the course, and project workers are appointed as their mentors.

DAG also believes that special training has to be devised for people in informal settlements, who face "overwhelming problems".

"Organisations [in informal settlements] are young and inexperienced. There is a constant influx of people and little cohesion. Residents have very little or no knowledge or experience of the development process," says DAG's training officer, David Abrahams.

"Traditional training courses on development issues are inadequate," says Abrahams. "Knowledge of negotiations skills and service provision, for example, will not necessarily enhance the capacity of communities to control the development process."

For DAG, capacity building involves:

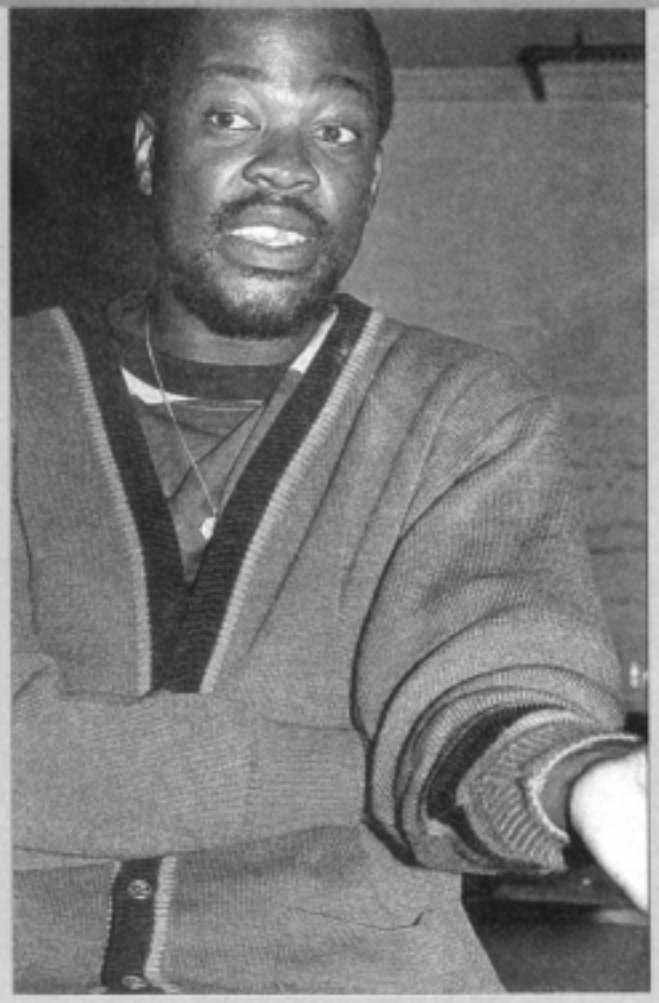
- Teaching organisational skills, such as meeting procedures, report writing, budgeting and planning skills.
- Developing working methodologies that will build trainees' confidence, assertiveness and consciousness, to control community development.
- Ensuring that service organisations build and empower organisations, rather than creating dependency and disempowering organisations.

Into the rural areas

FCR has a conscious policy to overcome urban bias, by running local government courses for rural communities in the Southern Cape, Karoo, Namaqualand, West Coast and Overberg.

In addition, careful attention is paid to gender bias. FCR asserts that at least 40% of course participants should be women. FCR is also trying to address gender inequalities within its own ranks. It has set up an internal working group to address gender issues. Women in the organisation meet separately to discuss problems. However, Chetty admitted that all FCR's co-ordinators are men.

If the USN is to retain credibility within communities, USN members will have to make a concerted effort to implement affirmative action in every aspect of their work. At the same time, guidelines will have to be drawn up to ensure affirmative action is neither token nor undermines organisations' ability to service poverty-stricken communities. ■



PICS: ELMOND JIYANE, DYNAMIC IMAGES

■ **DEVELOPING:** (right) ACO's Philemon Machitela and Kekidca's Amin Wagner and (far right) CAJ's Sam Mokgantsang

Training for stronger civics

A six-month course for civic leaders in the Johannesburg area is nearing completion.

KERRY CULLINAN finds out how it's been going

THE CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS OF Johannesburg (CAJ) has embarked on an amibitious six-month programme to train its own members in a wide range of development issues.

Twenty-eight people from nine CAJ affiliates are attending workshops — run by Sached's Khanya College — in issues such as local government, land and housing and development.

The motivation for the course? According to CAJ, more civic associations are becoming involved in development, which means either having to rely heavily on service organisations — or train their own leaders in technical and managerial skills.

As much of the course work takes place during the week, most participants are unemployed. CAJ education officer Sam Mokgantsang says about 80% of civic activists are unemployed, so this did not affect the selection of trainees much.

Most participants are branch executive members or very active members. However, the Alexandra Civic Organisation (ACO) chose a number of "second layer leadership" and people from other local organisations, such as Cosas, to spread the benefits of the course.

The main guys

For ACO's Philemon Machitela, the local government section came out tops. "Now I am able to understand how local government works and how to deal with the problems our community has with the local authorities."

Amin Wagner, from the Kliptown, Eldorado Park, Klipspruit West Interim Democratic Civic Association (Kekidca), agreed.

"This is most relevant to our work, as we deal mainly with the councjllors and the TPA," said Wagner. "The workshop on local government opened our eyes. We were surprised to find that the town clerk is the main guy; he has so much power."

Wagner also enjoyed learning negotiation skills, "so that we can negotiate with facts and figures — not on the basis of speculation".

Thulani Nkosi from the Soweto Civic Association (SCA) and Arnold 'Giant' Longmans from Rabie Ridge (near Midrand) enjoyed the land study, which identified vacant land in the Witwatersrand.

Next comes action

Through the study, Longmans discovered that Rabie Ridge was not considered to be part of the Witwatersrand. "We now have to mobilise people so that we can be included and become part of the Wits Metropolitan Chamber," he says.

Nkosi also enjoyed the sections on negotiations, capacity building for organisations and local dispute resolution committees.

Machitela too, enjoyed the negotiations section, where he learnt how to plan properly for negotiations, including getting statistics to back his civic's position.

Some civics, particularly the smaller ones, found it difficult to send people on the course and ensure that community work continued. Others — such as civic organisers — had to miss parts of the course to attend to civic matters.

But CAJ's Mokgantsang attended the course to ensure that civic representatives were "committed and consistent" and to evaluate it for CAJ.

Mokgantsang says CAJ is now considering further training for a core of up to 20 of the trainees. CAJ will then try to raise money for these people so that they can be employed full-time in CAJ affiliates and by CAJ itself.

Give us more

Too little time was the only major complaint made by trainees. Nkosi felt the course should run fulltime for a year.

Trainees suggested that debates such as the role of civic associations, their relationship to local authorities, civil society, culture, affirmative action and democracy should be included in future courses.

The last word comes from Phillip Mjacu from Actstop: "I like the way that the course is building participation. We have been arrogant towards government structures without looking for solutions. We must try to find structures that work.

"The course has made me feel I must carry on learning. I have now applied for bursaries and want to keep on studying." ■

PIC: PAUL WEINBERG

■ **INTRICATE PROCESS:** Trainers need to develop a holistic vision

Effective community training

EDGAR PIETERSE
Foundation for
Contemporary Research

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISAtions (NGOs) and community based organisations (CBOs) are increasingly asserting the importance of training. This is an encouraging trend. The Foundation for Contemporary Research (FCR) has been involved in training for the past three years, and has identified some of the essential components of an effective training programme.

FCR conducts the following training courses:

- A 22-week, part-time course on local government.
- Five eight-day residential courses on rural local government.
- A modularised "introduction to development course" for the Education Resource Information Project (ERIP).
- A modularised course on development project management for people in small scale development projects (to be launched this year).

This article will focus on the local government course that is aimed primarily at civic and SA Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) members.

The courses do not try to train future councillors or administrative staff.

The main purpose of the training is to build the CBOs' capacity to engage in local negotiations.

By the end of the course, participants should:

- Have a basic understanding of the various facets of the local government debate.
- Be able to participate effectively in local negotiations.
- Spearhead an internal education and training process.

However, we are increasingly being asked to adapt the courses to prepare people for some level of participation in interim structures. This is the most urgent issue we are investigating.

Selection

FCR proposes a relatively vague list of criteria for course participants, such as basic English literacy, a commitment to passing knowledge on to their organisations and a commitment to attend all sessions.

The participating organisation then has to identify and mandate the most suitable person. The organisation is also supposed to ensure that the person feeds their new skills back into the organisation.

But this has not been that successful. FCR has often had to take responsibility for identifying the most appropriate person, and monitoring their feedback. Ideally this should be done within an organisation's strategic vision, which sets out who should be trained and for what purpose.

Curriculum

The course's content is developed in consultation with involved CBOs, and is complemented by a number of prac-

tical skills transferal programmes. FCR develops specific learning blocks and modules to address the local government theme. CBOs are encouraged to comment on the curriculum, particularly with a view to shaping the content of the next course. This is done through questionnaires, interviews and discussions.

However the present fluidity of local government restructuring makes curriculum development difficult and complex. Course content has to be constantly adapted to ensure that it remains in step with changes.

Affirmative action

It has been difficult to ensure women are adequately represented on our courses. FCR wants at least 40% representation of either gender on each course. This has been met with resistance. CBOS said women did not occupy executive positions so were unlikely candidates for the course. In addition, most civics are only able to send one representative, if any, on the course.

In spite of these obstacles, FCR insisted on more creative ways of dealing with the issue, including suggesting various women activists ourselves. In the pilot year, 35% of trainees were women. Last year we had 45%. This was the result of pushing the debate, a concerted effort by activists within organisations and by head-hunting: proactively identifying and approaching individuals.

Follow-ups

Running such a course leads to a host of particular problems. FCR had to:

- Mediate between organisational demands on trainees and course requirements.
- Find appropriate ways of assessing and monitoring trainees' progress, and their impact within their organisations.
- Contextualise and dampen expectations of trainees, who often developed grandiose hopes about their employability within local government structures on completion of the course.
- Foster discipline and accountability among trainees.
- Follow up trainees after the course.

Follow-up processes have proved to be the most difficult, and we have had to confront a number of questions. When does FCR's responsibility stop and that of the mandating organisation begin? How do we ensure that trainees have the opportunity to participate in local government transition? How do we harness the pool of resources developed through these courses, to ensure that it impacts at a metropolitan level?

FCR currently takes responsibility for bringing together all trainees who have completed our course twice a year. At these meetings, we inform people of further training opportunities and try to assess their impact within organisations.

But this is inadequate. A broader educational and training framework needs to be in place to allow people to progress from one area to another, and advance their personal learning within their organisations.

Challenges

Implementing training programmes has proven to be an intricate and dynamic process, especially if one wants to address a CBO's specific needs and deliver a quality service. As we gain experience, our vision and understanding of what is required to increase CBOs' capacity and facilitate further educational opportunities becomes clearer.

Training NGOs and progressive educators need to develop a holistic vision of the future educational framework that allows for multiple levels and access points. This could result in nationally accepted standards. To achieve this, NGOs and CBOs need greater coordination and rationalisation.

New opportunities and ways of learning are desperately needed — and possible. We have to wrestle these opportunities from formal institutions and implement training opportunities that are exciting, relevant and community driven. ■

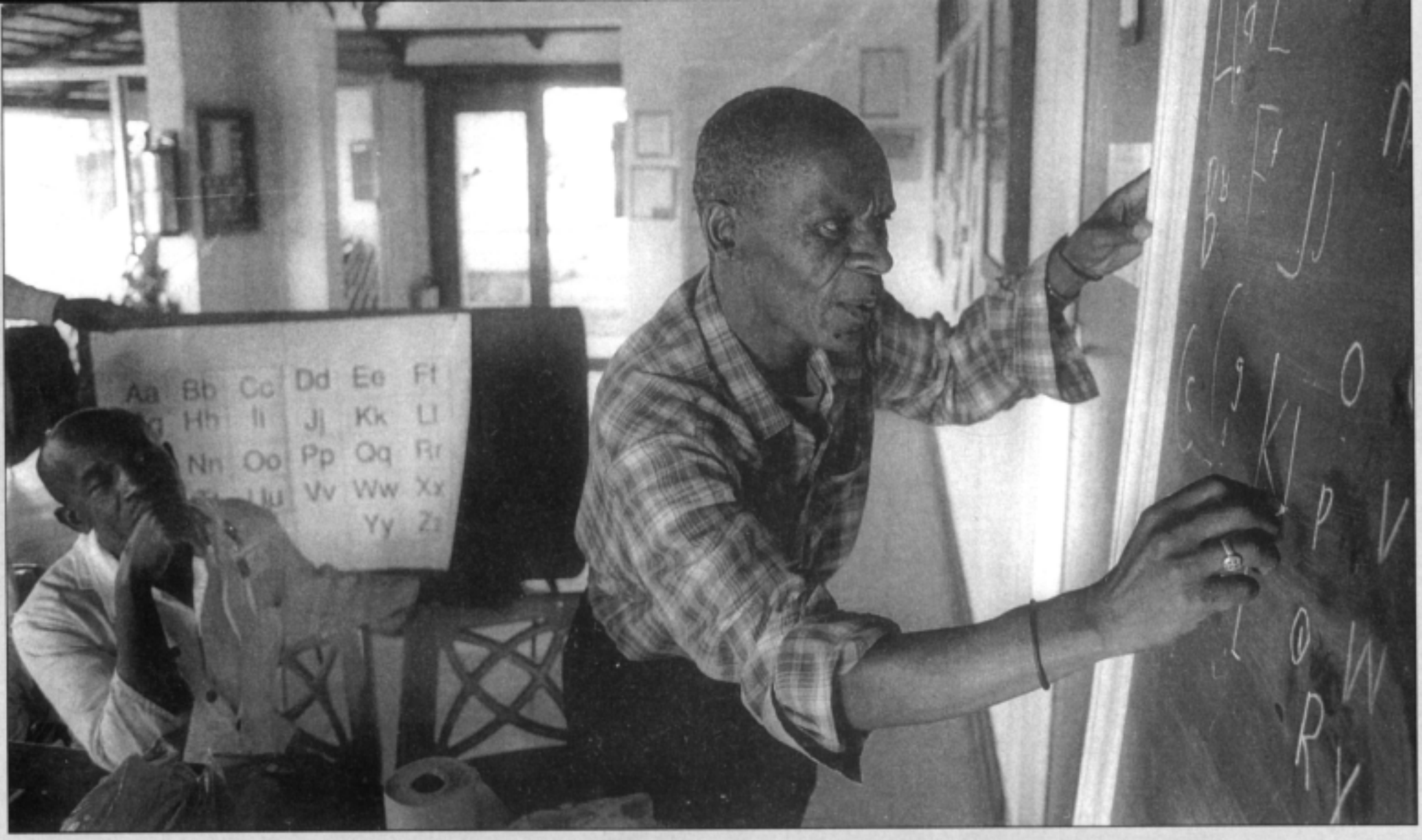
Cosatu on training

Cosatu believes that demands around education and training should be included in a national Reconstruction Accord. The accord will be an agreement between the ANC and Cosatu — with civics' backing — to ensure people's basic demands will be addressed once there is a democratic government.

In a discussion document on the accord drawn up by Cosatu's central executive committee (CEC), a number of demands are identified. These include:

- **The creation of a single national education and training department which plays a central role in addressing the education crisis caused by apartheid.**
- **Recognising that workers have acquired skills through experience as well as formal education, and linking their skills to grading and pay.**
- **Training workers to advance along a career path, with employers being obliged to help finance education and training.**
- **Establishing a representative body to set clear national standards and curricula for adult basic education and skills training. Workers who are trained should be given nationally recognised certificates to enable them to get jobs in other industries.**
- **Paid time off for workers to attend training courses. The unemployed and retrenched should also have the right to be retrained to help them get jobs.**
- **Union participation in industrial training boards. These boards should be expanded to include education (eg literacy training).**

Cosatu has suggested that a National Education Forum be set up to negotiate educational demands. It has also called on its affiliates to investigate the existing training boards, resources for training and possible legislation to improve education. It also wants adult basic education (ABE) to be linked to job creation, public works and development programmes. ■



PIC: PAUL WEINBERG

■ **INTEGRATED PLANNING:** Training is not an end in itself

No plan – no progress

Training and capacity building are the new keys to the funders' doors. Millions of rands are earmarked for non-governmental and community based organisations' training programmes. But they will have little impact unless there is a clear link between the programmes and the strategic plans of the organisations they are designed for. **RICK DE SATGE** reports

FACING PROBLEMS IN YOUR ORGANIsation? Can't seem to make progress? Need to reorientate yourself towards development? Then you need training — nothing a good training course can't fix, or so the current wisdom goes.

The fruits of this wisdom are to be found in the mushrooming of education and training courses on offer. However, look a bit closer at what is happening and the following scenario may unfold.

There you are, a trainer in a service organisation. Your organisation is funded and the funders are making it known that money is available for training and capacity building. Some of them are also dropping hints to community based organisations (CBOs) that cash is there for the asking and, in some cases, are actively putting their money up front. "We have X thousand/million rands available for a training programme. Are you interested?"

Tempted by amounts that range from anything between R50 000 for a sub-regional programme to several million rands for something national in scope, it won't be very long before either you are approached by a CBO or you set out in search of one.

So what happens after the inevitable meeting? You have a request for training so you do a needs assessment — right? And the needs assessment produces a long shopping list of training needs. You try to design a curriculum (which another service organisation has probably designed before, but you have to spend the money that you have been given).

The CBO is responsible for finding the people to attend the training course. You don't interfere. The community knows best.

Dates are agreed and venues are found. You organise a residential course so that there are no interferences. Participants travel to a training centre and training gets underway. The course is concluded. There is a course evaluation — a few critical comments are made, a few suggestions but overall everyone seems satisfied. Case closed and then you are off to design the next course.

Many millions later, it is evaluation time. Consultants fly in to do an impact assessment and there it is — your worst nightmare — nothing much has changed. Scores of explanations are put forward. The training was inappropriate. The CBO was disorganised. It lacked "absorptive capacity". The non-governmental organisation (NGO) lacked proficiency. It failed to transfer skills. The wrong people were selected for training. The level was wrong. People were not able to apply what they learnt. There was no follow up. The context changed, creating new priorities and so on.

The result of all this often leads to the parties bad-mouthing each other. But the roots of the problems are seldom to be found here. They feed on a flawed process where education and training have been reduced to stand-alone activities and became ends in themselves.

Understanding 'strategic'

People use the term strategic a bit like those "splat" stickers you see on certain types of car — indiscriminately. (How many times does the word strategic appear in this magazine?) Virtually everything is prefixed by the word strategic these days. There are strategic choice, responses, options, plans, management ... the list is endless.

If you want to lend weight to your proposition, describe it as strategic. The result, of course, is that the meaning of the term distorts with overuse. In some circles, the use of the term is an indication that some historic compromise has been brokered.

All of this is a great pity because strategic planning is a key concept in the current context. How does strategic planning differ from plain ordinary planning? And what is its relevance to effective education, training and capacity-building programmes?

Most of us understand planning as a process of clarifying what you want to do, setting some goals and objectives and then getting on with the job. Sounds fair enough, but the danger is that you get so involved in the planning process that you ignore what's happening around you. In this scenario, you complete your plan — it looks great — but the world out there has changed and the goal posts have shifted with it.

Strategic planning is about understanding and managing change and its impact on people and organisations. The basic idea is that you are continually analysing the changing environment to stay one step ahead of the game.

Strategic planning process

The link between strategic planning and effective training is crucial. While the detail is beyond the scope of this article, there are certain key steps in the process. These can be summarised as follows:

- You must understand what you are doing now and analyse how well you are doing it.
- You must understand the key features of the social, political and economic context in which you operate and try to project how they will change.
- You must analyse the key trends and likely changes and decide what their implications will be for what you are doing now and what you plan to do in future.
- Based on your understanding of what is happening, what is changing and how the organisation wants to impact on the situation, you develop your strategic plan.
- The plan must anchor strategy with structures and systems to ensure effective organisational development.
- Finally, there must be ways to continually monitor what you are doing in relation to further changes so that you can readjust plans to stay in control.

How does this work in practice? Imagine you are doing strategic planning in a civic association. The transition to democratically elected local government is imminent.

The transition will have major implications for the mission, shape and role of the civic. Civic leaders are likely to be elected into local government. What will this mean? Only once you are clear about this can you identify your education and training needs and clarify who should be trained to do what.

And that's not the end of the process. The training has to be monitored, people reintegrated back into their organisations and the changing situation reassessed as part of a continuous spiral.

To conclude. There are real dangers in pursuing donor money to launch mass education and training programmes as ends in themselves.

We need to move towards focused education and training which ensures that we build organisation and strengthen social movements.

This approach requires a great deal of skill and flexibility and it is urgent that community based organisations develop strategies together with the organisations which service them. The opportunities of the current situation will not last for long and we must move to seize the day! ■

● Originally from Zimbabwe, De Satge now works for Planact

There are real dangers in pursuing donor money to launch mass education and training programmes as ends in themselves

University offers community course

The University of Cape Town (UCT) offers a 15-week Housing and Community Development course each year to help community workers deal with community development.

The course falls under the construction economics and development department and a steering committee that includes community representatives. Course director Professor Bruce Boaden says the primary aim of the course is to "equip low-income communities with the skills to participate meaningfully in decision-making regarding the development of their area".

It runs for three days a week, and this year's course is due to start on 7 June. There is space for 25 people who have passed matric or have suitable experience and are proficient in English. Certificates are awarded to those who pass.

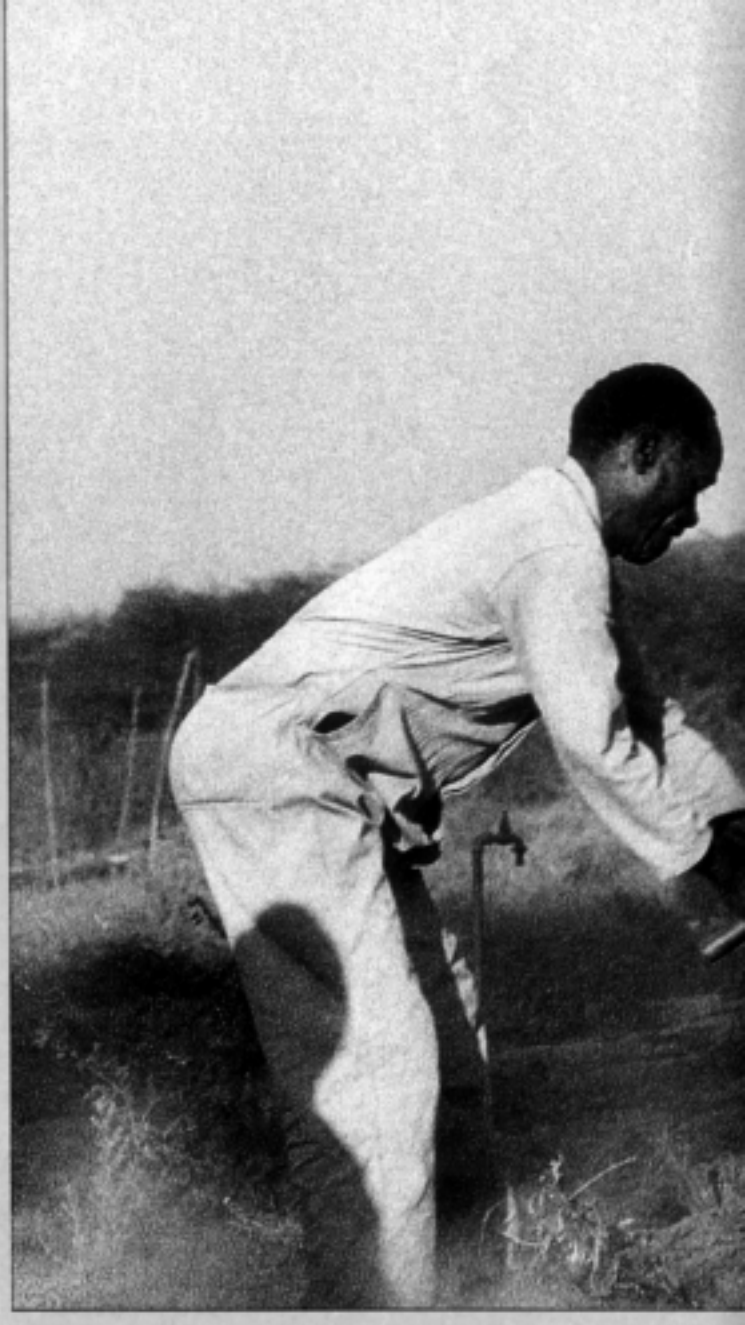
Seven subjects are covered: social and political aspects of housing; an introduction to town and regional planning; construction technology and drawing; cost and quantities estimating; management of low income housing projects; housing finance; and an introduction to the use of computers.

Students also have to undertake practical assignments, including a major project.

Lessons from Zimbabwe

The worms and the peach tree

PIC: PAUL WEINBERG (SOUTHLIGHT)



■ **DIGGING FOUNDATIONS:** But Zimbabw
co-operatives did not get the kind of
support they needed to flourish

'*Zanu-PF planted and tended the peach tree. Zanu-PF is entitled to reap her peaches.*' — ZANU-PF election manifesto, 1980. It didn't take long for the Zimbabwean revolution to go bad. Many worms found their way to the fruit — among them a lethal combination of donor aid and inappropriate training and organisational development strategies. In South Africa, the peaches are still green but the same worms are already at work. **RICK DE SATGE** reports

In 1980, Zanu-PF came to power on a socialist ticket with a massive popular majority. But by 1983, it was clear that Zimbabwe was not on any road to socialism. And yet this was a land where, a few years earlier, thousands of people had taken up arms to fight for their liberation. True, everyone had a different idea of what this liberation meant. For some it was land to farm. For others it was education, the right to work and to earn a living wage.

During the war, socialism was another word for change. Few people understood the meaning of the term. But what did that matter when to say you were a socialist meant you wanted your land back, a roof over your head, a job, education for your children and the power to shape a more equal society?

For a while Zanu and Zapu — the parties which organised Zanla and Zipra to fight the liberation war — seemed to be talking about socialism we could all understand. But even before the politicians came to power, they started to give socialism new meaning.

We had thought socialism was about thinking critically, developing democratic organisations to bring about the changes we all wanted. But we soon understood that our leaders thought differently. They didn't want us to think at all.

Why else did they want people to go to rallies and shout "Pambiri ne Zanu! Pasi ne Zapu!" (Forward with ZANU, Down with ZAPU!) Why else did they start a war against the people of Matabeleland and tell us it was to defend the revolution? Clearly our leaders didn't want democracy, either within the party or outside it. To think differently, to question, was to be a dissident, a sell-out.

We had thought socialism was about building our society in the interests of the majority. Again our leaders had different ideas. They gave us the example of people who called themselves socialists while filling their pockets as fast as possible. Every day our politicians and their media spoke of socialism and twisted its meaning. In their mouths socialism began to sound like corruption and abuse of power.

But can we blame the wrecking of the Zimbabwean revolution on a few corrupt politicians? Were not donor agencies and NGOs among the back seat drivers?

So many smiling donors

Even before the new flag ran up the pole, Zimbabwe was swarming with donors, each with a different perspective on the agreed task on national reconstruction. At the bilateral level there was a hurried search to measure the gap between rhetoric and practice and find the right people to do business with. Some money became available for health, education, agricultural extension, skills training, plant and equipment — but virtually none for the purchase and development of land under the "willing buyer - willing seller" agreement brokered at Lancaster House.

Simultaneously scores of international NGOs opened offices and launched national programmes which often combined direct funding of grassroots projects, the placement of volunteers and financial support for local NGOs.

The rise and fall of the co-operative sector

After the war, thousands of fighters from the liberation armies were demo-

bilised. They received a demobilisation allowance of Z$ 4 400 (about R7 000). Denied employment in the formal sector, many decided to form an independent co-operative organisation. The fact that the organisation had an explicit socialist agenda quickly made the co-operative sector strategic for many donors. The following extract, from 'The story of New Day Co-operative', illustrates donor impact on thousands of co-operators who found themselves on the land, but without the capital and support services to make their ventures work:

"In desperation, we sent people to town to see if they could find some help from the ministry or non-government organisations. To our surprise, we found that there were several donor organisations with money to spend on co-operatives. In fact, it was almost as if these organisations were competing with each other to find co-ops to support. We did not think about this much at the time. We were so desperate to solve our problems.

"We soon learnt that each donor had different ideas about how to do things. Some wanted to donate inputs. Others wanted to support projects controlled by women. Some wanted to pay for advisers and volunteers to help us with our work. Some of these donors wanted written reports. Others would not trust us with cash — they bought everything for us. Almost all the donors thought we could solve all our problems if we were given some money and a little technical training. At the time we thought so too.

"For a year or two, it looked as if the co-op was on the road to success. We thought the money we got was free, but looking back I'm not so sure. We had to go back to the donors to ask for more money for the next season or the next batch of poultry.

"Then we learnt a new word: dependency. The donors started using this word a lot. They said they were worried that we had come to depend on them. They decided this was a bad thing, so some of the donors said that in future we would have to pay back the money we got from them.

"We did not want to be dependent either. But we didn't have much choice. If the donors decided we must pay back the money, who were we to argue? So now we got different loans with different terms from some of our donors. We used a lot of this loan money to buy fertilisers and seed. Then we had a serious drought. Our crops failed. We could not pay back the loans.

"Now we heard the donors talking about how co-ops lacked management skills. Many donors became discouraged. When we went to see them they told us there was no more money in their budgets. They talked about the need for evaluation. They hired consultants to see how their money had been spent. The consultants reported that the money had been wasted. Our co-op now experienced an aid drought. Money which had once flowed like water now dried up."

Chicken feed

At the same time that the donors funded co-operatives, they supported a range of local NGOs and training centres. Almost all these organisations offered training courses which were completely unrelated to the organisational and development contexts in which people worked.

You could choose from a range of courses on how to keep books, run a meeting, repair a tractor, raise chickens, grow vegetables etc. However when it came to support for building effective organisation, understanding development, planning skills, critical thinking and the like, very little was on offer.

The organisations which offered training often straddled serious internal contradictions. On the one hand, they peddled fashionable concepts of democratic organisation and participatory development — while adopting the most conservative management models for their own operations.

Tasting the fruit

Collective disempowerment and a severe weakening of once vibrant social movements has resulted from the combined impact of:

- Political centralisation and the parallel corruption and abuse of power.
- Inappropriate development strategies.
- Uncritical engagement with donor aid, culminating in a World Bank structural adjustment programme.
- Ineffective training and lack of attention to organisational development.

Its most serious expression is found in the feebleness of political opposition and the lack of practical alternatives to current policies. The lessons for South Africa should be clear. ■

● *De Satge worked with the Popular Education Collective, a Zimbabwean NGO, for nine years.*

In a nutshell

- The Local Government Negotiating Forum (LGNF) was launched on 22 March 1993 after four months of negotiations.
- It is made up of two delegations — statutory and non-statutory bodies — which each have 30 representatives. The statutory bodies include state local government employees and councillors. The non-statutory delegation is headed by Sanco and includes representatives from the ANC, SACP and Cosatu, particularly the SA Municipal Workers Union (Samwu).
- Four women were part of the non-statutory delegation, while not a single woman graced the statutory delegation — an issue that Sanco said needed to be addressed urgently.
- Sanco vice-president Lechesa Tsenoli and deputy local government minister Y Makda chair the forum. Each delegation has six representatives on the management committee and two on the secretariat.
- Decision making is by consensus. Any decision that contradicts agreements negotiated at Codesa will be invalid.
- There are three working groups: legal and constitutional; services and finance and management, administration and training. Each delegation can send up to eight delegates to each group.
- Government bodies are obliged to supply these working groups with any information they request.

Forum lays the basis for local democracy

The Local Government Negotiating Forum (LGNF) has the formidable task of directing the transition of local authorities, reports **KERRY CULLINAN**

THE SA NATIONAL CIVIC ORGANISATION (Sanco) wants legislation in place by July that will facilitate the end of all apartheid local authorities and their replacement with appointed interim local and metropolitan councils (ILCs and IMCs).

However, elections for permanent local authorities are only likely in 1995 at the earliest. First the national constitution, which will define the boundaries and powers of local authorities, will have to be adopted.

These proposals were made at the launch of the Local Government Negotiating Forum (LGNF) on 22 March by a Sanco delegation, which included ANC, Cosatu and SACP representatives.

Thozamile Botha, Sanco executive member and ANC local government head, said the interim councils could either be appointed by the provincial administrators (in consultation with provincial monitoring commissions of the LGNF) or by the regional sub-committees of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC).

"We would prefer the TEC sub-councils, or regional executive councils, to appoint the interim councils as they are more representative. But if these delay, we would consider using the present administrators," said Botha.

Membership of the ILCs and IMCs would be negotiated in local and metropolitan negotiating forums. These forums would then forward lists to those in charge of making appointments.

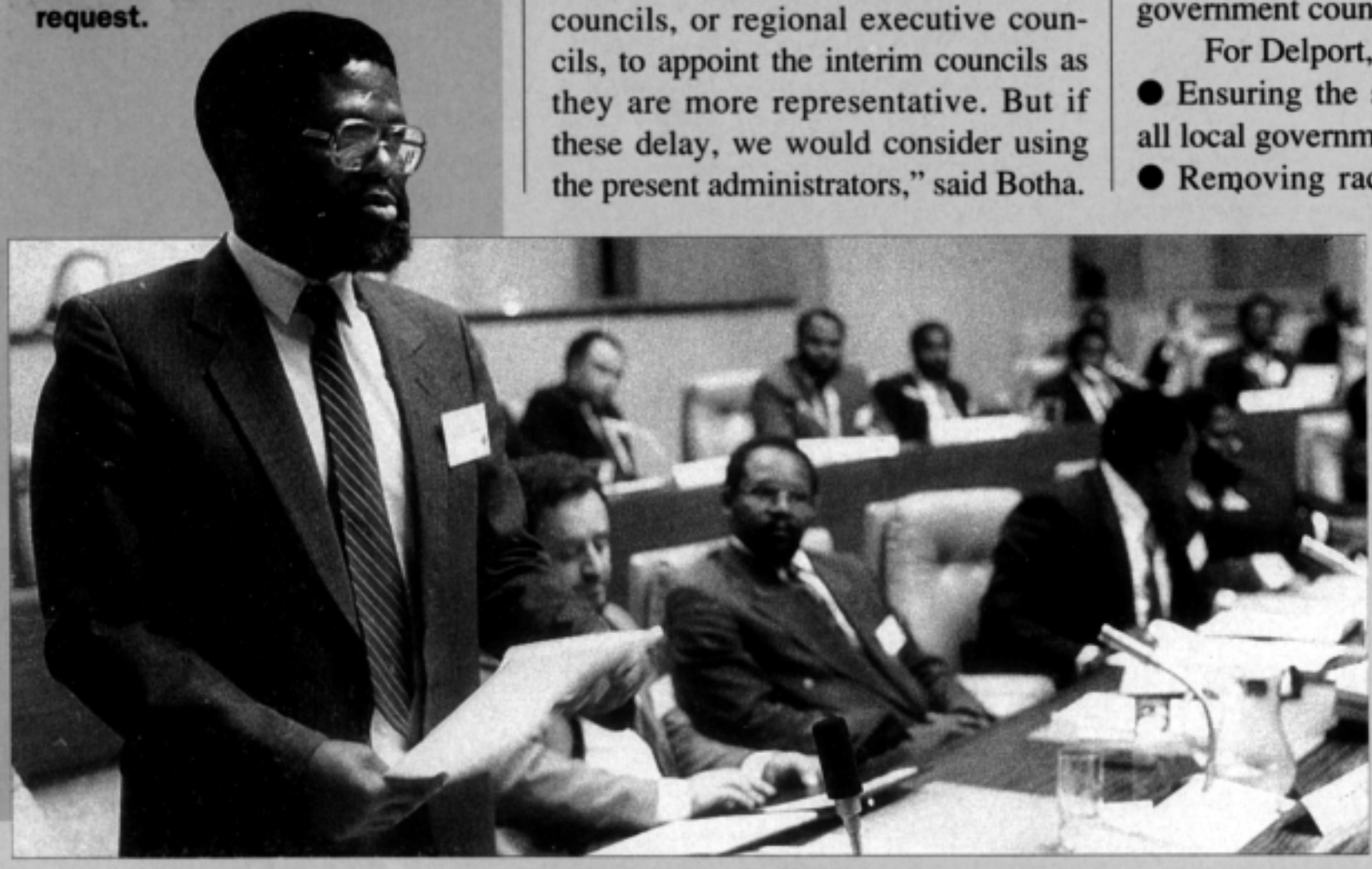
Not for me, thank you

However, local government minister Tertius Delport, who also addressed the LGNF launch, spoke out against interim councils.

"I am not in favour of transitional measures that would result in appointed councils being established, taking over the powers, duties and functions of city councils," said Delport. "We should rather move quickly to the point where elections could be held at local levels for newly established local government councils."

For Delport, this would involve:

- Ensuring the same laws applied to all local governments.
- Removing racial references in the



■ **LOCAL POWER:** Moses Mayekiso addresses the forum's launch

PIC: KENDRIDGE MATHABATHE

laws.

● "A process making provision for the merger of adjacent local authorities".

But this merger process of unrepresentative councils — which accelerated after the Interim Measures Act (IMA) was passed — has been criticised by civics as "unilateral restructuring".

The LGNF developed precisely because the civic movement rejected the IMA and sought to standardise negotiations around local authorities. Any hasty "solutions" at local level — without clarity about the homelands etc — are likely to be rejected by Sanco.

Sanco's first major victory

Sanco first proposed the formation of the LGNF at a meeting with government representatives in August last year. At the time, the government was trying to push the civic body into the existing National Committee of Local Government Associations (NCOLGA).

Despite the fact that the LGNF is Sanco's first major victory, civic leaders were cautious at the launch. They know that a key aspect of rebuilding local government will involve persuading residents to resume rent and service payments.

In addition, Sanco structures are weak. Yet many of the civic movement's best leaders will have to be involved in little else but the forum, and will not have time to build organisation.

Sanco president Moses Mayekiso emphasised at the launch that the LGNF's progress should be measured by "the extent to which changes in local government, both now and in the future, improve the daily lives of the most disadvantaged sectors: black communities, women, the poor, the rural areas".

Thozamile Botha expressed similar concerns: "To avoid the impression that we have sold out, our people must feel the difference [to their lives]. This forum must have political muscle. We are not debating the Black Local Authorities (BLAs) etc, but a formula to replace all apartheid structures with interim democratic structures."

What about corruption?

SA Municipal Workers Union (Samwu) executive member Salie Manie stressed that "democratic elections do not necessarily provide the solution for [democratising] the administration".

"How do we curb corruption? How do we stop the municipal and public sector from being open to abuse?" asked Manie.

"In the last two to four weeks before the financial year ends, I have never seen so much wastage [in the municipalities] to ensure that the previous year's budget allocation is spent. This is done to ensure that the following year's allocation is increased," said Manie, who works in the Cape Town municipality.

Manie also called for a work ethos to be developed in the public sector, where people were made accountable to their constituencies.

He emphasised the need for the National Training Board for local government to be restructured to address the shortage of skills: "We have the people and the willingness, but not the skills .... Many people in senior positions are also totally untrained. How do we retrain them?"

Deputy local government minister Y Makda also stressed the need for training, particularly around "orientation to the public sector environment, political accountability, managerial processes, financial management and accountability".

However, he warned that there was little money for such training and that "bridging courses" to prepare political role-players for new local government had a "high conflict potential".

Meanwhile, Boet van der Merwe, who represented organised local government, stressed that "under no circumstances should ... the present experienced personnel of local government be disadvantaged or lost".

Different agendas

Although delegates at the forum have been divided into statutory and non-statutory delegations, there is diversity within each group.

Although the statutory delegation is dominated by National Party members, there are a sprinkling of Democratic Party members such as Ian Davidson.

Some delegates are "career" public servants who are keen to strike deals to entrench their positions. Others, such as the delegate who objected to the use of "non-racial, non-sexist and financially viable" in the forum constitution, are likely to be on the right of the NP.

Some showed little interest in proceedings, falling asleep after lunch, or sneaking out at 4pm — ironically at the moment when Manie was stressing the need for a work ethic in the public service.

The non-statutory delegation goes under Sanco's banner. However, ANC, SACP and Cosatu members are also included as Sanco delegates. The delegation is generally politically united, with few — if any — delegates outside the ANC fold.

Tension is more likely to arise between representatives to the forum and their constituencies, which could have serious implications for Sanco's credibility.

Even in local level negotiations, civic leaders have battled to take their constituencies with them — particularly when residents are expected to resume rent and service payments. Many civics are weak and unable to hold proper reportbacks. Thus getting mandates from the grassroots and ensuring that local civics are kept in touch with developments at the LGNF will have to be a major focus for Sanco. ■

For Sanco, the LGNF will only succeed if it addresses six major issues:

- **the legitimacy of the structures to which service charges and other payments are made;**
- **the quality and quantity of services;**
- **the maintenance of services;**
- **writing off of arrears;**
- **affordable tariffs; and,**
- **education of all South Africans of the changes that lie ahead (to address issues such as the culture of segregation)**

Little headway with local negotiations

LEILA MCKENNA and **PASCAL MOLOI** of Planact examine trends in local negotiations in the Transvaal

LOCAL NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN initiated countrywide, mainly as a result of the inability of local councils to deliver services. While some negotiations have brought a little relief to communities, none have gone far enough.

Checklist

- **259 local negotiating forums have been set up nationally**
- **100 agreements have been reached**
- **66 agreements have been made in terms of the Interim Measures Act**

While the nature of the forums has varied from area to area, civics' demands have been essentially the same:

- In the short term, they want the removal of the black local authorities (BLAs), writing off of arrears, affordable tariffs, the transfer of rented houses and the delivery of services.
- In the longer term, they want the establishment of one city, one budget and one administration.

The government's response to the spread of local negotiations was the Interim Measures Act (IMA), passed on 27 June 1991. The IMA empowered state bodies to decide on the course of negotiations, and reduced the status of local negotiating forums.

The act was later amended to compel the establishment of joint administrations between black and white local authorities by the beginning of this year. In some areas, this resulted in civics being bypassed entirely. The amendment also tried to involve white local authorities (WLAs) involved in financing townships.

Resistance to the IMA provided impetus to the establishment of the Local Government Negotiating Forum (LGNF).

Achievements

Although the achievements of forums varied from area to area, general trends are:

- Negotiations strengthened the civics involved. Leaders learnt how local government worked and how to negotiate.
- The talks also helped to build organisation, as residents could be mobilised around issues. If negotiations were successful, they delivered tangible improvements to people's lives.
- Civics were recognised as a major stakeholder in local government, that had earned the right to be involved in its transformation.

Soweto was one of the first areas to start negotiations, early in 1989. The Soweto Accord brought the transfer of rented houses, writing off of arrears and the setting of an interim service charge. Eskom also took over the provision of electricity.

The Soweto talks also led to the establishment of the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber, which includes civics and local authorities in greater Johannesburg to look at setting up one city.

In **Benoni**, negotiations between the Wattville Concerned Residents' Committee (WCRC) and the Benoni Town Council (BTC) achieved a moratorium on arrears and affordable tariffs. An agency agreement was reached with the BTC, which took charge of delivering services. However, this has not yet happened.

Electricity provision has been a battle. However, from May 1, Eskom took full delivery in Wattville and Daveyton. It has also devoted some revenue from electricity tariffs to developing a network in Wattville.

In the **Vaal**, an agreement was reached in August 1991 about arrears, upgrading, transfer of houses, services to shacks and hostel upgrading.

In **Atteridgeville**, the Atteridgeville Saulsville Residents' Organisation (Asro) managed to secure an end to electricity cut-offs and negotiated interim service charges. During the talks, all but two BLA councillors resigned.

In **Alexandra**, the Regional Services Council (RSC) contracted the Sandton and Randburg councils in an

■ **ILLEGITIMATE:** Government promotion of the Black Local Authorities, such as in the 1988 municipal elections, failed dismally

agency agreement to perform certain management and technical functions in Alexandra. Eskom also supplies electricity directly to those houses electrified (20% of Alexandra).

Services in Alexandra have improved to a certain extent. The technical ability to maintain services has been created through a Technical Working Committee, councillors have been removed, tariffs are low and there has been some IDT-funded development.

PIC: GILL DE

■ **INEFFECTIVE:** Communities rejected councils and demanded one city, one council

Failures

Very few negotiations have moved beyond agreements around tariffs, the ending of rent boycotts and — in some cases — minor adjustments to administrative systems.

All local level negotiations have encountered the same obstacles:

- There has been little improvement in services.
- The WLAs tend to refuse to share their resources with surrounding black areas.
- Civics often lack the capacity to deal with the WLAs, which have taken over administrating a number of townships.
- Local authorities have engaged in unilateral restructuring outside the negotiating forums.
- Once agreements had been reached, the local authority could decide how to implement it. Often agreements were distorted, or not implemented at all.
- Although some BLAs have been replaced by administrators, the legal status of township local authorities has not changed.
- The IMA allows local authorities to decide who to negotiate with and provincial administrations (eg the TPA) can override local negotiations.
- Civics' resources are often drained by negotiations, as leadership are involved in talks and cannot devote sufficient attention to building organisation.

Other problems have also arisen. Communities have been disempowered to some extent, as in many cases there has been little mandating and reporting on processes within the negotiations. Very few civic members really understand the issues and leaders run the risk of negotiating above people's heads.

Some BLAs also have been given a new lease of life through the negotiations, particularly since the IMA was passed.

There is also the possibility of tensions arising between the civics and municipal workers. In both Alexandra and Atteridgeville, the WLAs now controlling the townships are talking of staff rationalisation, which will result in retrenchments.

In Benoni, the agency agreement only catered for Wattville — probably because neighbouring Daveyton, with a population of over 500 000 people, is much bigger than Wattville (about 30 000) requiring much more effort.

In the Vaal, problems arose when the WLAs tried to reach bilateral agreements with Sharpeville, Roshnee and Rust Ter Val, thereby sidestepping the shack areas. There have also been few gains in terms of service delivery in the Vaal. A key problem is the WLAs' refusal to share resources.

Despite agreements having been reached in Atteridgeville, there has been no improvement in service delivery and administration.

The Pretoria City Council (PCC), which took over Atteridgeville's administration, continues to nurse the slight NP majority over the Conservative Party (CP) and fears alienating white ratepayers.

In Alexandra, the agency agreement is very limited. WLAs do not put their own money into developing Alexandra. Instead they are paid by the Regional Services Council (RSC) to assist the township. Recently, a new leadership in Sandton's council has expressed reservations about merging with Alexandra and Randburg.

Very few local negotiations have even taken off in Eastern Transvaal towns, mainly as a result of CP-controlled councils' hardline attitudes. In Ermelo and Carolina, the councils cut off services, including water, in a bid to crush rent and service boycotts. Although Eskom has taken over electricity supplies in a number of areas, services, resources and funds generally lie in the hands of the conservative WLAs.

Possible solutions

The LGNF has to urgently establish national guidelines for the transition of local government.

Immediate interim issues are the establishment of single local administrations to replace BLAs, WLAs and coloured and indian management committees and local affairs committees.

This is to ensure that local restructuring processes are inclusive of community and local organisations and decisions are implemented by local forums, not existing apartheid structures.

The IMA will have to be replaced by interim laws to deal with service provision, restructuring and finance. The forum will also have to deal with the consequences of restructuring, such as staff rationalisation, retrenchments and training programmes. It will also have to decide how decisions are implemented.

In the longer term, policy options will also have to be negotiated and forwarded to the national negotiations. ■

IN BRIEF

Health privatised

The government is in the process of handing over state hospitals to provincial authorities, who in turn will hand them over to municipalities. Although the government claims this is to ensure that the hospitals are run efficiently, it seems to be the first step to privatise hospitals. The state has not yet indicated who will pick up the bill for running the hospitals. If this burden is passed on to municipalities, they will have little choice but to privatise the hospitals.

Row over Delport

Local Government minister Tertius Delport is trying to pre-empt and undermine discussions in the Local Government Negotiating Forum (LGNF), according to Sanco.

Sanco was reacting to Delport's recent parliamentary speech, where he put forward a number of proposals for local government elections. These proposals are expected to be tabled as a bill soon.

Included in Delport's proposals are separate voters' rolls for property owners and non-property owners, and weak metropolitan government. These have been rejected by Sanco.

Sanco president Moses Mayekiso added that local elections could only be held after a constituent assembly had worked out national guidelines for such elections.

Sanco says while every political party has the right to put forward its policy proposals, Delport seemed to be trying to undermine the LGNF. He had labelled it as "unrepresentative", said ANC and SANCO executive member Thozamile Botha.

But, said Botha, "the minister is aware that the Forum has an inclusive policy and that criteria for participation of different interest groups is being worked out".

"The government appears to want to treat the Forum merely as an advisory body," added Botha.

Tembisa coughs up

Tembisa residents agree to end their seven-year rent and service boycott, after reaching agreement with the township administrator. ■

■ **PROTECTION:** Trust aims to help exploited homeowners

Watchdog to stop housing rip-offs

FOR EVERY SATISFIED LOW-INCOME home buyer, there may be as many as nine others who have been ripped off. This astounding figure was revealed by Lawyers for Human Rights' (LHR) Brian Levenson at the recent launch of the Housing Consumer Protection Trust (HCPT).

"About 60% of complaints we deal with come from people who have had their deposits stolen," said Levenson, who heads LHR's Housing Rights Unit.

Developers, contractors, landlords, land speculators, government officials, estate agents and financial brokers were all involved in exploiting low-income families, said Shell's Humphrey Khosa, chairperson of the HCPT. Most vulnerable were families buying houses for about R45 000.

The HCPT was formed after two years of discussions involving civics, service organisations, unions and NGOs. Aside from Khosa and Levenson, trust executive members are Cas Coovadia (Community Banking Project), Alistair Rendall (Urban Sector Network), Jill Strelitz (Urban Foundation), Geoff Budlender (Legal Resources Centre) and Dominic Mduli (Sanco).

It has three main aims:

- Introducing legal mechanisms to protect low-income families, such as an industry ombudsperson.
- Encouraging standards for the industry. This could include setting up a housing watchdog and a code of conduct for builders and banks that finance houses.
- Extending legal services and consumer education to "help low-income families enforce their housing rights and prevent their own exploitation".

The trust has identified 14 advice offices nationwide to help with this task.

Banking on change

The trust hopes to encourage financial institutions to ensure that the houses they finance are well built.

"Banks have tended to see their role in an old fashioned, orthodox fashion," said Levenson. "We believe they have a duty to ensure the quality of the houses they finance. We hope they will be open to meeting us on that."

Budlender warned that consumers were not in a position to make choices when building or buying houses because of the shortage of housing and land. "Unless the supply side is also addressed, consumers will have difficulty [asserting their rights]."

Sanco's Lechesa Tsenoli said the trust was part of a number of initiatives on the housing front, such as the National Housing Forum (NHF), to address the housing crisis. ■

Drawing the lines in the regional debate

The ANC recently opted for a maximum of 10 regions in a restructured South Africa. This means local government will be crucial in addressing the living conditions of ordinary people, writes **LAURINE PLATZKY**

THE PRIORITY FOR A SECOND TIER of government should be the reconstruction and development of all South Africa, with the poorest, most marginalised people as prime focus for state policy. This means constitutional regions, not electoral regions, should be the most significant tier for the deployment of national resources for long term development.

Since the ANC has recently adopted regional policy which allows for a maximum of 10 regions — albeit without exclusive powers and with overriding national powers, should a region try to adopt policy and practises contrary to the national constitution — we must turn our attention to the third and lowest tier of government.

If changing the living conditions of the masses for the better is a priority, the third and lowest tier must become the most crucial under the larger region scenario. One local area cannot be considered in isolation of others and it will not be possible to plan for the improvement of services, or the upgrading of health, education or economic development unless a "mini-region" or "supra-local" territory is the focus.

Metro tier

The ANC regional policy consultation in March adopted a proposal for a three-tier system of government. It was recognised that, for example, the metro tier was significant and that some form of district councils would be useful. But details were left to a later consultation on local government.

In September 1992, the National Party outlined its proposals for strong regional and strong local government, which will leave the real power for redistribution lodged at a sub-regional, technical, non-elected level. This is unacceptable. For the programme of reconstruction to be appropriate it must be planned and implemented in conjunction with residents, which means an accountable structure: an elected tier.

It is at the metro level and RSC-type level that real policy and budgetary decisions will be taken to integrate the townships into cities, or to link bantustan commuters into the white economic centres.

Unless the third tier or local government is broadly defined to include district and metro elected bodies, apartheid will have been rejuvenated rather than eradicated.

Lastly, neither the current urban nor the gender bias will necessarily be addressed under the large region scenario. The more articulate and better organised metro representatives are more likely to ensure that their constituents are best served. Although the national constitution might forbid discrimination on any grounds, some form of national monitoring will be needed to ensure fair representation of rural people, poorly organised people and women.

Thus a national programme of reconstruction, possibly outside or parallel to regional government, will have to be mounted to begin to address the legacy of apartheid. ■

ANC policy decisions

ANC regions came together in March to formulate the organisation's policy on regions. Their decisions were as follows:

- **Delegates' starting point was that South Africa is one united country, and should be governed by a single national constitution.**
- **There should be a minimum of four and a maximum of 10 regions. The proposal for 16 regions (which Platzky supported) was generally rejected.**
- **Regional boundaries and powers must be defined by a special delimitation commission, then approved by a constitution-making body. These boundaries and powers would then be entrenched in the constitution. In the interim, however, the present provincial demarcations can be used.**
- **Central government should be responsible for defence, national security and foreign affairs and will have exclusive jurisdiction. Both national and regional government will exercise power over health, education, development and planning.**
- **Elected regional councils will elect executive councils. The executive councils would be chaired by an administrator, elected by a simple majority.**
- **Regional representatives, or senators, will be represented in parliament. These people will not be part of regional governments, but will liaise with them. They will be responsible for protecting their regions' interests at a national level.**
- **Sub-regional structures - metropolitan governments in urban areas and district councils in rural areas - were also proposed. Local structures will fall below these. However, details have not yet been fully worked out.**

[Source: Mayibuye, April 1993]

Fresh from a visit to El Salvador and Nicaragua, **MERLE FAVIS** speaks to KERRY CULLINAN about some of the challenges facing organisations there

■ **INCREASING CAPACITY:** This rural co-operative in Nicaragua markets its produce in the USA

Central American challenges

ALTHOUGH NICARAGUA AND EL Salvador are tiny rural countries in Central America, they have inspired millions through their struggles to install truly democratic states.

Interfund, an international donor agency, recently decided to find out how donor policy had affected development in those countries and how solidarity between developing countries (countries in the south) could be promoted. So they sent Merle Favis, who works in their South African office, to find out.

Favis points out that, although both countries are largely rural, and have a different history to South Africa, we can learn important principles of how NGOs and community organisations relate.

"In South Africa, community organisations are not universally recognised as the starting point for NGOs," says Favis. "But this is not the case in El Salvador."

During the war in that country, the state simply abandoned areas liberated by the FMLN liberation movement. Community organisations were then established to take control over all aspects of community life.

"NGOs were set up by community organisations to access foreign funding and direct the support of northern solidarity groups," says Favis.

"NGOs thus operated as an extension of community organisations, dealing with a range of developmental needs within the same organisation."

As a result, NGOs are accountable to community organisations. They plan together, NGO staff members are usually drawn from the ranks of community activists, and community representatives serve on NGO boards.

But since the peace process began in El Salvador in 1991, NGOs have had to change their focus from sustaining popular organisations during war to reconstruction and development.

"A distinction will have to be made between the interests of political parties in securing their power base and the interests of communities in achieving new levels of social development," says Favis.

Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, community based organisations (CBOs) were little more than an extension of the Sandinistas (FSLN).

A community leader said the Sandinistas had believed it was not necessary to promote grassroots structures, as the interests of the state, political party and "the people" coincided.

The Contra war also drained the state's resources. Many activists were drafted into the army, leaving a gap at grassroots level. As a result, community organisations were weak and unable to make their voices heard within NGOs.

A number of NGOs were formed when the FSLN was in power (1979 - 1990), most aligned to the government. In 1982, an NGO co-ordinating structure was formed.

After the FSLN lost the 1990 election, the party was thrown into crisis. Many former FSLN officials rushed to set up NGOs, and the number of NGOs tripled. This resulted in competition for resources and funding, and little coherent development planning. There was also an influx of more conservative northern NGOs, such as USAID.

But activists also acknowledged the need to build a bottom-up, demand-led development sector. National sectors — small farmers, cooperatives, workers and civics — have consciously built up their capacity to implement development.

Some tension has developed between popular organisations and NGOs, as popular organisations argue that donor resources should be channelled through them, not NGOs. Three nationally organised CBOs have even established NGOs within their own ranks. NGOs argue that popular organisations should be concerned with representing their constituencies, not delivering development.

South-south solidarity

The USA has pumped large amounts of money into Central and Latin America, forcing countries to undertake structural adjustment programmes that have brought economic misfortune.

"Everyone in Nicaragua and El Salvador knows about the 'neo-liberal strategy' of the USA," says Favis. "People think of strategies to resist and deal with US policies. This is not happening in South Africa. Global south strategies need to be developed to turn the rightwing tide."

Solidarity and information exchange can occur on specific topics, she says, including human rights networking and issues like the integration of soldiers into civil society. ■

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