WORK IN PROGRESS
WIP 86 • DECEMBER 1992
incorporating NEW ERA

NEW FACES ON AN OLD PROBLEM?

Piecing together a democratic civil service

The civics – on the road to nowhere?

1992 in review • Weighing mass action

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Incorporating NEW ERA

DECEMBER 1992 NO 86

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Editorial

SARS CELEBRATES ITS 15th year of existence with this issue. In 1977, SA had just emerged out of the trauma of the '76 period. Political space had widened slightly, and talk of "reform" was in the air. Although the '76 uprisings had been brutally suppressed, a revolutionary overthrow of apartheid had captured the imagination of a new layer of activists.

This mood dominated resistance politics of the '80s until it became clear that, while the old order could not last forever, it also could not be overthrown in one dramatic event. The 1990s has so far been dominated by a new terrain of struggle — negotiations.

As 1992 draws to a close, South Africa waits in anticipation: will a political settlement be reached, so that effective socio-economic growth and development can take place — or will the uncertainty continue, such that the country slowly grinds to a halt ?

Uncertainty, psychologists tell us, is the most common cause of stress. The people of this country are in a state of stress, as their minds lurch from hopeful optimism one moment, to dark pessimism the next.

The longer the political stalemate continues, the greater the uncertainty, and the deeper the stress. Without a political settlement, effective socio-economic development will remain on hold. The longer socio-economic development is kept on hold, the more the living standards of the people declines — leading to greater social instability, which can further delay a political settlement.

It is a vicious circle that can spiral the country down into a state of rapid decline from which it may take decades to recover.

In the past, the liberation movement welcomed the dawn of a crisis for the regime because that, according to revolutionary theory, increased the prospects of revolution, and the fundamental transformation of society.

But in a context where the choice is between a gradual advance towards a transformed and democratic social order, and a Lebanon-type state of gradual decay, romantic dreams of a Bolshevik-type revolution are at best the opium of the intellectual, and at worst downright irresponsible and dangerous.

Compromise, however unpalatable, is what will save us. The question is, of course, how far compromises should go. The current balance of forces in the country suggest that an acceptable compromise between all the major players can be reached, without blocking the advance to a democracy that can meet the needs of the dispossesed and deprived.

This can only be grasped if there is a dramatic shift in thinking — from a preoccupation with immediate state-political issues, to a deeper consideration of what is needed to place the country on a growth and development path. The ANC and allied groups have already done a lot of thinking along these lines. However, much of this remains within the confines of a few experts.

The country as a whole needs to focus its collective mind much more directly on what is necessary for this country, and the southern African region, to achieve effective socio-economic development.

The compromises that are necessary to achieve this must happen sooner rather than later — otherwise, in the mad rush to grab the whole cake, we might end up with nothing at all...

DEVAN PILLAY

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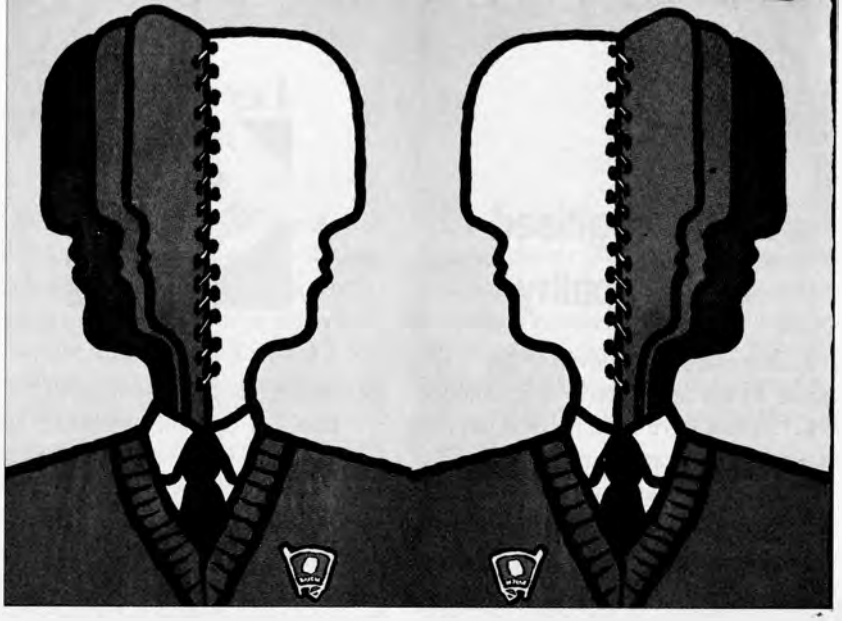


PIC ADAPTED FROM 'SPEAK FOR YOURSELF' BY ALEXANDER TARASOV

letters

Biko recognised indian apathy

It is interesting that Devan Pillay's response to my article (*WIP* 85, October 1992) should have been pivoted largely on a mere paragraph in my article.

Of course, one can only conjecture why Pillay should be more sensitive to a paragraph questioning indians' inordinate power in the liberation movements, whereas their involvement at grassroots level leaves much to be desired. It is interesting that he does not dispute this apathy. But the most interesting assertion is that my so-called "departure from the BC of Biko" leads me to an "Africanist-separatist ideological straight-jacket".

I am not so sure that this will reassure Pillay, but *I am not departing from the BC of Biko*. Steve Biko did not turn a blind eye to the apathy of indians in the struggle, as well as their inclination to degenerate into exploiters of africans.

Biko alluded to this in an article written just after Idi Amin had expelled indians from Uganda, called "Ugandan asians and the lesson for us" (*Frank Talk*, Vol. 1 No. 4). In this article, he says: "The asians (in Uganda) had skills and educations which africans did not have... As time went on, the 'contribution' to, and control by the asian group of trade, professions and civil service was completely out of proportion to their numbers. Then also, asians refused to see themselves as part of Africa... In a sense, therefore, the asians became middle men who continually saw themselves as a minority and by their practice of exploitation of the africans ... they contributed to the growth of animosity between themselves and the africans."

He went further: "It is important for (South African indians) to see that the trend of race relations in any country is largely influenced by the inter-relationship of groups in their joys and woes.

Rightly or wrongly, there has been a tendency in South Africa ... for asians to see themselves as a minority group. To what extent this tendency is justified, one does not know, but it is clear that it may prove dangerous for race relations in time to come.

"Already, there have been periodic outbursts of animosity between africans and indians in Durban and other parts of the country, particularly in 1949."

Lastly, I can only add that, in the mid-80s there was yet another "outburst of animosity" between africans and indians in Durban. Around the same time, when african workers at OK and Game Discount Stores in Durban went on strike, they found indians (and 'coloureds') more than willing to scab.

This, Comrade Pillay, is the bitter reality we have to confront if black solidarity is to be genuine. I reiterate that it is incongruous that the Jay Naidoos should occupy the positions they are in now, when their kith and kin within the indian component of the oppressed community are so apathetic.

Gomolemo Mokae
Azapo

Mokae belongs to a bygone era

If Gomolemo Mokae (*WIP* 85) was a poet, I would recommend him as one of our early 70s poets, but unfortunately for him we are in the 90s.

In one of the Post and Telecommunications Workers' Association (Potwa) congresses, Comrade Joe Slovo said content, not what sounds revolutionary, advances the struggle.

I agree with Mokae on one thing: a black person is not less human than a white person. They are both human beings. That is exactly what Ruth First, Neil Aggett, Bram Fischer and others died for.

Dr Mamphela Ramphele said: "It's only when you arrive at that deep sense of your own humanity that you can appreciate the humanity of others." That is why we have comrades such as Joe Slovo, Jeremy Cronin, Carl Niehaus and Barbara Hogan contributing in our struggle.

We should recall Lenin's words: "Some people who lack the spark of life, who have absolutely no idea of how to set to work, these are revolutionary preachers, armchair revolutionaries who do not know that knowledge cannot be derived only from books but that decisions could spring only from the experience of the masses."

It is dangerous to play with people's emotions. People should avoid being signboards, which just point in a direction without knowing the ups and downs to that destination. Revolutionary sounding slogans should not imprison us.

Thobile Maso
Transkei

Photo creates wrong impression

The photograph over the caption: "On the road: A familiar scene of white 'experts' breezing through gutted townships" (*WIP* 85) was taken in May 1990 at an inspection of the place where a number of Sebokeng residents had been shot dead and injured at a march held in March 1990. Mr Justice Richard Goldstone was appointed to enquire into the event. This was well before the Goldstone Commission came into being.

The inspection was necessary to place all parties to the enquiry in a position where the testimony of witnesses could be properly presented, tested and assessed.

We did not then and do not now hold ourselves up as "experts" deciding matters on behalf of others. We were most certainly not "white men breezing in and making major decisions on behalf of the majority" as suggested in Lena Slachmuijdler's article.

A wrong impression is created by your inappropriate use of the photograph in which we appear.

George Bizos and Karel Tip
Johannesburgh

We admit that the photograph was inappropriate, and apologise for any inconvenience caused — Editor.

People's Power, not mass action, is the goal

A new line is entering the democratic movement which requires scrutiny. It may be summed up as "mass action forever", and has been variously referred to

as "mass action is an integral part of democracy", "mass action must continue under De Klerk, under an ANC government, and even under socialism", and "mass action is more accurately defined as mass struggle".

What these formulae have in common is that mass action is not something undertaken for a particular purpose at a particular time, but that it should be part of our political culture.

Those pushing such positions seem sceptical about the character of the immediate transition and want to alert us against compromises which will abort the struggle. In classical socialist literature, this was dealt with as the failure of the bourgeois democratic revolution to lead into the socialist revolution. There is cause for concern on this count in South Africa.

But is the answer permanent mass action? Could this policy possibly gain the adherence of the masses as a whole? (As contrasted with a militant minority?) Are we not failing to put forward a perspective of freedom and liberation as an end worth sacrificing for? Are we not placing our present leaders in a position where they are automatically seen as future enemies?

The traditional position is that our struggle is for People's Democracy and People's Power. Once power rests with the masses, the road is open for the genuine transformation of society.

The new emphasis on civil society has lent greater credibility to this concept of People's Power. The prospect opens up a massive shift in power and authority from an elitist power structure to a mass-based participatory democracy which constantly exercises vigilance in the interests of society as a whole. We must distinguish between the problems of the present situation and future problems, as they arise.

Ben Turok
Johannesburg

Letters under 300 words receive priority. *WIP* reserves the right to edit letters.

WHO'S LEFT?

I used to visit your commune
— you remember me, of course —
I'm the one whose words held sway
when talk turned to dialectics or discourse;

and could tell you in an instant
of the latest from Laclau or Mouffe,
for I had kilogramscis of quotes
I could wag at you in reproof

if you strayed from the line of the people
the mass line that marched in my head,
for the workers who one day would triumph when each
bourgeois was thoroughly dead —

I'd come to your parties in khaki
with my comrades, so you wouldn't forget that I'd waved
the flag towards Pollsmor and shouted, though teargas-beset

"WE'RE BUILDING A NEW WORLD WITH STRUGGLE!"
Now it's different. These days
I don't visit at all, for the red
star on my jacket's replaced

with a stupendous new paisley tie;
my fervour contained by a suit;
as I struggle to sound like Jay Naidoo
(though I never could look quite as cute);

you'll see me at times on Agenda
(if you're lucky to have a TV)
on top-expert panels with that freak
they call Robinson, there you'll see

me stuck between Nats and Azapos
and the DP's suave also-ran,
fresh back from our latest conference
at an IMF monastery in Japan.

— My alliances do have their uses
for instance, when last I acquired
a new car (I *had* to get hold of
my Audi, I was overwhelmed and inspired

by its superior stereo sound system)
A kind MP I knew from my think-tank
put me in touch with his niece
who worked at a number one bank;

she arranged a really good discount,
then later, with scarcely a grouse,
MK recovered it intact in Zola —
it was stolen while parked at Shell House —

see what I mean? these days the people
I turn as a tap off and on,
mass actioned or anti-mass actioned
they're a trump card for negotiation,

we can't dodge the forces of history,
our humanity brightens each day,
but when leaving the World Trade Centre I
sometimes catch myself coming in the same way;

there has been a strategic re-alignment
of myself to fight for you all;
I *think* I still long for a socialist future —
but in the meantime I'm having a ball!

Kelwyn Sole
Department of English
University of Cape Town

briefs

MALAWI

Trial sparks violence

VIOLENT PROTESTS HAVE ONCE again broken out in Malawi, this time at the trial of a leading Malawian trade unionist, Chakufwa Chihana. At least three people have died so far in clashes between members of the ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and the Interim Committee for a Democratic Alliance (ICDA) at the court.

Chihana, who is the chairperson of the ICDA, is being charged with acting in a manner that is "prejudicial to public security" and being in possession of "seditious material".

Harry Chiume, the ICDA's legal adviser, says the commotion started when MCP supporters assaulted ICDA members at the court hearing. The MCP members allegedly also tried to attack Chihana and his legal representative as they left the court.

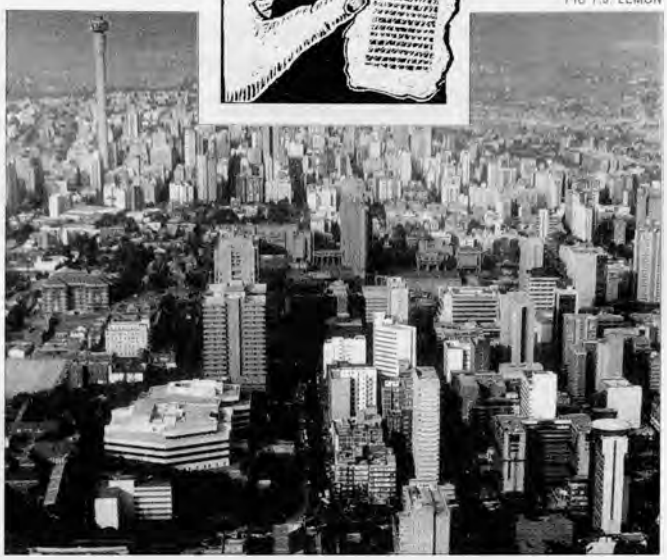
Chiume believes the attacks are part of the government's strategy to frustrate the international call for multiparty elections in Malawi. Banda was forced to announce on 14 October that he would call a referendum to determine whether Malawians supported multi-party elections.

But, says Chiume, "under the prevailing circumstances, it will be a futile exercise to have the referendum".

"It is clear that the government has embarked on a campaign of intimidation," he said. "We have no hope that proper legal procedures will be followed with the referendum. We are convinced that it will be seriously flawed to the extent that the regime will make the results laughable." ❑

— Professor Malema

PIC T.J. LEMON



City State? *ANC debates metropolitan government.*

REGIONAL PROPOSALS

New ANC regional proposals

THE ANC'S RECENT DRAFT DOCUMENT on regional policy contains important shifts from its original proposal. These include that regional powers be entrenched in the constitution and the possibility of metropolitan government.

But the organisation stresses that although discussion and debate is essential, "the details of the powers, functions, roles and boundaries of the regions carry such constitutional importance that only a national and democratically elected constituent assembly should arrive at any final decision".

In contrast, says the ANC, "the National Party government is of the view that the powers, functions and even the boundaries of future regional governments should be settled before a constituent assembly is elected".

The ANC's essential proposals are:

- The central state will have the legislative and executive power to override all other levels of government.
- There should be "concurrent power" among national, regional and local government on certain issues, such as education.
- "One country, one tax base".
- Regional government will be able to enact laws provided that they are agreed on by national government. It will deal with issues such as education, health, development, town and regional planning and imposing taxes.

The ANC has identified three main areas for debate:

- The size, number and location of regions: two proposals have been tabled, one for ten regions and one for 16.
- Whether there should be metropolitan government. The 16 region proposal makes provision for four metropolitan areas (Pretoria-Moretele, Witwatersrand-Vaal, Durban and Cape Town) to be considered as regions.
- The powers of local authorities, whether these powers should be written into the constitution and whether local authorities should be protected from regional and central government interference. ❑

— Kerry Cullinan

ENVIRONMENT

Plutonium threat to SA coast

JAPAN PLANS TO SHIP A TON OF plutonium to Europe twice a month — probably via the Cape. The first shipment is due before the end of the year. This has raised protests worldwide, mainly because an accident would have catastrophic effects on the environment.

Plutonium is both chemically and radiologically toxic. This means that it poisons living things and is likely to cause cancer.

The De Klerk government has retreated from its initial opposition to the shipments to a more non-interventionist position. Initially it asked the Japanese to stay out of the Exclusive Fishing Zone, a 360km perimeter around the coast. More recently, the government said the ship would not be allowed in the territorial waters, a mere 20km perimeter.

Protesters point out that plutonium-based energy is not sustainable. It yields considerable waste, which remains highly radioactive for thousands of years. This has to be stored safely. In addition, it is extremely centralised, capital intensive and needs security and surveillance.

Coal-based electricity has definite advantages over nuclear power. No security regime is necessary and the environmental and health risks, although far from insignificant, are less long term and more manageable. But the energy debate should not be seen as a choice between coal or nuclear power. In the long run, society will have to turn towards truly sustainable energy sources. ❑

— Thomas Auf der Heyde

CHANGING A LEOPARD'S SPOTS

Talk of bringing political democracy to South Africa typically revolves around versions of elections and affirmative action. But are these enough to democratise one of our most powerful and authoritarian institutions — the civil service? **NEVA SEIDMAN MAKGETLA** *and* **ROBERT SEIDMAN** *have a few ideas*

PIC: GRANT SCHREIBER

TRANSFORMING THE CIVIL SERVICE WILL require a lot more than switching personnel and shuffling desks. Over time the array of institutions we label the 'civil service' develops its own 'life' and logic; and it proves a lot more difficult to penetrate and change than is commonly assumed.

Unless the structures, mechanisms and procedures of the civil service are overhauled and transformed, a few nasty shocks await us down the road.

Elsewhere in Africa, black people have long replaced most white civil servants. But nowhere did the new government systematically transform the regulations that had guided civil service activities before independence.

As a result, the new civil service (sometimes rather rapidly) came to resemble the old. Its offices remained in lofty buildings far from the day-to-day realities of the majority. Extreme secrecy continued, preventing consultation outside the corridors of power. Civil servants were not required to confer with the historically poor and disempowered. Increasingly, social pressures and lack of time made officials avoid people outside the circuits of power.

Most politicians started off intending to impose their will on the civil service. In Zimbabwe, right after independence the government decided to reform the labour law. The new minister asked a lawyer to draft a bill to support workers' organisation and defend their rights. When they got the bill, the civil service acted as they always had — more out of habit than malice.

So they ignored the unions, consulted the leading mining conglomerate, and ended with a rewritten bill that was based largely on the South African one. They promptly forwarded it to cabinet. Among many oddities, the draft guaranteed the right to strike — but only after a multitude of remedies had been exhausted, including binding arbitration!

And as the old structures and conditions were asserted, the newcomers ended up believing that their earlier ideas had

been misguided, impractical and simply too idealistic.

Despite the high ideals with which they started out, African governments generally churn out decisions all too reminiscent of the colonial era.

System of decision making

A democratic society allows more people to influence critical decisions about the economy, the military, and so on. From this standpoint, the political power of communities and classes emerges, above all, in the ability to influence government choices. Obviously, that power has roots outside the government. But the nature of decision making systems in the state itself helps determine who can affect the outcome. A government can modify the power of various social groups by defining the procedures and criteria for decision making.

Decision making is a process with three steps: first, collecting information; second, converting that information into choices; and third, responses that shape the new decisions. Naturally, the various actors that participate in each phase are able to guide the outcome.

Our current processes are not geared towards gaining information from the historically disempowered. On the contrary, the system was deliberately tailored to *prevent* such consultation and accountability. The few public channels that exist (such as appeals processes or ombudspersons) are inaccessible to the majority.

Democratic elections do make an impact at the highest levels of government. But they do not reform lower-level decision making processes. Indeed, as the Austrian analyst Joseph Schumpeter has observed about the US, they may merely allow people to choose a dictator every few years.

In our case, the fact that the upper reaches of the bureaucracy are nearly all white obviously aggravates their alienation from the majority. But black civil servants will not behave much differently if they are bound to the same procedures. All this does not mean that restructuring is wishful thinking — indeed, the experiences of other African countries suggest some potent remedies.

Secrecy affects the poor

No matter what the law says, secrecy never affects the rich as much as the poor. In most countries — and notably in SA — secrecy forms the first obstacle to public influence on the civil service. As a rule, the public does not know what choices civil servants are making or what information they have.

Naturally, issues of national security or personal privacy should remain confidential. But in a democracy, government should have only minimal power to keep secrets from the public it professes to serve. The law should define strict limits on secrecy, such that the civil service should have to prove that it is essential in specific cases.

In SA, the cult of secrecy still flourishes. The civil service will not divulge information which in most countries is common knowledge: prison conditions, petroleum reserves, arms imports, etc. Recently, a civil servant told us the amount of drought aid disbursed in 1992 — but strictly in confidence!

Consider the budget. In the dusky and mysterious confines of the Ministry of Finance, we are told, the civil service develops the budget in secret. No one knows its details until the minister delivers it to Parliament in a little red box. Such secrecy, says the myth, prevents speculation.

But that is a lie. 'Informally' at least, leading civil servants discuss the issues with the rich and powerful. In the real world, taxes on minerals are not settled until the leading mining companies are consulted, for example. Nor does any government plan to borrow without conferring with the top financial institutions.

Secrecy effectively cuts out only the poor. In the process, it prevents public oversight and encourages corruption, as the many scandals of the past few years confirm.

Why shroud the process in mystery? In the US, the development of the budget is open to public scrutiny. In the 1970s Congress set up its own budget office, which provides a systematic critique of the executive's proposals. While this openness or transparency generates new difficulties (lobbying, waffling and horse-trading), it at least permits more public control over public monies.

Draconian laws feed the average civil servant's fetish of secrecy. In Zimbabwe, the Official Secrets Act inherited at independence made it illegal for civil servants to disclose anything learned from their duties, unless authorised. At face value, the Act could be used to impose a jail sentence on someone who shows a visitor the way to the lavatory!

Furthermore, in the early years after independence, civil servants convinced the new government — wrongly — that even cabinet members were not allowed to consult anyone outside government on draft legislation. Obviously, that 'rule' vastly increased the power of the civil servants. One minister had occasionally asked university lecturers for arguments against conservative economics proposals — until his colleagues told him that it was illegal. Soon after, members of the security branch were asked to search the lecturers' offices.

Most civil service secrecy, however, has no legal mandate. Instead, it reflects deeply entrenched habits that work to enhance the power of the civil servants.

Over the past few months, the parastatal Industrial Development Corpora-

tion has planned, essentially in secret, massive minerals projects. These programmes will help shape the structure of the South African economy for years to come. The bureaucrats did not set out to avoid consultation with the unions and stakeholders other than big business. It simply did not occur to them to publicise the planning process. By the time most South Africans heard of them, the schemes were already difficult to change.

Freedom of information

An important step toward democracy, then, becomes the introduction of rules that reduce secrecy in the civil service to the bare minimum. Laws and departmental regulations that require secrecy should be examined and, where possible, scrapped. New rules should compel civil servants to share the information they now hoard.

In the US, freedom of information acts oblige officials to disclose material to the parties affected by a decision. Only files related to national security can be held back, and even those decisions can be challenged in court.

A requirement that the civil service provide written justification for specific decisions lends further weight to freedom of information acts. Today, if a civil servant chooses, for instance, not to extend sewerage to an informal settlement, s/he need not give any reason, making it very difficult for residents to fight the decision. Civil servants are therefore free to exercise their prejudices.

Social impact statements are another lever that can open up civil service decision making. They require that agencies study and publish the probable impact of important projects on society. A United Nations Development Programme project to draft new economic laws in China, for example, obliged drafters to assess the impact on women, the rural and urban poor, national minorities and young people.

The power of businesspeople and top civil servants depends largely on their privileged access to information

Similarly, a democratic government here could compel its agencies to publish evaluations of how decisions on service provision, hiring or financing will affect, say, income distribution, affirmative action, employment, the environment, the balance of payments and the national budget.

Such a process alerts the public to proposed actions, and equips it to examine the broader implications. It also obliges government agencies at least to pay lip service to national development goals.

Bureaucratic jargon

The use of highly formalised language in the civil service deepens the state's secrecy. Without a glossary, even well-educated people cannot understand most laws, national or local government accounts or, indeed, the average civil service memorandum.

The civil service typically argues that the jargon is created by the need for precision. But simple modern language can be just as exact — and comprehensible on top of it. It can also undermine the culture of secrecy and professional mystique that characterises the system.

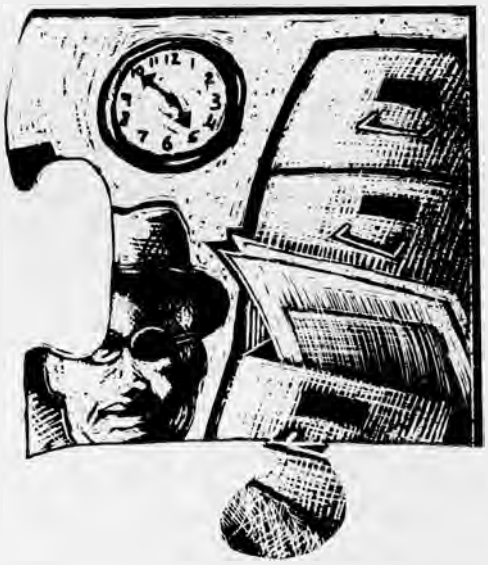
Again, consider the budget. Both local and national governments publish highly detailed accounts, which few lay people can understand. They use complex accounting forms systematised for European business in the 19th century. And they allocate funds by agent rather than use, so that outsiders find it difficult or impossible to assess efficiency. These forms rule out public oversight, but not corruption.

Incomprehensibility is not necessarily part and parcel of government. Some states in the US have introduced laws that replace outdated formulae in legislation and contracts with simple English. Similar measures can be adopted here.

Re-organising decision making

Powerful people tend to talk to each other — and hardly anybody else. They track each other down, if only to reminisce about their days in school, university, jail or exile. They simply "don't have the time" to devote to individuals who cannot decide the course of events.

It would be as irresponsible for a director-general to ignore the head of Anglo American as it would be for her to waste time talking to an ordinary miner.



In order to make civil servants pay attention to the needs and desires of the poor majority, government must organise the civil service appropriately. There are three options: regulate the outcome, establish channels for public input, and ensure broader representation in decision making bodies.

Government often tries to reduce the discretion of the civil service. These rules emerge most clearly in the guidelines for allocating public resources, which replace market dictates. Generally, elected politicians are hardly aware of them and know little of their impact on the public. And they necessarily favour some groups over others.

In SA, the civil service used to allo-

BALANCING COSTS AND BENEFITS

DEMOCRATIC DECISION MAKING TAKES TIME and money. The most notorious drawback of participatory procedures is the amount of time they require. By contrast, in the short run, authoritarianism may seem temptingly efficient to the rulers. But the real costs of that course to society and the state may only emerge as policy failures are racked up in the longer run.

Still, if a democratic government underestimates or ignores the costs of democracy, it will likely end up bankrupt or disillusioned over the slow pace of decision making. Attempts to reform the civil service must weigh the costs and benefits of democratising each major decision-making system.

A democratic government must also find ways to reward the civil service's efforts to permit wider participation. All too often, rewards are geared to the more tangible results — the amount invested in a project, the area of land distributed in a land reform programme. It seems a lot tougher to measure and reward public participation in such schemes, but there are ways.

Indicators a new government can build into evaluations might include the number of local people, especially women, involved in decision making; the success of public hearings; or the extent and success of training programmes.

Democracy remains a process, not a final product. And democratic elections represent only a first step on the road to a freer society. If we rely on affirmative action alone, without changing the structures that determine the outcome of decision-making processes, we run the risk of merely creating a black elite to join the white ruling class.

If we are serious about the content of a South African democracy, about enabling the majority to participate on a broader scale, we need more than affirmative action. We need to carefully examine and creatively transform the entire range of decision-making systems in the state. ■

cate resources in accordance with openly racist criteria. Nowadays, official regulations avoid blatant racism, relying instead on related criteria that achieve the same effect.

Zimbabwe's experience shows just how important — and difficult —it is to change such criteria. Around 1981, the new government decided to eliminate racism in the Harare budget. A progressive black lawyer scrutinised the bylaws and replaced 'European areas' with 'low-density areas' and 'non-European' with 'high-density areas'.

She told us later that she honestly had not understood the economic implications of the criteria. Despite the new euphemisms, the 'low-density' suburbs kept their rich revenues. The historically black, much poorer areas still had to support themselves from fees and beerhalls. They continued to be far worse off than the largely white communities.

When the Zimbabwe African National Union (Zanu) took office, the new transport minister asked the civil service to draw up a long-term road plan that would serve the black peasantry. His civil servants produced a proposal that would not build a single kilometre of road in a black rural area.

When the minister had calmed down enough to listen to the explanation, he was assured that the appropriate criteria had been applied. Alas, the rules permitted new roads only where predicted traffic made it economically worthwhile. Impoverished and neglected, none of the black rural areas qualified. So, until the government changed the rules, the ministry could not 'legally' service those deprived under the previous regime.

The lesson is that the development of new regulations to govern civil service decisions requires careful research, both to identify the relevant rules and to explore their impact. Such an investigation must go beyond the obvious guidelines on state spending in order to discover which rules discriminate against the poor, even when they are not openly racist.

Still, no government can predict and regulate all the choices facing its officials. We need to find ways to ensure broader participation in decision making. That requires clear channels for public initiative and response, and organisations that represent people outside the government itself — in the jargon of the moment, a *strong civil society*.

Government can easily demand that its agencies hold public hearings or request comment before taking decisions. In this way civil servants can be compelled to notify interested parties about upcoming decisions. But a democratic state has to design such processes carefully to ensure that historically disempowered communities or their representatives can participate.

In Zimbabwe in 1981, a government commission held hearings on the land question. It accepted only submissions typewritten in English. Very few black smallholders could comply. Unless the state lays down new rules for gathering information, the civil service will continue to ignore the majority.

There are other ways to broaden participation. A board representing local interests (community-based organisations, local business, unions, and so on) can govern local power or water supplies. In the US, some so-called poverty programmes require "maximum participation of the poor", which usually entails the appointment of representatives of poor people's organisations to governing bodies.

But such an approach only works to empower the majority where it has effective organisations. As a rule, the historically disadvantaged lack the skills and resources easily to set up, maintain and control representative organisations. The rich and powerful typically have great advantages in that respect — witness the increase in employer and professional organisations compared to the difficulties facing trade unions or civics. Without state support, the privileged will inevitably dominate decision making processes.

It follows that a democratic government must do more than support civil society in the abstract — ways must be found to help develop organisations that represent the majority. This can be done by reshaping the laws to encourage more appropriate organisational forms and by sustaining these bodies by fundraising. The state can also provide resources and skills through arms-length procedures. ❑

— Dr Makgetla teaches economics at Wits University, and Prof Seidman teaches law and political science at Boston University, USA.

dossier

NUMBERED DAYS

"There are three kinds of lies — lies, damned lies and statistics," Benjamin Disraeli once said. But what did he know? We present the first of several snapshots of our country ... in numbers

People killed in political violence Sept 1984 - Feb 1990: 5,565
People killed in political violence Feb 1990 - Oct 1992: 7,739
Yearly average of political fatalities in Northern Ireland: 136
Yearly average of political fatalities in SA (1985 - 1992): 1,684
Monthly average of people killed in political violence:
Jan 1992-Oct 1992: 307

Victims of train attacks in ten months to Oct 1992: killed: 252 injured: >460
Number of train attack suspects arrested to date: 21
Number found guilty and sentenced: 1

Homicide victims in 1991: 14 693
White homicide victims in 1991: 488
Estimated number of women raped each year: 390,000 (one every 83 seconds)
Rape cases reported to police in 1991: 22 765

Average income of black worker (first quarter 1992): R1243
Average income of white worker (same period): R3543
Percentage of household income spent on food on average: 59%

Number of robberies 1991: 69 000
Percentage increase over 1990: 11.5%
Number of licensed firearms at end 1991: 3 095 094
Percentage of white South Africans who own a gun: 48%

Number of inmates in South Africa's prisons end December 1991: 96,540 (official capacity: 83,780)
Number of reported deaths in police custody (Jan-Oct 1992): 111
Number of police officers killed Jan-Oct 1992: 187
People detained without trial (as of Oct 1992): 391

Estimated number of urban dwellers living in "informal housing": 7 million
Fourth largest land controlling authority in SA: SA Defence Force

SOURCES:
SA Commissioner of Police, Urban Foundation, Human Rights Commission, Nicro, Labour Research Service, Transvaal Attorney- General, Sunday Tribune, SA Reserve Bank, Southern Africa Research and Documentation Centre, Lawyers for Human Rights, Central Statistical Services, SA Institute for Race Relations

FOCUS 1992

A YEAR IN REVIEW

A YEAR THAT KICKED OFF WITH HIGH HOPES OF A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, HAS ended in limbo. Nationally, the main players trade words but resist deals, causing us to forget that at other levels and in other sectors a vast assortment of negotiations continues. But, ominously, so does the violence and instability.

We remain in that curious phase, described 140 years ago by the American statesman John Calhoun: "The interval between the decay of the old and the formation and the establishment of the new, constitutes a period of transition which must always necessarily be one of uncertainty, confusion, error, and wild and fierce fanaticism."

How much more strain our society can withstand is uncertain. The options seem to be narrowing: either we slide stubbornly into the abyss of a Lebanon-type civil war, or we make the compromises that might enable us to lurch towards relative political stability, economic growth and social development.

This review of 1992 probes the state and the strategies of the two principal players, the National Party government and the ANC-led alliance. **STEVE FRIEDMAN** questions the strategic coherence of the Nats and the Grand Plan critics detect behind the smooth rhetoric, while **HEIN MARAIS** tests the left's glowing assessments of the ANC-alliance's mass action strategy.

We also survey the highlights and downers of the year, and invite the major players to crystal gaze. Surprisingly, they're upbeat about the prospects for breakthroughs and peace in 1993. Are you?

BLIND MAN'S BLUFF?

If you've discovered the government's 'Grand Plan', send a copy over to De Klerk. Judging by the evidence of the past year, he needs it, writes **STEVEN FRIEDMAN**

IT IS BY NOW GLARINGLY OBVIous that the architects of the world's most reviled system of race domination three years ago set out to negotiate a formally non-racial order in which they still would play a major role.

The project called for unusual political talent and skill. At the minimum, National Party (NP) leaders needed to achieve two things to reach their goal of an orderly, conservative transition.

PIC T.J. LEMON

***Slow thinkers**: De Klerk and his cabinet want to hang on to power, but have not worked out how to.*

Firstly, they had to develop a realistic strategic sense of where they are going and how to get there, as well as an accurate assessment of how much of the old order they have to surrender in order to ensure a new one that won't be all that 'new'.

Secondly, they had to ensure that their reluctant constituency becomes more enthusiastic about travelling that road with them. Events this year suggest that the NP may have failed on both fronts.

Unimpressive performance

Assuming that the Nats are trying to shape the future on their own, they don't seem to be doing terribly well.

Economic policy remains frozen in mid-air, waiting, admits the minister of finance himself, for a political settlement which the government is either unable or unwilling to achieve. The townships are no more stable than they were 12 months ago; the state's security structures are even less credible guardians of public order than before. The groundswell of conservative black support that the Nats so confidently predicted is yet to show up on an opinion poll.

If the NP is trying to woo its enemies into cooperation on its terms, the performance has been less than impressive. How else does one assess the constant aversion to arrangements that might 'co-opt' the 'enemy' into solving problems jointly?

Leaving aside the interim government issue, the Nats have refused to join negotiation forums on socio-economic issues on the grounds that they refuse to be bound by their decisions. They persist in their demand that the negotiating partners take joint responsibility for problems such as violence and economic decline, but without ceding any of the power that accompanies such responsibility.

How does the NP square the constant predictions of electoral victory with its continued demands for minority vetoes? Why run a combative election campaign against the ANC while insisting that no settlement is possible without its agreement? What is one to make of the public enthusiasm for an alliance with Inkatha and other conservative parties when the NP attends a summit without bothering to tell its 'ally' what it plans to concede?

Unrealistic

There are countless other examples, but they all seem to add up to a common theme: either Nat leaders are not sure where they are heading, or they are remarkably unsuccessful at getting there.

Moreover, it is not at all clear that the rank-and-file are dead keen on staying with them for the ride. Word has it that an air of despondency has set in among NP grassroots; indeed, resolutions at party congresses and public opinion surveys suggest a very strong hankering for the old SA. If the grassroots are unwilling to make the changes needed to steer the party through the transition, the leadership will have to become assertive and persuasive enough to change their minds.

Instead, De Klerk has been reacting with credible impersonations of PW Botha.

Now, one can view all this as political theatre. With enough imagination, all the seeming inconsistencies and blunders can be explained away as sly stratagems. Many of the 'failures' could be viewed as subtle ploys to weaken the 'enemy' and secure a better deal: the more conditions worsen, the more bellicose Ulundi becomes and the more the Nat grassroots protest, the easier it becomes to persuade bargaining partners to settle in order to ward off the looming horror.

But if there is a subtle game plan concealed behind the bungling, its success is hardly unqualified. If the plan is to defeat the liberation movements, it must be measured against the 23% of the vote which, according to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the Nats would win in a non-racial poll. (Readers who sense a master plan to change all that, may be interested to know that a cabinet minister recently told an audience that he had begun wooing mass electoral support by greeting blacks as he jogs past them.)

If the plan is to pummel the liberation movements until they settle on Nat terms, it must be measured against the concessions De Klerk was forced to make at the summit with Mandela. All in all, the NP performance has been underwhelming.

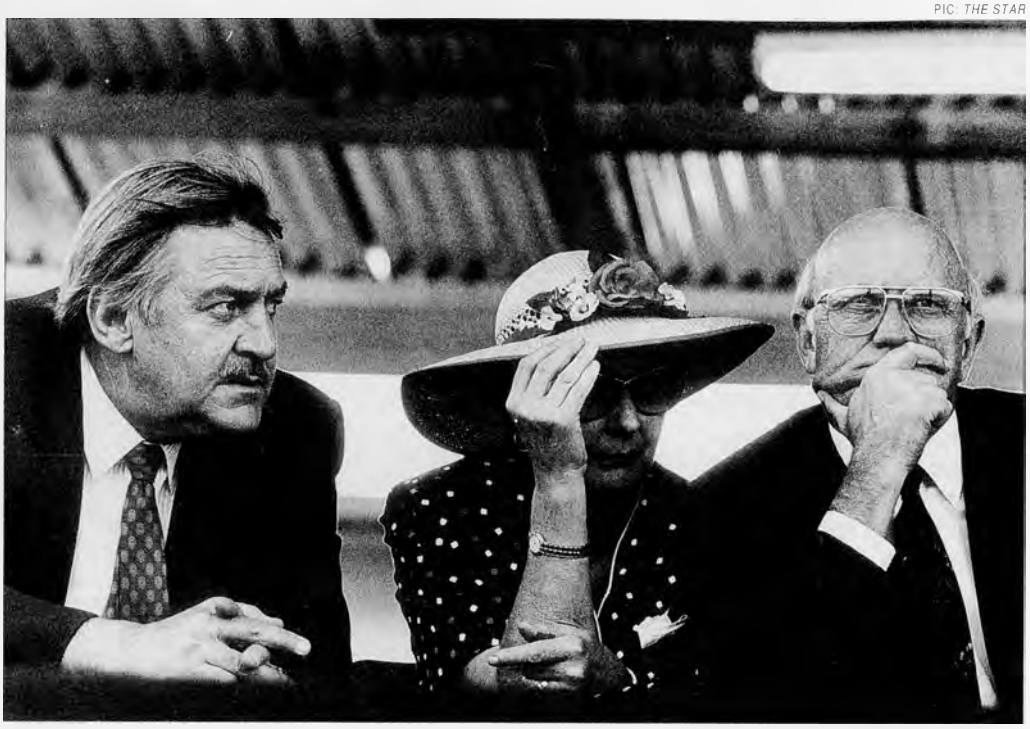
Why? Many senior Nats appear not to have a realistic vision of where they want to go and how to get there. Younger cabinet ministers such as Leon Wessels and a 'technocrat' like Derek Keys seem to grasp that the Nats cannot run the future alone.

But Hernus Kriel and others (Kobie Coetzee? Pik Botha?) do not seem to share that insight. In theory, they accept that power-sharing is the best they can get. In practice, they still see the transition as a Nat-led journey to a future in which their opponents will accept a junior partnership in a new order not very different from the old.

Such limited and contradictory visions remain embedded in Nat thinking.

Two factors deserve attention. Firstly, it is one thing to contemplate in the abstract

PIC: THE STAR



Hold your hats: *Pik Botha and De Klerk search for a vision.*

surrendering sole power after 40 years, quite another to leave the room when the time comes. Older Nats tend to hesitate at the brink. Ministers also have personal stakes in key bargaining issues: former state security council members are predictably keener on a general amnesty than ministers who did not warm the seats of that inner sanctum.

Secondly, the March referendum convinced senior Nats that they could get away with far more than they had anticipated. This sense stemmed not from an assessment of local support, but from attitudes abroad.

Analyses of the transition often underestimate the effect of world opinion on NP thinking: major decisions have been made with an eye both to foreign capitals and to local constituencies. NP leaders read the wave of international sympathy after the referendum as a signal the world would settle for far less than the opposition wanted.

The result has been not so much a juggernaut strategy that debilitates the 'enemy', but strategic miscalculations and stalemates which (together with matching problems on the side of the opponents) debilitate the transition.

The root of the malaise extends to the Nat bottom-line, or lack thereof. While the NP would like to keep as much of the old as possible, it is not clear what they believe is feasible. Power-sharing is about the only bottom-line that stands out. The Nats know they cannot run the country without 'the enemy', in spite of their public utterances.

Contradictory goals

But what else do they want? To preserve property rights and the market by limiting the post-apartheid state's power? Or to ensure that they can apply a firm hand to the rudder of the new state? Do they want to preserve 'efficiency and order' or white privilege?

Many Nats seem to want all of the above. But the goals are often contradictory. The strategy needed to achieve a Tory democracy is very different from that required to retain specifically Nat or even white privileges: one reason for the frequent frustration of the *Sunday Times*' editor is that he wants the former, but the Nats cannot make up their mind.

The result is a string of ad hoc steps and leaps — sharply influenced by noises abroad — instead of a coherent strategy. And it is doing as much damage to a workable transition as it is to the Nats themselves.

Of course, none of this makes a settlement impossible. The Nats and their bargaining partners have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to fudge seemingly stark choices and to muddle on without effective leadership or strategic clarity.

The problem is what happens after a settlement? Unless the Nats (and their adversaries) develop a realistic strategy and persuade their constituency to back it, political life after a deal may be as fragile and unstable as it is now — and hopes for an economy that will allow us to fight poverty will dissolve. ❑

— Friedman heads the Centre for Policy Studies in Johannesburg

Work In Progress/New Era cornered some of the major players in the transition and asked them:

1. 1992 was the year when ... ?
2. The biggest blunder of the year?
3. A certain prediction for 1993?
4. What does your organisation want for Xmas this year?

Here are some of the responses ...

COSATU

1) When the old order refused to die, and when organisations of the majority fought back with mass action that culminated in the largest general strike in our history.

2) The meeting called by Gatsha Buthelezi with Gqozo, Mangope, Treurnicht and others. This has buried Buthelezi politically. His summit of political dinosaurs also cracked open the regime's "Coalition of Christian Democrats".

3) That nothing is absolutely certain.

4) Democratic elections for a constituent assembly, involving international supervision, with effective monitoring and control of the security forces; democratisation of the SABC; a representative forum to address the socio-economic crisis in SA.

NACTU

1) When unity of the oppressed still eluded the victims of Pretoria's tyrannical rule. Violence on the shop floor increased as workers became enemies of one another instead of being comrades-in-arms.

2) For the liberation movement to help secure an international plat-

FROM AMNESIA TO ZION

The highlights, lowlifes, flukes, flops and feats of 1992, from ANC to ZCC, surveyed by **Hein Marais**

A Every year has them: Anniversaries ... the ANC's 80th, *Work In Progress* turned 15 (not a grey hair in sight), the October Revolution rocked the boat 75 years ago, it's 500 years since Columbus stumbled ashore on the Americas, and 50 years ago a forced labour factory called Auschwitz was turned into an extermination camp. Closer to home, the De Klerk regime still hasn't figured out the difference between amnesty and amnesia. But, like most South Africans, it's learning the meaning of anxiety.

B Boipatong and Bisho took us to the brink. But 'B' was made for Buthelezi: boorish, bloody-minded and ambitious, he bellowed and bullied, but ended the year snuggling up to racists and has-been autocrats.

C Codesa ended in a draw and the contest moved to the streets. The CPcracked up. The police cracked down on everyone but train killers and hostel mobs. De Klerk took a barrage of corruption scandals (development aid, drought aid, third party) on the chin. There was more commie-bashing, cabal gossip and Calvinist censorship (targeting blasphemy, gay literature and revisionist cinema).

D The budget deficit and death toll soared, while a scorching drought turned huge parts of the region into a dustbowl. Township dancing picked up where negotiations left off, with Codesa 1, 2 and 3 setting the clubs alight.

E The economy — shedding 1,000 jobs a day — creaked and shuddered in a recession so deep that down began to look like up. Thousands of exiles were left on a limb as NCCR and UNHCR aid dried up.

F Legions of fans of federalism declared their views, but the government's federalism conference flopped on the day of the Bisho massacre. The 'F' word was fence, as in Ronnie Kasrils' unmended fence, DP fence-sitting, the delayed fencing-in of hostels, and Buthelezi mangling Cole Porter's "Don't Fence Me In" at a press conference. But, ultimately, for too many South Africans, 'F' stood for funerals.

G Pathologist Jonathan Gluckman blew the whistle on deaths in police custody, while Judge Goldstone gallantly tried to keep a semblance of justice alive. Thousands of civil servants got golden handshakes, and joined the corporate sector.

H SACP chief Chris Hani broke the silence on ANC camp abuses. The hospital strike was hobbled by 7,700 dismissals and violence, but hung on for 16 weeks.

I According to Nelson Mandela, De Klerk started off with interity, then lost it, then recovered it, then ... The Interim Government

form — the United Nations — for bantustan leaders to address the world, thereby giving them a semblance of national leadership and recognition.

3) Disunity will probably continue and dominate our politics, allowing the regime to project itself as the sole agent that can deliver this country from its political woes. Various pacts will be entered into, but Pretoria will implement none.

4) An end to the anarchy reigning in our communities, which has disrupted the social fabric.

INKATHA

1. When the peace process and negotiations were scuttled by the ANC's withdrawal from Codesa and the subsequent upward spiralling of violence that followed on the ANC's "mass action" and worker stayaways.

2. The bilateral talks between the government and the ANC on the issue of violence. The attempt to foist their far-reaching decisions on the IFP and other parties can only exacerbate violence.

3. Negotiations will resume, though in form different from Codesa. Parties on the left and right that did not participate in Codesa might participate. The economy will recover.

4. Reconciliation, peace, justice, economic growth and freedom for our people.

NP

1. 1992 was the see-saw year: expectations regarding negotiations were sent sky-high by a referendum, and then crashed down at Codesa 2, but slowly recovered towards the end of the year.

2. The failure of the top leadership of the ANC and the IFP to meet and resolve the violence between their respective supporters.

3. The realities of SA will force all important political players to the negotiation table.

4. That all the political parties and organisations will use the instruments of peace to bring true national reconciliation to our land.

DP

1. When the National Party and the ANC put self-interest ahead of the interest of SA; when crime and violence continued to escalate along with food prices and unemployment.

2. The actions of the ANC and the NP which caused a breakdown in negotiations and growing polarisation within our society.

3. The holding of non-racial elections.

4. Peace and prosperity for SA, enabling people to choose their political home free from intimidation.

ANC

1. This was the year when it became clear that the National Party is not yet prepared to accept a full democracy and still wants to maintain control over the political process.

2. The disastrous course of the Further Indemnity Bill through Parliament. This was compounded by forcing the amnesty legislation through the President's Council, a totally undemocratic body. This was the kind of behaviour that one expected of P W Botha.

remained imminent. Insurrectionists tried to harness blazing passions, but in the cities most folk chose indifference. Inflation was anchored in double digits (average 14%).

J Johannesburg became murder capital of the world. The justice sytem went from bad to worse, as common killers were freed by decree. Example: Rudolf Rix served six days for beating to death a worker with a pickaxe.

K Karma. Stay tuned ...

L Land distribution remained an enduring legacy of apartheid, with the government transferring and selling state land in the face of opposition. Lay-offs in the mining industry cost 40,000 jobs. Bank robber Lucky Malaza earned his name when he walked free as a 'political prisoner'.

M Mass action embarrassed fear mongers and alarmists by focusing the minds of negotiators—though not without anxious moments of brinkmanship. SA's long-awaited entry into international sport turned out to be a march of mediocrity. 'M', of course, is also for murder, massacres and mayhem. Enough said.

N SA's status as a nuclear-capable country was confirmed, but no one noticed. Natal plunged deeper into civil war, as National Peace Accord structures were sidelined and thrashed. Numsa staged the second biggest strike in SA history. And we became the only country in the world without an official national anthem.

O We Ooh-ed and Aah-ed at the Olympics, but in the end the two medals had to soothe our hearts.

P Who polices the police, in whose custody 111 prisoners died this year? Pik Botha became the planet's longest-serving foreign minister ever. And 'P' = Patriotism, which means never having to say you didn't know.

Q Quarrel, quibble, quench, quake, quaff—you name it, we did it all in 1992.

R Remember the referendum, when 69% of 13% of 35 million people decided to give reform a try? Seven months later, no one could remember which way they'd voted. Rape remained a national scourge with 1,000 attacks daily. More revolutionaries flirted with reform, while rugby fans learned to droop their heads in shame.

S Sports sanctions were lifted, but it wasn't until soccer coach Screamer Tshabalala assaulted a reporter that the national team won an official match. The SABC reverted to the role of voice box for the government. Satanism became the urban legend of choice in suburbia. Township self-defence units were accused of moonlighting in less than legit trades. Strike waves rolled on, but wage gains lagged behind inflation.

T Train attacks claimed 252 lives, and led to only one conviction. The carrying of traditional weapons was outlawed, but police looked the other way.

U Ulundi — whose Waterloo? Unemployment roared past the seven million mark, with less than six percent of school-leavers finding jobs. Universal suffrage remained alien to SA life. Utopia won new fans.

V TV interviewer Lester Venter looked frisky and martial when quizing the opposition, but wilted at the feet of government big shots. VAT flopped.

W Winnie Mandela retreated, retaliated, then resigned. But don't cash in your bets, yet. Good news was the formation of the inclusive and non-partisan Women's National Coalition in April. The adage that 'War is Politics by other means' retained adherents.

X Xenophobia. Fear and loathing of foreigners is still a national affliction.

Y Youth. Tomorrow's bitter harvest?

Z The Zion Christian Church in April again staged an event we choose to ignore: Ever heard of two million people travelling hundreds of miles to Moria at their own cost to attend a 'political rally'?

—Research by Kimberly O'Donnel; photos by R. Botha, B. Hendler and The Star.

A YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY

If you weren't doing it, you were talking about it — mass action, that is. How successful was the campaign? And did the outcome justify the risks? **HEIN MARAIS** *does the measuring*

"If you can't bite,
don't show your teeth"
Yiddish proverb

TWENTY MONTHS AGO, the ANC snarled and had its bluff called. This year, when the government ran Codesa into the ground, the organisation had to put its money where its mouth was. It did. And 1992 became the Year of Mass Action.

The campaign took a while to warm up, but by August it was clanging along in full swing. Predictably, the voices of reason teamed up on the sidelines, lecturing South Africans on the evils of adventurism, inflated expectations, impatience, militancy and other afflictions.

The chant, "Don't Rock the Boat" boomed across the land, and there were hints of panic as the media brimmed with sermons hailing the rewards of patience, trust and restraint.

The rest is history. Mass action scared some South Africans witless, but it did not jostle us over the precipice. There's much to be said for the claim that it saved the negotiations process, by focusing minds within the De Klerk camp, which opted for the obstacle-clearing Record of Understanding one month after the Bisho massacre.

As it turned out, mass action came with an expiry date, as Jeremy Cronin had anticipated in his "The boat, the tap and the Leipzig way" essay: the 'tap' was opened, then closed when De Klerk cried 'Uncle'. Water under the bridge ... until next time?

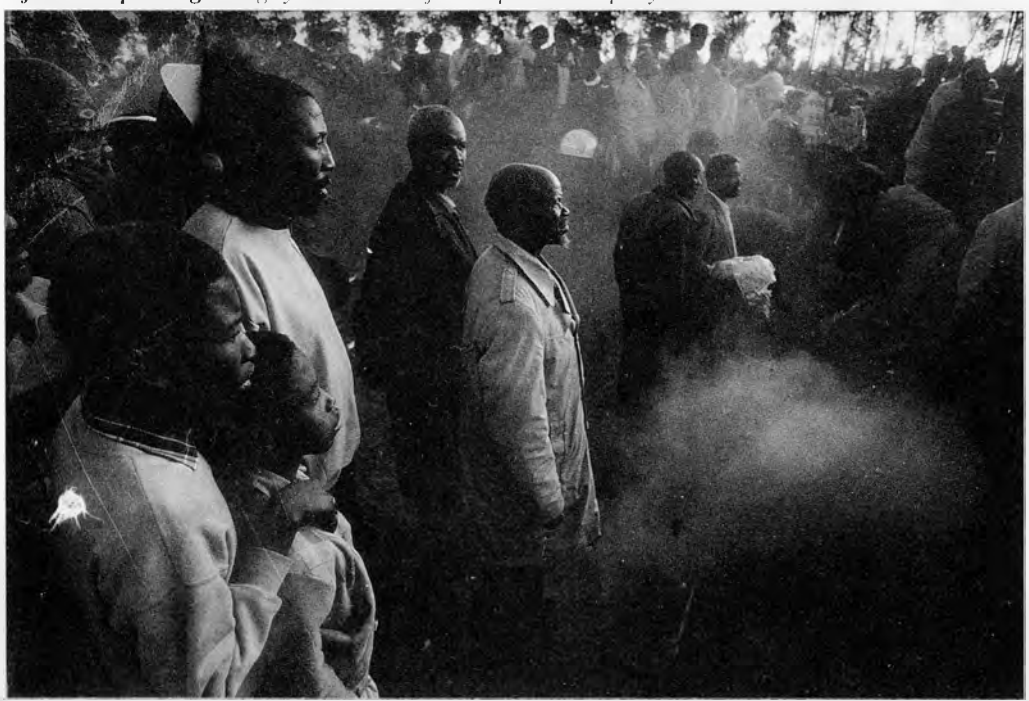
Normalising failure

The tendency of liberation movements, Robert Fine and Dennis Davis observed last year in their book *Beyond Apartheid*, "is less toward self-criticism than toward what we might call 'the normalisation of failure'." Hence the need to test the more flamboyant claims that mass action was a marvel that democratised negotiations, smoothed the ANC's creases, strengthened structures on the ground and won back the initiative for an organisation which had been looking clumsy and distracted in the contest for state power.

Mass action was not a trick pulled from a hat. The principal goal of the ANC re-

***After Boipatong**: Angry mourners force political players to act.*

PIC: T J LEMON



3. Either we work together and commit ourselves without hidden agendas to justice and peace, or our country will be destroyed.

4. That the carnage in our country comes to an end.

PAC

1. It was the year when the mass murder of Africans (Boipatong and Bisho) continued unabated.

2. The release of killers, rapists and robbers as political prisoners.

3. Elections for a Constituent Assembly. The PAC will do extremely well in pulling in the votes.

4. A whopping big donation for our election fighting fund.

SACP

1. 1992 was the when the ANC-led alliance once more discovered for itself that mass action works.

2. The regime's deadlocking of Codesa.

3. Capitalism will continue to demonstrate its inability to solve the needs of the population, and the flirtation in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union with the so-called free market will carry those countries from crisis to crisis.

4. The SACP has long been concerned about persistent rumours that Santa Claus has been exploiting his workers in the North Pole. This year Santa Claus will be grounded and our children will realise that their Christmas presents come from the hard labour of the workers at Prima Toys and from the love and sacrifice of their impoverished parents — not from a portly, white gentleman from the northern hemisphere.

mains the achievement of state power, as a prerequisite for transforming SA society along more just and egalitarian lines.

After several years of attrition, proponents of the negotiations route became ascendant within the organisation — to the point where, by late 1991, dissidence on this matter was effectively shut out on the margins. The domestic balance of power and the international context had effectively ruled out insurrection.

It was within this strategic framework that mass action was deployed to 'encourage' the regime to clear the negotiations deadlock, and to tilt the playing field to the ANC's advantage. The aim was a smoother, speedier negotiations process culminating in the transfer of power to a democratically elected ANC government.

Whatever the shrill warnings, the claim that mass action was meant to bypass negotiations and propel the ANC along a short-cut to power lacks evidence. Sooner or later, the ANC and its allies were going to be back at the negotiating table. Spunky daydreams aside, that consensus held at leadership level.

Ambitious plan

But mass action remained an ambitious undertaking. Internally, it had to lull rising disquiet, invigorate the ranks, and repair faltering organisational capacities. Externally, it had to confirm the ANC's prestige and support, strengthen its hand at the bargaining table and smooth the path to power. Simultaneously, it had to advance the ANC along two paths — converging first at the negotiations table and ultimately at the achievement of political power.

For two years now, complaints about inadequate consultation, lack of leadership accountability and estrangement from the negotiations process have been circulating within the ANC. The highly technical content and shifting nuances of negotiations were alienating many supporters. By early 1992, this steady whine had become gruff and ominous.

With few tangible benefits spilling from the bargaining table, negotiations, which had been marketed as a "site of struggle", was being seen as an abstract and distant process. In the context of intense insecurity and violence, orthodox politics began to loose its appeal for people wrestling with the daily realities of survival. Many drifted towards political apathy, while some opted for an unfocused militancy that is not always distinguishable from crime.

The violence has hit the ANC hard. It has deepened organisational disarray at the branch (and in some cases regional) level, drained the confidence of activists, undermined the organisation's appeal and encouraged desires for "peace at any price".

These and other factors also sharpened an array of tensions and contradictions, some of which regularly spur pundits to announce the discovery of "splits" and "camps", generally of the "negotiators/insurrectionaries" sort. While the lines of tension tend to be fluid and seldom encircle "camps", they are not necessarily harmless.

To what extent did mass action reverse these trends on the internal front? At all ends of the country, impressive levels of mobilisation were achieved; likewise the standard of discipline that was maintained. Many of the events bristled with the sense of revitalised strength and purpose, a mood that inspired communities — some regions announced their virtual 'rebirth' as enthusiasm swelled and new members joined.

However, the ANC failed to use mass action to move beyond sheer mobilisation toward organising its constituency. The systems and organisational practices that will be required to win an election and sustain efficient activism were not installed. Lethargy was replaced by fits of vigour, but new groundwork was not laid.

In parts of the PWV region, for instance, allies in civil society saved the day on the organisational front; a pattern repeated elsewhere.

Mass action transformed branches momentarily into assembly points, but did not develop them into organisational nodes. A crucial weakness remained at the grassroots level, such that, months later, PWV chair Tokyo Sexwale felt it necessary to isolate internal disorganisation as a major threat to the ANC.

Flights of fancy

Nevertheless, the mobilisation that occurred was impressive and, at times, spectacular. Insurrection might not have been part of the plan initially, but as the campaign gathered steam, nostalgia for the insurrectionary dream spread at grassroots level — a measure of the extent of alienation and despair that had crept in. The fundamentalist militancy of the Peter Mokabas and Ronnie Kasrils won new fans, which highlighted latent contradictions within the broad church of the ANC. Already, it has visibly reinforced tensions around choices of strategy, as the 'It's-on-it's-off' seesawing on the Ulundi and Mmabatho marches suggest.

Did mass action "democratise negotiations" and take them "back to the people", as claimed? Doubtless, the general engagement with the regime became more tangible — "more real" even —to scores of supporters. Leaders went on the stump across the country, discussing negotiations with communities, answering questions, hearing complaints, entertaining demands. And for those several weeks, ordinary supporters and members participated in the broader drama of the negotiations process — they rallied, marched, stayed away, sat in. But in the end, the negotiators stepped back into the

smoke-filled room and shut the door.

The fact of the matter is that negotiations do not lend themselves to participatory democracy: they require mandates, flexibility and trust. At best, on this score, mass action could have reinforced the confidence of rank-and-file in the negotiators. Whether this happened is a moot point.

Might is right

Negotiations are decided not by the weight of reason but by the balance of power. And power can be expressed through military strength, reference to proven electoral strength, the ability to destabilise society or by demonstrating mass support. At its most transparent, mass action was aimed at the latter. As a "referendum in the streets" it was an undeniable success, puncturing the notion that the majority had been lulled or bludgeoned into abandoning hopes for progressive change.

But mass action also contained an element of destabilisation, insurrection even — though not on the national scale that so distressed establishment critics.

The call for free political activity in targeted homelands like the Ciskei, Bophutatswana and KwaZulu was — and is — justified of course. But it can be added that, in SA on the whole, a climate for free political activity is not exactly the norm. The selection of targets was not arbitrary, nor was the campaign without ulterior motives.

In the Ciskei's case, the call was translated into an attempt to remove the Gqozo dictatorship (as the ANC alliance's September 3 demands clearly announced). Less explosive options existed (such as the SA Council of Churches' referendum proposal, see *WIP* 85's editorial), but it was decided to run the gauntlet in Bisho. Why?

One answer relates to a national political process that had become deadlocked at the centre, where the ANC was unable to tilt the regime off balance. Pretoria's homeland cohorts represented weak points which, if pressured, could shift the balance of forces at the hub. The campaign for free political activity in the homelands was also a euphemism for destabilising the periphery. And it was especially there that mass action flirted with insurrection and engaged in brinkmanship.

The cheerful verdict is that the risk paid off: the regime's Christian-democrat alliance was undermined, with Gqozo, Buthelezi and Mangope so isolated that they have taken to snuggling up to the white far right. But does it not make more sense to strap players like Buthelezi and company into a formal bargaining process where their influence better reflects their genuine strength? Moreover, is it not in the interest of the ANC to be confronted by a relatively disciplined and coherent alliance at the other end of the table?

Instead, we now have a gang of jittery desperadoes strutting along the perimeter. At least one of them is capable of unleashing national chaos; together they threaten a fearsome veto during the transition. What resembles a victory in the short term might prove disastrous down the road.

Back to the future

More poetically, the deep nostalgia that characterises the South African struggle was revealed again. The paradigm was that of protest politics of old, with the symbolism belonging to 1985-86 (complete with the insurrectionary mirage flickering on the horizon).

Mass action harked back also to the view of victory as an event, rather than a process. Despite initial lip service to the socio-economic realm, the campaign hinged on a set of finite, political goals: interim government, constituent assembly, democratic elections.

The mobilising appeal of the goals was major, but they reinforced not only the notion that a transition ends when the new government takes office, but also that of instantaneous change — the politics of the apocalypse. Mid-1980s de ja vu. In reality, the transition will wobble way past that point, continuing until political power is achieved and the new regime is able to govern and not just rule.

Mass action kick-started a stalled phase of the transition. But it did little to promote the kind of dynamic force ("mass struggle" to some) which can ensure that the outcome will resemble the aspirations that drove people to struggle.

Ironically, it did not stiffen the ANC's bargaining stance, but boosted fans of 'sunset clauses' and enforced power-sharing, including figures 'sidelined' at the height of the campaign. As Pallo Jordan's fierce rejoinder to Joe Slovo's compromise package hints, this has pushed a new set of fault lines to the surface.

In the end, the ANC flashed its teeth without being challenged to bite. Mass action broke the deadlock — but on the basis of brinkmanship played within an incredibly explosive context. The protest that "we had no choice, we had to up the ante" (as one alliance leader puts it) is valid. A bullheaded regime, the balance of power and internal dynamics left the organisation no other option. But the fact is that we travelled out onto the ledge for the game of chicken. Luckily, the other side blinked.

Yet, leaving the matter there would be irresponsible. For it seems unlikely that our society — and its menagerie of stressed out incumbents and aspirants — can endure another bout of brinkmanship without rattling to pieces.

Mass action was the ANC's chance to hit a home run, and step back friskier and feistier than ever. It didn't. The penalty lies in ambush, ahead. ❑

PIC: PAUL WEINBERG (SOUTHLIGHT)

PIC: EDMOND JIYANE (DYNAMIC IMAGES)

labour

A STITCH IN TIME?

Local may be lekker, but are employers and the SA Clothing and Textile Workers Union (Sactwu) colluding to keep the prices of clothes and fabrics high? **KERRY CULLINAN** *investigates*

IN A UNIQUE MOVE, UNIONISTS, EMPLOYERS and the state have formed a single task group geared at salvaging the clothing and textile industries. But will the forum do this at the expense of ordinary people?

Consumers are already battling with high clothes prices. Critics accuse employers and Sactwu of colluding to keep prices high — by supporting tariffs on imported goods and by calling for stricter controls on imported second-hand clothes. Free marketeers believe the market should restructure the industries, while left critics say the controls hit the poor hardest.

But the criticisms seem a little simplistic. "If all tariffs were to be removed and market forces were to restructure industry, SA would lose its motor industry, large sections of the tyre, chemical and engineering industries, as well as the clothing and textile industries," says Sactwu's assistant secretary, Ebrahim Patel.

"What you would have in theory is a nation of consumers with access to a range of goods at the lowest possible prices. But there would be no jobs, so people would have no money to buy all these goods."

Wits University economist Miriam Altman predicts that if tariffs were removed immediately, the industries will be destroyed within six weeks, the time it takes to import goods. Altman, who is attached to Cosatu's industrial strategy project, adds that importers not consumers will benefit from a tariff removal.

Manufacturers and Sactwu agree that the industry has to produce higher quality goods if it is to become internationally competitive — a view shared by the World Bank.

The main reasons why SA cannot compete in the cheap clothes market are the relatively high costs of both fabric and labour. In China, for example, workers are paid poverty wages in an industry that also "employs" children and prisoners. In SA, clothing and textile workers are not well paid, but the industries are heavily unionised (96% of workers belong to Sactwu), enabling workers to fight for better wages and work conditions.

"There is no comparison between SA wages and China, where workers get about R25 a week," says Patel. However, Altman points out that over the past few

years, "the 'price' of labour has risen more slowly than that of textiles".

For Altman, SA has two options if it is to become more competitive: "Either cheap goods will have to be heavily protected, or firms will have to be helped to adjust to produce more upmarket goods". Heavy tariffs on cheap imports will become unnecessary if the latter route is chosen, she says.

The task group enters

The trilateral task group was formed after Sactwu late last year proposed a negotiating forum to Org Marais, then manpower minister. The goal was to block the steady decline of the clothing and textile industries.

Since 1989, 20,000 Sactwu members have been retrenched, most of them in the textile industry. Textile employers have urged the state to impose higher tariffs on imported fabrics, but clothing manufacturers resisted the move.

Marais stepped in and invited representations from each interest group. But Sactwu called instead for an ongoing process involving all major stakeholders, from cotton farmers to retailers. The task group was to design a short-term plan and a long-term process to make the industries more competitive internationally.

A group chaired by Barlow Rand's Paul Hatty has drawn up a short- term plan. Consensus was reached in a rather unusual manner: Sactwu found itself mediating between feuding textile and clothing employers.

"There are objective conflicts of interest between the two industries if viewed from a short-term, narrow perspective. Cheap fabric helps the clothing industry in the short term," explains Patel. "But Sactwu has shown that such 'short- termism' is not going to lead to the development of a vibrant and dynamic industry."

Stemming the flood

To halt the flood of cheap imports, the Hatty group has proposed that either a specific tariff (a standard tariff on quantity of goods, regardless of value) or an ad valorem tariff (a percentage of the value of the goods), whichever is highest, be imposed on all imports. The Board on Tariffs and Trade (BTT) prefers that the lower of the two tariffs be imposed. Sactwu is trying to find a way out of the deadlock by calling for a negotiated tariff proposal.

"There are about 2,000 different tariffs for the industry," explains Altman. Instead of dealing with each tariff separately, she proposes that a specific tariff be applied to each of the 40 "problem areas" she has identified. An ad valorem tariff should be imposed on remaining items, she says.

Shortly before going to press, the BTT published a new proposal (which Altman describes as "extremely complicated"), involving a combination of specific and ad valorem tariffs. Players were in the process of studying the proposal.

While Sactwu is focusing on tariffs at the moment, Patel stresses that "in the long term, the union supports a reduction of tariffs to levels consistent with those of our main international trading partners".

"An industry that relies on tariff walls is not viable: It makes for an uncompetitive industry, reduces the range of articles people have access to, and raises costs for consumers."

According to Patel, Sactwu believes that a tariff policy must form part of an overall, coherent industrial policy - which will be planned by the task group. The underlying belief is that the industries will only grow if potentially efficient and productive sectors are identified and promoted by means of incentives and short- to medium-term tariff protection.

Social contract?

Some observers see in the task group the beginnings of a social contract between employers, Sactwu and the state. Patel says local perceptions of social contracts entail wage restraint and limiting strikes. Sactwu's accord on tariffs has not made such concessions. "On the contrary, the restructuring of the industries holds the key to wage and working condition improvements. Further, the key to tripartite accords is a strong, well organised labour movement."

Sactwu's participation in the task group is in line with decisions taken at Cosatu's economic policy conference in March, he asserts. "That conference said we ought to ensure that our industries become more viable and that SA develops an active industrial policy," Patel reminds.

The task group's progress will be watched with interest by the labour movement. Such forums are new to SA, where union militancy, employer heavy handedness and state repression — rather than joint negotiations — have been the norm.

If Sactwu can win advances for its members, other Cosatu affiliates are likely to push for similar initiatives. The National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa) has already agreed to join the electronics and auto task groups that are being set up by the state.

But finding a balance between jobs and wealth creation is extremely difficult. This will certainly be complicated by the animosity between the clothing and textile manufacturers, which is so bad that some clothing employers are suggesting that the entire SA textile industry should be scrapped.

Sactwu is once again under pressure to play mediator, in the knowledge that if the task group fails, huge job losses will result. ❑

ORIGINS OF THE CRISIS

THE CLOTHING AND TEXTILE INDUSTRIES HAVE been plagued by factory closures and mass retrenchments. Sactwu's Ebrahim Patel blames the industries' crisis on:

- **Decades of "inward industrialisation" with very protected trade arrangements, which developed as a result of sanctions and boycotts.**
- **A major decline in the standards of state control over imported goods, due mainly to corruption within the bureaucracy which allows people to slip goods past customs.**
- **A deep and sustained recession.**
- **The global recession, which means SA export prospects are weaker, while countries like China have taken to dumping cheap goods in SA.**
- **Duty free import permits, issued by the government as an incentive for exporters. This, coupled with customs corruption, has led to a flood of imports.**
- **Second hand clothing imports. In 1991, one in five garments sold was an imported second hand item. This translates to 30,000 to 35,000 jobs.** ■

personally speaking

DIKGANG MOSENEKE

Deputy-president, Pan-Africanist Congress

PIC: MICHAEL HERMAN

Dikgang Ernest Moseneke has racked up more than his share of firsts. At 15, he was the youngest prisoner on Robben Island. He completed his law studies in prison, and later under house arrest, became the first black advocate to be admitted to the Pretoria Bar. He is also one of the few political leaders who thoroughly rattles every interviewer the SABC fields against him. Mosito Raphela caught up Moseneke, now deputy president of the PAC .....

YOUR FIRST THOUGHT THIS MORNING?
That meeting of strange bedfellows — homeland leaders and ultra-right supremacists. It left me flabbergasted, and yet it was not so strange.

ANY ADDICTIONS?
Work. I work up to fourteen hours; either professional, PAC or community work. I think I should do something about it.

WHAT PHYSICAL EXERCISE DO YOU DO?
Ask Bennie Alexander. We were together in Boipatong and F W De Klerk was there. We had to run and toyi-toyi along with the rest of the marchers. I was clearly fitter than him and he is younger [laughs]. This is because I jog quite regularly, participate in fun runs and play tennis.

WHAT DO YOU NO LONGER BELIEVE IN?
That the oppressed are right all the time. The oppressed often kill and exploit each other. Race, class and gender issues will be with us long after the end of apartheid.

WHO COOKS IN YOUR HOME?
I don't cook. My wife and I have gone beyond the tension over who should cook. When she is away I can, of course, fix my own snack.

WHAT ANIMAL BEST CHARACTERISES YOU?
I can't think of any animal, but fair play, integrity and hard-work would be part of its qualities. Despite all the noise I make about the land I know little about animals.

WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT LIVING IN PRETORIA?
Everything. It is the capital of the nation [laughs]. Most people greet each other and cars do not get towed away. Fewer pick-pockets. In Pretoria we are like country bumpkins, whereas in Johannesburg everyone is smart and moving.

YOUR BIGGEST REGRET?
Eh, the ten years I spent on Robben Island was a big bonus, and I don't regret it. I regret the moment the Patriotic Front collapsed.

COMPLETE: IF I WERE A DICTATOR FOR A DAY...
I would send all young people to technikons and teach them how to create wealth.

WHAT'S THE TOUGHEST THING ABOUT BEING DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE PAC?
Keeping in touch with national activities, and making sufficient and meaningful contact with grassroots members and supporters.

YOUR FAVOURITE TV INTERVIEWER?
Adrian Steed. We had a big, big match, one interview which I think had the nation on its feet.

DID YOU PAY YOUR TV LICENSE?
Yes. I don't know what it says about me. I don't know what my PAC followers will think. It is one of those automatic bills that reaches my desk.

WHAT DO YOU MISS MOST ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD?
Lack of pressure and responsibility, and the support I got from my parents. I wish I had a repeat of growing up in Atteridgeville.

WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL SECURE?
When my family members are around. It is interesting that I have so many friends, even from the enemy ranks [laughs].

YOUR BIGGEST FEAR?
Violence, social insecurity and the failure of our people, africans in particular, to actually transform the society they have fought for. You find people fighting for liberation and once they get it, they make a hogwash of it.

You end up with corrupt bureaucrats who steal money from the people, who mismanage the economy and who are despots not democrats!

WHAT DOES THE WORD 'SETTLER' MEAN TO YOU?
It does not mean white. It means an oppressor who upholds a settler or colonial regime or order; a minority which does not see itself as part of the people of the country it dominates. There are many whites who have opposed this system and others who have fought for it. There are many africans who have been lackeys and supporters of colonial regimes.

Therefore, a settler is a supporter of a particular repressive system. You can choose to be a settler or part of the liberation forces.

AND THE WORD 'AFRICAN'?
Sobukwe says there is one race — the human race ... When you talk of african you talk firstly of indigenous people of the African continent, and secondly all other people who are on the African continent who do accept that their destiny is bound with that of the indigenous people.

So africans are those who live in Africa, not in a settler-dominating relationship but in a democratic way. African has no racial correlation whatsoever.

YOUR FAVOURITE SOUTH AFRICAN IDIOM OR EXPRESSION?
Should I say 'One settler one bullet'? [laughs] Having spent such long parts of my life in struggle, I think it is: "Long live the liberation struggle!"

YOUR FAVOURITE SOCCER TEAM?
Mamelodi Sundowns. Up the Downs.

COMPLETE: AT THE END OF THE DAY, I ...
Unfortunately I have to go to meetings, to cocktails in honour of some important personalty or the other. But I do end up home and have a drink to wind up the day.

YOUR ALL-TIME FAVOURITE NOVEL OR STORY?
War and Peace by Tolstoi, and *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe.

THE WORST JOB IN THE WORLD?
Running a country as a politician. And, as if that is not enough, every five years you have to subject yourself to a vote.

YOUR HAPPIEST MOMENT?
When I married and when my two sons were born. Most of the other happy moments turned sour quickly.

IF YOU WERE NOT AN ADVOCATE, WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING ?
When I was young I told my aunt that I would like to be a traffic cop, pilot, diplomat or a lawyer. Political leader was not on the list.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY?
Homosexuality is about choice, and that choice should be respected. Everyone has the right to choose a sexual partner.

WHAT SHOULD FATHER XMAS BRING DE KLERK THIS YEAR?
A resignation letter already signed for him.

SHOULD EMPLOYERS BE ALLOWED TO HAVE WORKERS TESTED FOR AIDS?
No. They might as well test them for bad breath.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU USED PUBLIC TRANSPORT?
Virtually everyday, I was on the plane only last night. Until some twenty-four months ago I used a taxi a lot. With me holding political office I was told it would be unwise and unsafe.

WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL GUILTY?
All I have that the majority of the people don't have.

THE PERSON YOU MOST WANT TO MEET?
I have run out of heroes. My three favourite people are R M Sobukwe, S B Biko and O R Tambo. But I can't say the same of the some of the people next to Tambo.

SHOULD THERE BE CENSORSHIP IN A DEMOCRATIC SA?
No, an emphatic No.

DO YOU SEE THE ANC AND PAC EVER WORKING CLOSELY TOGETHER?
The only sensible thing to say is that I hope they will.

DO YOU AND YOUR BROTHER TIEGO (ANC PWV REGION LEADER) DISCUSS POLITICS?
Regularly.

WHO SHOULD ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE NEXT?
Comrade Winnie Nomzamo Mandela. ❑

Reconstruct

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Economic forums spring up

A HOST of regional economic development forums have sprung up in the country over the past few months.

These range from the Border-Kei Development Forum (see *Reconstruct* 5), which participants see as an "embryonic regional government", to the more cautious PWV forum.

Although the ANC, Cosatu, Sanco, local and regional government and business are involved in all forums, none of the parties have developed a united national approach.

There is a real possibility that the regional forums will end up competing against one another for investment. For example, a number of regions are considering setting up export processing zones (EPZs) whereas the country may not be able to sustain a large number of EPZs.

Local economic development initiatives have also been set up. In Atlantis, residents have set up a forum to save their area. Durban's Operation Jumpstart is also trying to attract wealth to the city. The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has found that its cooperatives, set up over the past few years, are unable to cope. Because of this, the union is considering changing its emphasis from job creation to rural community development.

The regionalism/federalism debate is raised once more. The debate is crucial to our future and to the 'new South Africa'. The boundaries and powers of future regions will also have a significant impact on local and regional economic initiatives.

In this issue, the case for smaller regions that are able to reconstruct a society divided by apartheid, is argued.

Closely linked to the federalism debate is the state's attempts to sell off state land. These sales seem motivated both by a desire to ensure that a democratic government has little power to address apartheid's wrongs and an attempt to buy votes. Vast areas of land are being handed over to the homelands, while money raised from land sales is often used to build houses.

This issue also looks at some of the development projects being undertaken in the Western Cape. ■

CONTRIBUTIONS

Reconstruct **was initiated by the Urban Sector Network to raise issues related to urban development. Contributions should be sent to: Kerry Cullinan, *Reconstruct*, PO Box 32716, Braamfontein 2017.**

Focus on economic initiatives

INSIDE

Participation is the key

Economic development forums have been set up throughout the country. The **CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY AND LABOUR STUDIES** looks at some of the problems participants face

THE CORNERSTONES of an effective forum to negotiate economic issues in a city or region are consensus, the speedy implementation of agreements reached and proper participation by all central players.

The first step towards the success of any forum is said to rest on whether consensus can be reached on:

- characterising the problem;
- developing a vision;
- a process to realise that vision;
- resources to support the process;
- implementing and controlling the process.

The need for a regional development forum in Natal-KwaZulu is evident. The majority of the population is disadvantaged in almost every aspect of social, economic and political life. This mitigates against much needed economic growth and a favourable political resolution.

Violence continues to defer the possibility of grassroots organisation and development. While it may not be constructive to apportion blame for the mess, it cannot be forgotten that there are widely divergent players in any inclusive process. What is fairly common in development forums is that everyone agrees on the problems, but very few can agree on how to solve these. Thus characterising the problem and developing a vision is no problem, but there is no consensus on action.

The form and powers of any development forum are crucial in determining whether consensus has value. If the forum cannot implement decisions, there is little point in battling for consensus.

Other factors such as legislation, closed information, weak links between the forum and the grassroots, lack of commitment by participants, the level of representation by key stakeholders to contribute fully also determine whether consensus will be reached. Consensus on these issues is necessary, but not sufficient, to ensure that a development forum will attain its goals.

Normally, any player is welcomed to a forum as long as they can show that they have a stake in the area. For the democratic movement, going into an all-inclusive forum without a basic strategy does little more than secure it the moral high ground for a while.

It is common to hear complaints about lack of capacity in terms of human and financial resources from the democratic movement. It is increasingly clear that poor preparation, poor report-backs and poor representation are weaknesses to be targeted by anyone wanting to derail the process.

Any forum wanting to settle major problems should bring together major stakeholders, whose commitment to the forum can be measured by their level of participation. Consensus is hollow if there is not full participation.

Forums should also be seen as opportunities to empower participants. Too often, the democratic movement loses opportunities because it feels it is not equipped to respond.

Another constraint is that the democratic movement's resources are not coordinated. At a regional level, progressive organisations consistently fail to develop common strategies. Any coordination that does occur comes from individuals rather than the grassroots.

The failure to develop strategy is a major weakness which will be felt fully when forums reach the implementation stage. For example, only if alliance structures cooperate in the upgrading of hostels, will such a project be possible.

Forums afford all stakeholders the chance to find collective solutions. But this does not preclude individual stakeholders from also trying to secure their stake. While cooperation is more important than confrontation, organisations have to ensure that the solutions found will contribute to an equal and democratic society.

The manipulation of problems and resources for short-term gain will inevitably increase as we move closer to elections. Because of this, democratic organisations need to make a sustained impact on decisions taken at regional development forums.

Forums give the democratic movement access to a pool of resources, skills and ideas which can be used to benefit communities that have been deprived of the opportunity to lead a better life. ■

PWV prepares to launch forum

The country's wealthiest region is about to set up an economic and development forum. But Cosatu and the civics have warned that they will not tolerate a talk-shop, reports **KERRY CULLINAN**

THE COUNTRY'S wealthiest region, the PWV, will soon have an economic and development forum that brings together business, labour, civics, political parties and the state.

At the time of going to press, parties were meeting to finalise arrangements for the launch.

The biggest challenge facing the forum is to find common points of agreement between parties and to move beyond talk to action. Cosatu's Witwatersrand secretary, Amos Masondo, says his organisation wants "results, not a talk shop".

"Our main concern is to stop job losses and work for job creation. We also want community issues like the lack of housing and the lack of schools to be addressed," says Masondo. "We all agree on the need for the development and regeneration of the economy, but for the sake of people and not simply to strengthen the economy."

Impetus for the forum came from the Wits Metropolitan Chamber's economic working group. At a meeting convened by the group, labour and business said it would make more sense to set up a regional forum.

The Consultative Business Movement (CBM) was then asked to facilitate the regional meetings, and CBM's Andrew Feinstein has been acting as interim convenor.

The first plenary meeting, held on 24 June, was attended by regional government, political parties, civics, labour and business. At this, a document describing the economic and developmental trends in the region was presented by Professor Alan Mabin.

Out of the plenary, a steering committee was established with representatives of business, labour, civics and the state.

PIC: WILLIAM MATLALA

Amos Masondo says his organisation wants "results, not a talk shop".

A broad understanding has been reached among players that the forum will aim to reach consensus on economic and development issues in the PWV, and give effect to this consensus, says Feinstein.

He sees two main areas, process and delivery. The process involves initiating discussion with regional players on economic and development issues, establishing relationships and building organisations' technical and administrative capacity. Delivery will involve reaching consensus on regional and economic development issues, and implementing that consensus.

For Mabin, the starting point of the forum will be "developing a pool of knowledge and expertise that will lay the basis for negotiated strategic planning for the PWV".

Mabin believes that the PWV has lagged behind other regions such as the Western Cape and Border in forming such a forum, because of the complexities of the region.

"There are lots of initiatives, some competing and clashing, on the way forward for the region. We have gone through a lot of debate, such as on the involvement of local government and political parties," he says.

For Feinstein, the slow start is "not a matter of great concern". Like Mabin, he points to the complexity of the PWV.

"Unlike in the Border region, the issue of representation in the PWV is much more complicated. This region also covers three metropolitan areas."

"It has been relatively easy for the major players to agree to the need for the forum, a lot easier than we expected," adds Feinstein.

However, now that the forum is up and running, immediate attention has to be paid to building a common vision.

For Cosatu, "one of the main problems is whether the TPA will agree that decisions made by the forum are binding," says Masondo.

"The TPA wants the forum to be a National Party rubber stamp, while business wants the forum to assist in getting investment for the region. But we will not allow the forum to be used by discredited government structures to cleanse their name or by business to ensure maximum profits," he adds.

Another problem for organisations like Cosatu and the civics is their capacity to put forward people to the forum. "Although we are committed to the forum, manpower is not readily available," says Masondo.

He adds that Cosatu is also cautious that the forum is not "messed up by the creation of numerous sub-committees, so that at the end of the day it is hard to keep track of issues". ■

Durban's Jumpstart off to a slow start

Durban's initiative to inject new economic activity into the city is taking its time to take off, reports a **Special Correspondent**

All roads lead to Durban: Jumpstart has to pay urgent attention to low cost housing.

DURBAN, LIKE cities such as Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Pietermaritzburg, has responded to the economic crisis by setting up a forum aimed at stimulating economic growth.

Natal is a region associated with endemic political violence and has one of the poorest hinterlands in the country. As a result, Durban's business and political leaders have expressed alarm at what seems to be a very bleak future.

Tongaat Hulett, one of the biggest local businesses and landowners, initiated an analysis of the region's economy and likely scenarios for the future. The findings were widely distributed in the *Durban 2000* report.

The analysis suggests that, without significant effort on the part of the state and business, Durban's four million people will face deteriorating economic, social and political conditions.

Partly as a result of the Tongaat Hulett exercise, the Durban city council hired management consultants Deloitte Pim Goldby to help bring together interested parties to address the situation.

The result was Operation Jumpstart, which was launched in October 1990 in the city hall with speakers from the council, the Development Bank of SA, ANC and others.

Representatives from business, community and union groupings, the ANC, Inkatha and other local organisations attended and participated in the working groups around a number of pre-identified themes. These included big and small business, infrastructure and housing, land use and regulations, major projects, education and training.

Convenors were elected for each working group and a steering committee composed of these convenors and representatives from major interest groups such as the ANC, Inkatha and regional government were appointed.

Since the launch, Jumpstart has initiated and assisted a number of high profile projects in the Durban functional region. Examples include the recent, well publicised lottery and the proposed waterfront developments on the Victoria embankment and Point area.

Proposed low income development in Cato Manor (vacant since Group Areas removals in the 1960s) was helped by Jumpstart. Details of the development are presently being negotiated by a committee with representation from all major interest groups in the region.

Jumpstart intended to get some high profile developments off the ground within six months of its launch. But none of these have materialised yet.

In addition, community-based critics are sceptical of Jumpstart's representivity, and few community groups or unions have the capacity to be actively involved in the long term discussions needed for such an operation. Lack of experience in dealing with these groups meant that Pim Goldby's initial overtures were discouraging.

Jumpstart has been very dependent on the funding and attitude of the local white Durban city council, which plans to fund Jumpstart and other projects by selling some of its investments countrywide.

Critics have labelled Jumpstart unrepresentative and concerned with developments that are not necessarily going to benefit the poor. For example, export processing zones are at best ambivalent in their impact on labour.

But the options for local economic development in Durban — even if driven by the most democratic forum — are limited. In post-apartheid Durban, tourism will still be a major component of the economy, making high-profile investments promoting places necessary.

However, Jumpstart needs to ensure that it pays attention to involving a wide range of groups in future development initiatives. In addition, the large-scale developments it is promoting need to be assessed.

New ways need to be found to combine the Durban city council's commitment (to the tune of R100-million) to development in peripheral areas with more visible, central developments aimed at promoting Durban's economic profile, both nationally and internationally. ■

Watch the West grow

The Western Cape will soon launch a forum to promote the region's economic development, reports **KERRY CULLINAN**

PIC: WESGRO'S ANNUAL REPORT 1991-1992

Adrian Sayers (2nd right) and David Bridgman (right) with delegates at the Wesgro workshop.

THE WESTERN Cape will launch a regional economic development forum on 3 December that is broadly representative of all major political, business, labour and civic bodies in the region.

The driving force behind the forum is the Association for the Promotion of the Western Cape's Economic Growth (Wesgro). Wesgro, a joint municipality and business initiative, has been key in getting the various regional players together to plan the region's economy.

The forum's main aims are to increase employment and improve the quality of life of people in the region. Particular attention will be paid to urban development and housing, improving the competitiveness of business and black economic advancement.

It will be guided by a plenary, steering committee and a set of commissions. Different commissions will deal with issues such as housing, improving the business sector and job creation.

While the forum is regional, its focus will be the Cape Town metropolitan area. However, a special commission to look into problems experienced in rural areas is to be set up to "ensure that the forum does not perpetuate urban bias", says Wesgro's director, Dr David Bridgman.

Cosatu's Adrian Sayers describes the decision to establish the forum as a "turning point in the history of the region".

"Historically the economy has been managed by the apartheid regime, resulting in gross skewness in the distribution of and control over the wealth of the country," said Sayers. However, as the forum was aimed at redressing this "in the interests of all economic stakeholders", any growth in the regional economy would now "benefit the entire population".

The Western Cape forum has an advantage over other regions in that it can draw on a wealth of information about the region's economy, which has been gathered by Wesgro over the past two years. The research project, which was initiated in 1990, involved over 30 researchers and assessed all major sectors of the region's economy.

Wesgro's main aim, says Bridgman, is "to facilitate the growth of the regional economy through promoting investment". To do this, he says, Wesgro provides information and support for potential investors, identifies and markets the economic advantages of the Western Cape and stimulates and supports regional development initiatives.

This explains Wesgro's interest in uniting a broad range of forces behind a plan to rejuvenate the region's economy.

An in-principle agreement to launch a regional economic development forum was taken in April at a Wesgro consultative conference, called to discuss a programme of action based on the results of Wesgro's research.

The conference was attended by 350 people, including a strong Cosatu delegation, and an interim steering committee comprising 22 people was set up to investigate launching a forum.

Bridgman says one of the difficulties that Wesgro has faced — and that the forum will inevitably face — is how to "effectively engage community based groupings in development issues in a way that facilitates their empowerment".

Arising out of this problem, the civic and the unions, with ANC support, decided to form a Progressive Development Forum (PDF). The idea behind the PDF was that it would effectively be a progressive "caucus" that could deal systematically with demands from established state and business initiatives.

Although the decision to form the PDF was taken in June last year, Cosatu has been the only organisation able to commit itself to such a structure. As a result, the PDF has not yet been launched.

However, with the imminent launch of the regional forum, the progressive sector will be under more pressure to deliver its vision. It is thus likely that the PDF will be launched to ensure that community-based organisations are able to present united demands to the forum. ■

Bloekombos explores in situ upgrading

Residents of Bloekombos, a well established informal settlement outside Cape Town, do not want to move. Instead they are exploring the possibility of an 'in situ' upgrading, reports **KERRY CULLINAN**

PIC ERIC MILLER

It might be a shack, but it is home — and families are reluctant to move away from the area.

KIDS BREAKDANCE on the soft sand, while parents fetch water, sweep or drink to idle the time away. A few lucky ones go to work.

Bloekombos, located on the edge of the Conservative Party controlled Kraaifontein, doesn't have any facilities. There are no schools and there is no water. When we visited the area, children were collecting water from puddles in the pitted roads, while adults were buying water from a local entrepreneur at R1,50 for 25 litres.

But Bloekombos does have a strong community spirit. Some of its residents have lived there for many years. Their shacks are sturdy and have concrete floors. A number of spaza shops also operate in the area.

This spirit has enabled the community to resist numerous attempts by the CP to move them out of the area. On a number of occasions, shacks have been destroyed by bulldozers as the council attempts to drive the `squatters' from the area.

The Kraaifontein municipality claims that the 23 hectares of sandy, marshy land they are living on is worth R2-million. They want the people off the land so they can sell it to industrial developers, they claim.

They refuse to offer any assistance to the community, even in terms of providing water.

Meanwhile, the Cape Provincial Administration (CPA), recognising that people do not want to move away from Kraaifontein, has offered the community serviced sites across the road.

The commuity is trying to secure upgrading for Bloekombos itself as well.

In their dealings with the CPA, the community is represented by its Development Committee. This comprises of representatives from the civic, the ANC and its Youth and Women's Leagues. The committee, assisted by the Development Action Group (DAG), is considering its options carefully before responding to the CPA's offer.

While the CPA has to date refused to consider in situ upgrading, (where the people will not have to move while their sites are being improved) DAG's Alastair Rendall, believes that the community could win this demand.

"We have identified in situ upgrading as an important, precedent-setting aspect of urban restructuring," says Rendall.

"It allows marginalised communities to gain access to urban opportunities at the lowest possible cost."

At present, DAG is helping the development committee to do a feasibility study to determine what people want from a development project.

Once a community development plan has been drawn up, funds will be raised to implement the plan. The community will then decide whether to continue working with DAG. If they do want to continue working with DAG, a new contract will be drawn up between the two parties.

DAG has adopted community contracts as a way of ensuring that its tasks and relationship with communities is clear to all parties.

The development committee is very clear that they want to control the development process. They are discussing a range of different ideas from using local labour in upgrading to rising funds for starter houses.

They are also discussing the implications of going for both in situ upgrading and the new CPA sites.

Rendall says the community realises that deciding on both options, the in situ upgrading and the new sites, could divide the community.

"We have to assess the CPA's tactics and we need to discuss all the options thoroughly," says Rendall.

He also emphasises that neither DAG nor the development committee consider an in situ upgrade to be the only way of solving the crisis.

"What we are all committed to is community controlled development. Our primary concern is that people should direct the development process, whatever form this process takes," stresses Rendall. ■

Lwandle's allocation battle

There is such a difference between development options in Lwandle that allocation has great potential for conflict, reports **KERRY CULLINAN**

PIC: ERIC MILLER

Home is a double bunk for this family of six, but many families prefer the overcrowded hostels to serviced sites.

THERE IS little doubt that most people would choose a brick home rather than a serviced site, if they could. In Lwandle, near Strand, residents face three choices: a three-room rented home in converted hostels; a free, serviced site; or a serviced site that they must buy.

The converted hostel complex is everybody's first choice. It is the only option that offers housing and 70% of residents would rather rent than buy their accommodation. But the converted hostel will only accommodate about 260 people, while 7,000 people live in Lwandle.

The other options arose from a range of different developments taking place without consultation.

The area —essentially a collection of single storey hostels — experiences terrible overcrowding. Since 1986, the hostels have been occupied by families with one family per bed.

"First the CPA wanted Lwandle residents to move to Khayelitsha. They were granted a reprieve and the CPA appointed a black local authority for the area," says ANC REC member Basil Davidson, who works for the Development Action Group (DAG).

The CPA then gave the SA Housing Trust (SAHT) the rights to develop 550 sites near the hostels, which the SAHT aimed to sell for R8,000 each.

At the same time, the Regional Services Council (RSC) gave the Lwandle black local authority a grant to upgrade the hostels and develop a further 230 sites with electricity, which would be free for residents.

Then the IDT granted the Urban Foundation's Cape Utility Homes (CUH) a grant to develop 797 sites. David Slevu, who heads Lwandle's housing committee, says the community was "not consulted about the application to the IDT".

However, when approached by CUH, the community suggested that the IDT grant be used to buy the SAHT's 550 sites for R6,000 a site. The remaining R1,500 per site (the IDT grants R7,500 per site) could then be used to install toilets, says Slevu.

"The CUH bought the sites but claimed that it had to spend more money to put in toilets. It now wants to charge residents R600 a site," says Slevu, who is also the secretary of the local ANC branch.

At the same time, the CUH developed some 200 other sites with the remaining IDT money. While these sites do not have electricity, they will be free.

Slevu hopes that the new project manager — who was recently appointed by the housing committee, the CPA, the Lwandle council and DAG — will help to sort out the confusion.

Meanwhile, says Slevu, no one wants to move from the hostel unless they can get some kind of housing. But loan applications have been refused by a number of banks, who say they fear Sanco's bond boycott.

To compound the problem, there is a possibility that 'squatters' from Waterkloof will be relocated to sites within 1km of Lwandle. These sites are lower quality than the Lwandle sites, which could cause tensions between the two communities. In addition, Lwandle is a Sanco stronghold, while Waterkloof is organised by the Western Cape United Squatters Association (Wecusa).

For Davidson, Lwandle represents "a microcosm of non-existent state housing policy and ad hoc development".

"The financing of developments through the RSC, IDT, SAHT and a government fund for hostel upgrading was done in isolation from surrounding communities," says Davidson. "The community is only involved in the allocation, which is the most difficult and divisive. Extensive workshops will have to be run to look into all the options and consider possible incentives for getting people to accept moving to the sites." ■

es are the only thing produced in this empty factory as the recession takes its toll.

PIC: C. LEDOCHOWSKI (SOUTHLIGHT)

ATLANTIS: THE LOST CITY?

Atlantis, a deconcentration point about 50km from Cape Town, is dying. But its residents are determined to save their area. **KERRY CULLINAN** visited them

ATLANTIS STRUGGLES out of the rooikrans in a flat, sandy, windy area north of Cape Town. The industrial area is almost empty. The residential areas are surrounded by empty spaces, waiting to be filled by residents who never come.

There is nothing remarkable about the site chosen for Atlantis. And there was also no need for a deconcentration point outside Cape Town. The authorities started to develop Atlantis in 1975 as a means of moving coloured people out of Cape Town -- and spent R500-million to do so. Housing developments in the city's coloured townships were stopped and glossy brochures of Atlantis were given to people struggling to find homes in Cape Town.

By the year 2000, the authorities had predicted that there would be 500,000 residents in Atlantis. At present, there are only 65,000 — a mere 13% of the expected population.

Atlantis' 81 main factories provide about 7,500 jobs. Jobs are steadily diminishing as the recession and diminishing incentives take their toll. Some 3,000 jobs and 20 factories have been lost in the past five years. Many businesses that moved to Atlantis were lured by the seven year incentive package offered by the state, which included significant tax concessions. For most businesses, the seven years is coming to an end. As a result, these businesses are simply closing down and relocating.

The key industry in Atlantis is the parastatal Atlantis Diesel Engines (ADE), which builds diesel engines for the SADF, amongst others. ADE employed 3,000 workers in 1988 but has cut its workforce to 1,800. Unless a new market can be found for the engines, ADE's future looks bleak. Two other firms, Probuilt Diesel and Atlantis Forge, depend heavily on ADE for business.

As many as 3,000 jobs are filled by people from outside the area. About 40% of Atlantis' economically active people are unemployed. Up to 30% of Atlantis' workforce is forced to commute to Cape Town every day to work, spending R10 a day on taxi fares. The area's planners expected half the workforce to commute out of Atlantis every day. But little was done to help the commuters. For example, there is a railway line to Atlantis, but this is only for goods trains.

Forum set up

A year ago, some 40 local organisations got together to form the Atlantis Forum in a bid to save the area. Organisations range from the Atlantis Residents' Association to the ANC, Cosatu, churches and traders. Their aim is to come up with an urban development programme to

ensure that Atlantis has a future.

The Foundation for Contemporary Research (FCR) has been asked to head a research team and is acting as the secretariat for the forum.

FCR's Andrew Meston says the research and consultation process will focus on four areas, namely:

- economic development,
- restructuring local government,
- replanning Atlantis,
- environmental issues.

Sub-committees will be set up to look into the different areas. These sub-committees will report back in May next year, and a programme of action will then be taken on the basis of reports.

"Progressive organisations are strong in Atlantis and all parties believe that Atlantis has a future," says Meston. About 80% of all Atlantis workers are unionised.

FCR researchers have already completed an extensive survey of the area, including a socio-economic analysis.

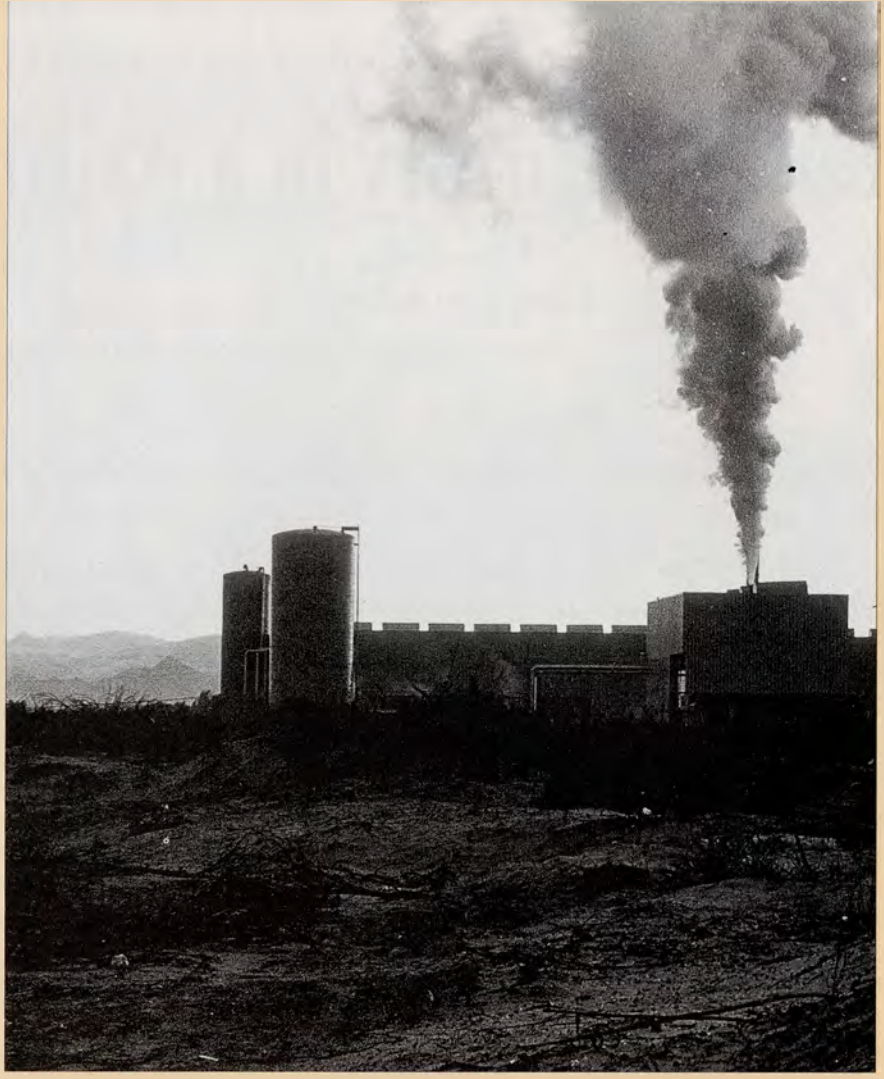
However, Atlantis' future is sorely hampered by very poor planning. Cape Town is expected to expand towards Atlantis, but the government has built Koeberg nuclear station slap in between Cape Town and Atlantis. Koeberg will be in operation until at least 2020. Its existence hampers the development of a port near Atlantis.

Furthermore, the Cape Town council and industrialists are increasing efforts to attract business to the city, and Atlantis cannot compete with Cape Town in terms of business opportunities.

In Atlantis itself, the factories are far from the residential areas. Many factories are not committed to investing in the area. They only stay for as long as state incentives last. In addition, the industrial area has its own white council, which is appointed by the state.

The CBD hinges on a few shops, a hotel and the municipal offices. There is very little provision for offices. The CBD and the residential areas fall under a coloured management committee, which has an R80-million debt.

On the plus side, Atlantis has plenty of water, good roads and electricity. Serviced industrial land is relatively cheap at R12/m^2.



PIC: C. LEDOCHOWSKI (SOUTHLIGHT)

The smoke rises as quickly as the cost of living.

Atlantis residents also have developed a sense of community and permanence, with about 80% of the houses privately owned. The Atlantis Forum is determined to save the area, and has some innovative ideas. In addition, ADE is looking into building engines for the taxi industry.

Creation of apartheid

But Atlantis is not a natural growth area. It is a creation of apartheid. It is situated far from raw materials, and too far from either Cape Town or Saldanha Bay to use either port effectively.

In addition, it is unlikely that the government will continue to offer generous incentives to businesses to entice them to Atlantis.

The Urban Foundation-initiated Private Sector Council (PSC) recently published a report calling for the immediate phasing out of deconcentration and decentralisation policies and incentives.

An Urban Foundation report on the PSC's findings notes that while incentives for business are quite substantial, "these incentives are artificially induced advantages, without which deconcentration would hardly occur".

It goes on to describe Atlantis as a "barren collective consumption environment with few opportunities for leisure and enjoyment of daily life".

It notes that Atlantis residents face a high cost of living and "most Atlantis residents [moved] because of a lack of housing alternatives in Cape Town". Thus, it concludes, "the development would not appear to be solving the problems of equity or efficiency or the promotion of individual choice".

The PSC is promoting the concept of a compact city , and has called for restrictions on urban growth to be lifted.

While areas like Atlantis cannot be wished away, the PSC's proposals are likely to make economic sense to the government, which has wasted millions of rands on promoting areas that are unsuitable for economic development.

The Atlantis community thus faces tough opposition in its bid to improve life in the area. However, their determination has already led to a series of sophisticated plans which may breathe more life into Atlantis. ■

Building unity is a painful process

KERRY CULLINAN spoke to two civic leaders about their problems, programmes and differences.

The civic movement in the Western Cape has been unable to unite. Although Sanco was launched in the region this year, the largest civic organisation in the region, the Western Cape United Squatters Association (Wecusa), remains outside Sanco. Large parts of the Cape Housing Action Committee (Cahac), which organises largely in the coloured areas, has also kept out of Sanco. Efforts to unite Sanco, Cahac and Wecusa continue, but it is unlikely that the various Western Cape civics will achieve unity soon.

MONGEZI MNGESE is a member of Sanco's regional executive committee, and heads the land, housing and services department.

How was Sanco formed in the Western Cape?

For about two years, the Western Cape Civic Association (WCCA), Western Cape Hostel Dwellers Association (WCHDA), Cahac and Wecusa tried to merge. This was very difficult because of all the historical factors that divide the organisations. An interim committee was set up to facilitate the merger. In July last year, two WCCA officials, chairperson Michael Mapongwane and a Nyanga member, Pro Jack, were killed.

Late last year, we worked very hard to try to get the four organisations together, but Cahac and Wecusa had some problems and did not see the process going further.

We then decided to form Sanco in February. Shortly before the launch, three members of the hostel dwellers' association were shot. One died and one is still in a critical condition. We decided that we had to go ahead with the launch, which took place on 28 February this year. There WCCA, WCHDA and 11 Cahac affiliates merged and elected a civic working committee.

Unfortunately, because of past differences, Wecusa has not joined us. KTC (squatter camp) has joined Sanco, but we are working very cautiously. We are not proud of getting bits and pieces.

We are working towards understanding and resolving differences. It is high time that we came together as a united force.

How is Sanco structured in the region?

We have five sub-regions. But the first regional council set up a commission to demarcate sub-regions, so these may change. At present, we have Peninsula (greater Cape Town), Boland, Southern Cape, Karoo and West Coast.

Because different organisations merged to form Sanco, we have to ensure that every civic branch is relaunched. This

ENOCH MADYWABE, the vice-chairperson of Wecusa, outlines his organisation's stance

How is Wecusa structured?

Wecusa was formed on 19 February, 1989. It has a management committee of 12 members and 29 branches in the region. These branches form area committees and send delegates to the general council committee. Our six organisers, who are not paid, deliver letters to our area committees calling them to meetings.

We are strongest in Peninsula. But we also have committees outside Peninsula, such as Mossel Bay.

What is Wecusa's programme of action?

We focus mainly on upgrading land for people living in the settlements. We have managed to get some areas upgraded. At the moment, 218 hectares in Brown's Farm in Philippi (an industrial area near Nyanga) have been upgraded to make 2,310 plots. Our aim is to upgrade 4,400 plots.

The second area is Khayelitsha Town 3, Village 5. We are busy upgrading 4,100 stands through the IDT. They gave us R31-million. All other areas are financed by the CPA.

What is your relationship like with the CPA?

The CPA does certain work for us, not out of sympathy, but because we are strong. We are not begging them. They are doing what the government was supposed to do a long time ago.

Why has Wecusa pulled out of the Serviced Land Project (A CPA initiative to look into developing land for low income housing in the south east of Cape Town)?

Initially the project was about Crossroads. Then it was changed to the SLP and this was a problem to us. Secondly, we saw the process being delayed by the forum. We, as the people living in bad conditions, have big problems of flooding in the winter times. Our members come to us day and night for help.

We then go to the forum and find people living in houses in towns and townships. We have a very difficult time getting consensus and making decisions. We see that this is going to waste our time. We believe in ac-

PIC: ERIC MILLER

Victims of 1989 'squatter camp wars' in Crossroads . . . Unless unity is achieved, more violence could flare up.

is a very long process, that involves REC members going around forming interim committees and setting dates for branch launches. From there, the sub-regions will be launched.

Does Sanco have a programme of action in the region?

Our main task is to launch the united branches. We are concentrating on Peninsula. We have approached service organisations for funding to form sub-regional structures, but we are concerned about the slowness of the project.

There needs to be a tight national training programme for Sanco members, especially on administration. Nonetheless, we are cooperating with service organisations here, and getting some training.

Where is Sanco strongest at present?

We have launched branches in three sections of Gugulethu and in Mfuleni so far. There are interim committees in Nyanga, Khayelitsha and Milnerton. We have requests from all over, but there are only 11 REC members so it is difficult. We kept four executive positions free because we hoped Wecusa and Cahac would move in.

What are you doing to encourage unity with Cahac and Wecusa?

Cahac is split over whether to join us or not. Some communities where they organise are cautious of joining us.

As far as Wecusa goes, we have set up two meetings which did not materialise.

When Wecusa speaks to the ANC, they say they want unity. But when we try to meet, they don't attend. We hope to meet them very soon.

We would prefer to work out problems ourselves. If we fail, we will ask for assistance. ■

tion instead of talking a lot. So we decided to withdraw and concentrate on action.

How does Wecusa fit into Sanco?

Sanco is already launched. At the beginning we were part of the interim committee. When this committee was formed in 1990, it was said that the committee must go around the areas to inform people of the unity process.

It was also said organisations must visit each others' offices to make sure that they have members and assets. But the interim committee failed to do these things, so Wecusa decided to withdraw from the committee.

A fight took place in Macassar in Khayelitsha where three Wecusa members were killed by civic members early last year. People were coming from the brick houses and forming WCCA branches in the squatter areas. Before this, about ten shacks were burnt in Macassar because civic members said they did not want Wecusa in Khayelitsha.

The civic people were also saying that these Wecusa members were headmen. But this is a funny thing. These Wecusa people were the leaders of the battles of the squatter settlements from the time of the pass laws. They were suffering to stay in the city.

Nobody was supporting us then. The township people were watching us at the difficult times and criticising us for coming to the city from the homelands. Now they want to come from the brick houses and chase us away and rule the area.

Why are they coming to us and wanting to rule us now that the battles have been won? We are the same people still living in the shacks. This is all about power.

What are the chances of Wecusa joining Sanco now?

We are not part of Sanco or any other organisation. We are independent. As long as the shack dwellers still exist, we will keep on fighting for the homeless people.

Our needs are not the same. The people living in houses want services. But we have to fight for the land first. After the land, we then struggle for it to be serviced. After that, we then struggle to build a proper house.

There is a big difference between us and people living in the townships. ■

State sells off our heritage

One morning after national elections, the new democratic government may wake up to find that the Nationalists have sold off all the country's assets. **KERRY CULLINAN** reports on state land sales

PIC: PAUL GRENDON (SOUTHLIGHT)

Demands for a moratorium on state land sales fall on deaf ears, as the state goes on a selling spree.

A RANGE of service organisations, lawyers and researchers have been calling for a moratorium on the sale of state land — without much success.

"The demand for a moratorium seems to have fallen on deaf ears — both in the government and the ANC," says Debbie Newton of the Surplus People's Project (SPP). "Enormous pressure is needed if we are going to stop the privatisation of state land."

The deputy minister of land and regional affairs, G Scheepers, announced in August that over one million hectares of state land would be transferred to the homelands.

The government claims that homelands will merely administer the land. But Aninka Claassens of the Centre for Applied Legal Studies, says homeland administration of the land means the same thing as incorporation.

The transfer thus goes against the government's 1991 white paper on land, which states that "land would no longer be incorporated into the self governing territories".

She also points out that the transfer will affect many communities who have fought against incorporation into the homelands, and warns: "If the proposals are implemented, we must expect a replay of the violent civil war that erupted in Moutse in 1986."

Aside from the transfers, rural land is also being auctioned off. One example is the department of agriculture's recent sale of 22 farms in Trichaardtsdal near Lebowa.

Attempts are also being made to sell off prime sites in urban areas. In the PWV, the state is trying to sell 53 prime sites worth some R10-million. Political pressure has stopped the sale so far. The ANC PWV demanded a moratorium on the sales at its recent congress.

The Legal Resources Centre (LRC) in Cape Town recently discovered that the House of Representatives' community development board has sold off 1,759 properties in Cape Town over the past year. Most of these were originally bought from owners who were forced to move because of the Group Areas Act (GAA).

These sales only started after the NP gained control of the House of Representatives. Claassens suggests that the motive for the sales is "short term profiteering and pre-emptive action to ensure that a future government does not inherit the assets necessary to stabilise the housing crisis".

What money has been made from the sales is being used to "finance the housing budget and thereby buy votes", she adds.

So far, the state's Advisory Commission on Land Allocation (ACLA), set up to deal with Group Areas victims' claims to state land, has proved toothless.

The LRC's Henk Smith points out that many GAA victims do not know that they can claim back their land and are not getting any state assistance.

"ACLA is weak and does not have the support of government departments," says Smith. "Also, ACLA is restricted to dealing with state land. As soon as the land is sold, ACLA will not deal with the issue."

Willie Hofmeyr, the ANC's Western Cape deputy secretary, adds that his organisation is very disappointed in ACLA.

"Land taken away under the GAA is an extremely hurtful and sensitive issue," says Hofmeyr.

"We thought ACLA was a positive step to redress this hurt, but it is clear that the government is not acting in good faith. It gives the impression of addressing problems, but it is deliberately selling off as much property as possible before people can claim their land."

However, Claassens points out that the ANC and other progressive structures are not blameless, as they have failed to campaign for an end to the sales and transfers.

"The fact that the sales and proposed transfers have largely gone unchallenged bodes ill for the prospects of any meaningful redistribution of land in the future," says Claassens.

"If the political will to contest this pre-emptive action is lacking, where is the political will to embark on redistribution from existing white owners to come from?"

But it is clear that progressive organisations will have to be pressurised to take up the sales. ■

Strange sales favour Cape Town's rich

KERRY CULLINAN reports

TWO BIZARRE land deals in Cape Town expose that, while the state does not have a clear land sale policy, it inevitably prefers to favour the rich and the entrepreneurs rather than poor apartheid victims.

The one deal involves the proposed sale of 177 luxury 'bungalows' at Clifton beach and the other involves the attempted sale of a property in Rondevlei, which was prevented by a Supreme Court order.

The bungalows are located on prime land in one of the city's most prestigious areas. For years, they have been leased by the country's wealthy and privileged — including casino king Sol Kerzner.

Quite by chance, Sanco's regional executive discovered that the council planned to sell the bungalows to tenants at 1983 prices. Sanco was horrified by the plan, which would raise R30-million for the city instead of a possible R1,5-billion if the land is sold for higher density tourist accommodation.

"Council has a greater moral obligation to the people of Cape Town than to 177 of the most privileged residents in the city," Sanco's John Neels told the council.

"The process of deciding the most appropriate use for that land should arise out of a proper consultative planning process ... and therefore the decision to sell the bungalows is premature," added Neels.

Sanco and other concerned organisations are now waiting to see whether their objections will be taken into account and the sale stopped.

At the other end of the economic spectrum from Kerzner stand 81-year-old Kassie Hendricks and her family. Hendricks and her husband have been forced to board with a granddaughter in a tiny council flat since the Group Areas Act (GAA) forced them to sell their land in Rondevlei.

Hendricks' land was sold to the community development board for R39,000 in 1982 when Rondevlei was changed from a coloured to a white area.

In 1989, the area was redeclared coloured. Some of the Hendricks family remained until they were told to move in June by attorneys representing a P Basson, the alleged new owner of the land.

Basson, who has been liquidated five times, paid R23,000 for the land and was about to sell it for R160,000 a month after buying it.

The Hendricks family then turned to the Steenberg Advice Centre for help. The advice centre found that Basson was not the registered owner and that the property was still owned by the development board.

The matter was then turned over to the Legal Resources Centre (LRC), which managed to get a court order stopping the development board from selling the land until the Hendricks family had applied to the Advisory Commission on Land Allocation (ACLA) to reclaim their land.

A room with a view — the state intends selling 177 luxury 'bungalows' on Clifton beach. PIC: EF

Unfortunately, the Hendricks case is unlikely to set a precedent for other GAA victims. The family was saved by a technicality — the sale to Basson was not properly done because the wrong tricameral house had conducted the sale. In fact, as the ANC's Willie Hofmeyr points out, "the deal bears all the hallmarks of a scandal".

Their case brings no relief for families such as the Williams and Sias families who were also forced to sell their Rondevlei land in the mid-80s. The families were given R5,000 each but their properties were sold for about R100,000 each in January. ACLA has refused to take up the matter because the land is now privately owned.

Thus, on the one hand, the extremely wealthy are given an opportunity to further increase their wealth by the city council, while on the other hand, the state refuses to respond to the legitimate land claims by apartheid victims. ■

Left out of regionalism debate

The National Party's talking about it. So are conservative homeland leaders. But the regionalism debate seems confined to a few individuals in progressive circles. **KERRY CULLINAN** reports

PIC: CECIL SOLS (DYNAMIC IMAGES)

From Ulundi to Bisho: Buthelezi and Gqozo close the gaps in their alliance.

ONE OF the major obstacles standing in the way of the 'new SA' is the definition of regions and their powers. Yet the ANC and other progressive movement structures have been slow to respond to the issue.

The ANC's policy conference in June deferred making a decision on regions, as delegates felt there had been insufficient discussion on the issue. This month, the ANC hosts a consultative conference on regionalism with its regional leaders. Yet, at the time of going to press, no documentation had been sent out to regions — let alone discussed at regional or branch level.

On the other side of the fence, the National Party (NP) has embraced federalism. It recently hosted a federalism conference where it revealed its proposal for seven regions (see map).

It has already appointed an internal committee to look into Cape boundaries and powers, and ANC members in the Western Cape believe that the Cape Provincial Administration (CPA) is already adapting itself to the new proposal.

The Ciskei, KwaZulu and Bophuthatswana — all ardent supporters of federalism — have over the past few months developed a strong alliance. This alliance recently reached out to the white rightwing, when the three homelands met with the Conservative Party and the AWB.

Chief Gatsha Buthelezi has also spoken of reviving the KwaNatal Indaba to consolidate Natal and KwaZulu.

The state also seems keen to bolster its bantustan allies in its desperate bid to buy votes. Semi-clandestine land transfers from central government to the homelands, involving over a million hectares, have begun. KwaZulu will be the main beneficiary, standing to get some 600,000 hectares.

NP's seven regions

The NP's proposed seven regions (see map) marks a departure from its constitutional proposals released last year, which said that the nine development regions delineated by the constitutional development and planning department in 1985 could form the basis of new regions.

The most obvious departures are:

- the increase in the size of the Western Cape (called Good Hope) to incorporate large parts of the northern and eastern Cape, including Port Elizabeth;
- the consolidation of the Northern Cape, Western Transvaal and Bop into North-West. This seems to be aimed at placating Mangope and the white rightwing, who have formed an alliance to campaign for such a region to be formed.

In addition, the NP wants strong regional government with entrenched powers. Regions would be in charge of their own police forces, could decide on taxation levels, education, health and so on, under the NP's plan.

National government, on the other hand, would only be responsible for national defence and security, foreign affairs and constitutional planning.

Laurine Platzky, a researcher for the Development Action Group (DAG), says the government's seven regions shows that the NP wants to "reincorporate the bantustans without dismantling them".

She also slates the proposition that regions determine their own tax levels. "If rich regions have high taxes, industry and wealthy individuals will move or register elsewhere," says Platzky.

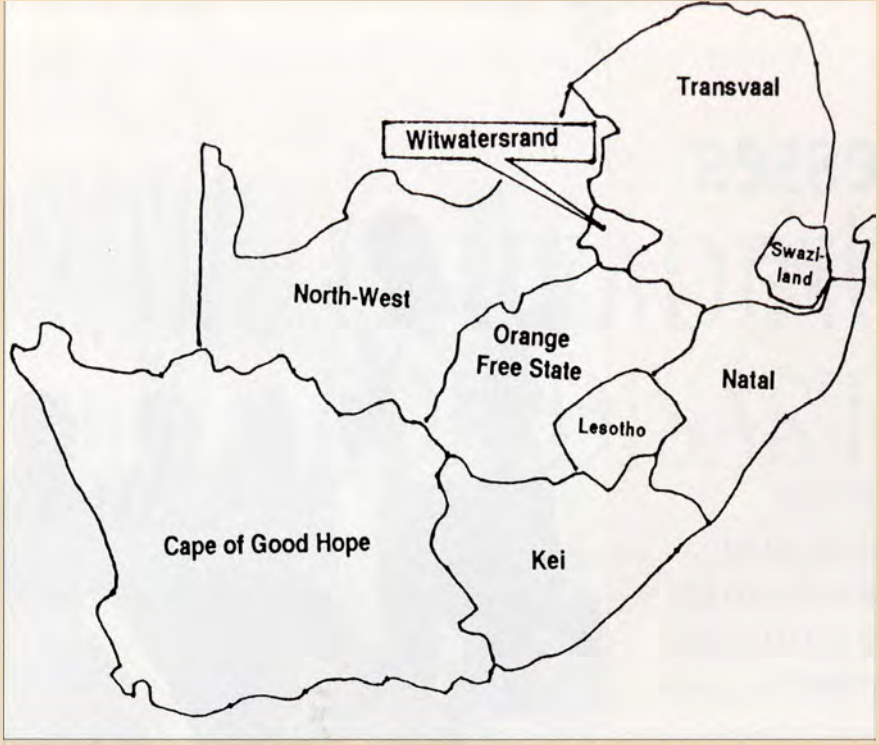
"If rich regions have low tax and good social services, unless there is strict influx control, everyone will move there and the burden will be too heavy for a single region. National taxation is the only fair system, other than some specific regional taxes which would be unavoidable, such as a property tax."

Meanwhile, Mike Kenyon from the Grahamstown Rural Committee (GRC) argues that the NP's support for federalism is based on its belief that it has a better chance of hanging on to power through regional elections.

Prevent ANC

He believes the NP thinks it will be able to prevent an ANC majority in Natal, the PWV and Western Cape — the key economic regions of SA.

For Platzky, the "reconstruction of apartheid society" should be the key function of regions. And this means small regions.



Bantustan boundaries? The NP's proposed seven regions.

"Small regions are in a much better position than large regions to identify the most important development problems that face them, to concentrate resources on solving these problems and to involve all sections of the community in development in an accountable way," she argues.

Platzky also calls for major metropolitan areas to form their own regions. She gives two main reasons for this:

- people have flocked to metropolitan areas to survive, making these areas unmanageable for local authorities;
- rural areas will have a better chance of getting resources if do not have to compete with metropolitan areas in the same region.

"Wealth does not move naturally from rich to poor, or from urban to rural. Spreading wealth always involves a struggle unless rural areas and small towns are recognised in their own right at a national level, where policy is made and funds allocated," says Platzky.

While Platzky believes regional boundaries should be determined by a commission of inquiry, she would like to see some 15 regions and has broken down the different provinces as follows:

- Western Transvaal, Eastern Transvaal, Northern Transvaal, PWV,
- Northern Natal, Southern Natal, Durban metropolitan area,
- Northern OFS, Southern OFS,
- Border-Kei, Eastern Cape (including parts of the Karoo), Platteland (Karoo and Southern Cape), Namaqualand, Northern Cape and Cape Town metropolitan area.

Although the ANC has not come out with a clear policy on regions, researchers Richard Humphries and Kehla Shubane point out that the ANC "remains committed to elected regional authorities".

One reason for this, they argue, is that the ANC has been "forced to function as a regionally based formation" which has "prompted the growth of a regional `consciousness' within the ANC".

Humphries and Shubane also point out that, for the ANC, "the centre of gravity in policy making will be located in the central government".

Fair distribution

Thozamile Botha, the ANC's head of local government and housing, believes some of the functions of regional government should include ensuring the fair distribution of resources and service provision.

To carry out its functions, regional authorities should have "the power to raise taxes necessary for the carrying out of its devolved functions", said Botha.

At this stage, it seems that the ANC is still opposed to the powers of regional government being enshrined in the constitution. However, this could well be an issue that the ANC compromises on in negotiations. ■

National vision for local government

WHILE THERE IS agreement in principle that a national forum on local government should be formed, some thorny issues still have to be ironed out.

The main thorn is the nature and the powers of the forum. Sanco is adamant that the forum must be a negotiating forum that is able to take decisions on local government issues.

The state, on the other hand, is keen on an advisory body. It would prefer to see Sanco becoming past of the National Council for the Co-ordination of Local Government Affairs (Ncolga).

Ncolga is a statutory body that brings together a wide range of bodies from town clerks to municipalities. However, it is merely an advisory body to the government on local government issues.

Local government minister Leon Wessels and Ncolga have been trying to persuade Sanco to accept membership of Ncolga, as this would mean that a new forum would not have to be set up.

However, Sanco is in favour of a new forum, and has placed preconditions on its participation in such a forum. The key preconditions are:

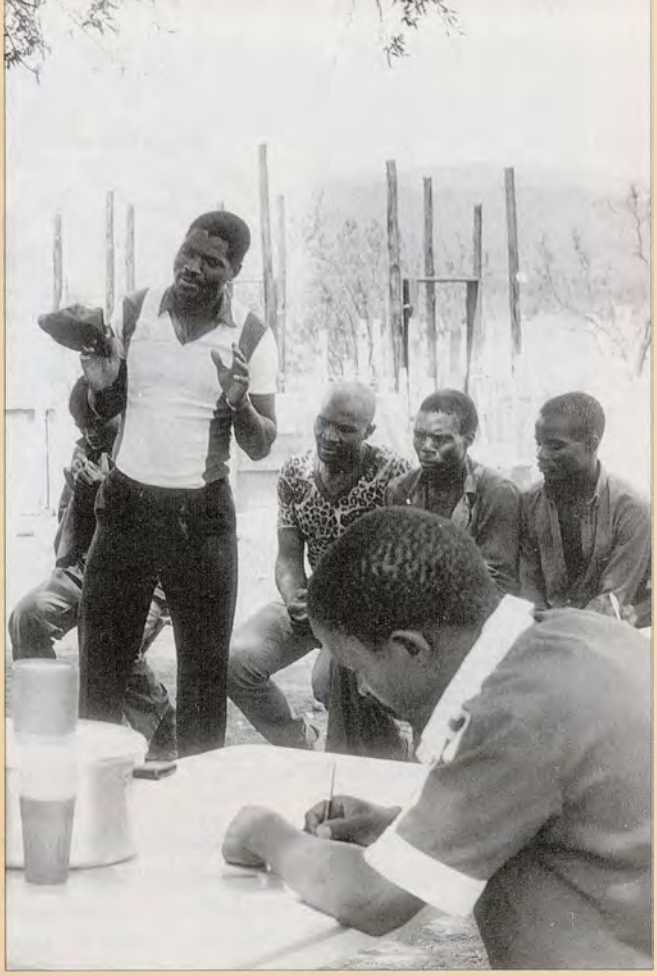
- **an end to the state's unilateral restructuring of local government;**
- **the removal of the 1 January 1993 deadline for the formation of joint administrations, as laid down by the Interim Measures Act;**
- **Public commitment from the state and Ncolga to form a national negotiating forum;**
- **Any changes to existing local government legislation, such as changes in boundaries or administrations, should be negotiated at the forum.**

At the time of going to press, Sanco and the state were still involved in negotiations about the nature of the forum.

However a series of meetings had been held between the parties involved, where they exchanged views. ■

NUM reassesses its cooperative strategy

Five years ago, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) started setting up co-operatives for dismissed workers. Today, the union plans to change its focus to community initiatives. **KERRY CULLINAN** reports



PIC: KATE PHILIP

Meetings, meetings . . . NUM's cooperatives battle to meet demands from retrenched mineworkers.

THE NUM has declared a moratorium on forming new cooperatives until problems within its existing co-ops have been sorted out. The union is also considering changing its emphasis from cooperatives to broad based rural development.

This decision has not been easy for the union. The cooperative project offers a beacon of hope to the thousands of retrenched members sent back to their homes in impoverished rural areas. But after a recent evaluation, the NUM's cooperative forum felt it would be more effective if it changed direction.

There are two levels to the problem. First, cooperative development as a strategy is a slow, intensive, long term process that is not viable for emergency job creation. The union's 30 co-ops offer a maximum of 500 jobs, while an estimated 140,000 mineworkers have lost their jobs in the past five years.

"In a situation where we cannot work with everyone, how do we choose which ex-miners to work with?" asks NUM co-op head Kate Philip. "There is also a danger of privileging ex-miners, and introducing power struggles into poor rural communities."

The second level of the problem is the internal viability of cooperatives. Much training and capital is needed to start a co-op. But the NUM is unable to provide these on a large scale. As a result, many co-ops are battling to manage their finances and production processes.

"Cooperative members are mostly unable to draw a regular survival wage, let alone a living wage," said NUM official Tux Ntolo. "This means that our members are using their own reserves to keep the co-ops going, when the co-ops should be contributing to the community's reserves."

Their viability is also affected by the lack of infrastructure in rural areas. The union has also found that it cannot sustain its agricultural co-ops in isolation from a community approach to managing local resources such as water, land and fuel.

These problems have led the NUM to the conclusion that it should address rural communities' basic needs — such as food, water and fuel supplies —rather than job creation, as its starting point.

Philip told the conference, which was attended by rural service organisations and co-op members, that the NUM was looking into:

- a food self-sufficiency campaign, which would involve initiatives such as community gardens;
- campaigns around clean water and energy;
- supporting income generating initiatives and local economic enterprises, such as credit unions and bulk supply units.

The union feels that local economic initiatives that rely on local resources and could involve the whole community would avoid raising expectations about outside funds.

However, the union does not plan to abandon its co-ops. Its aim is to consolidate and develop co-ops, but more as a "graduate school" than as a starting point.

As part of this process, the union is setting up an agricultural training farm in the Transkei. This will include experimenting with food processing and crops that will bring in more money, such as herbs.

A participant questioned whether the NUM, as an urban based union, was the appropriate organisation to take up rural development. Philip explained that the NUM's projects department was looking into changing its structure.

However, she also pointed out that the NUM had a responsibility to its retrenched members and that the union had access to funds negotiated from mining houses during the course of retrenchments.

"NUM can also use its leverage on the mining houses to spread their resources," she added.

The conference resolved that it was essential for rural development organisations to work together and to share their experiences. ■

HEADING FOR DISASTER?

Last March, civics across the country joined a new central structure, the SA National Civic Organisation (Sanco). Most observers applauded the move as a dramatic boost for the civic movement. But some activists quietly disagreed. Here, one such critic, **BEN JACOBS**, *raises the alarm and explains why Sanco might be the downfall of the civic movement*

SOUTH AFRICA'S CIVIC MOVEMENT IS widely touted as the bedrock of vibrant and democratic politics and development at the community level.

During the interregnum, civics have been looking more promising than ever. The collapse of local government and the recognition that civics are legitimate community representatives has thrust them to prominence and won them support.

However, the arrival of a democratic order will change those conditions. The big question is whether the civic movement will be able to adjust to the new conditions and avoid the drift into obscurity. The answer depends in large part on whether Sanco, the new national civic organisation, can reinforce and revitalise the civic movement as it passes into the new era. Unfortunately, the early signs are not encouraging.

Sanco's launch in Uitenhage in mid-March followed a brief, confused debate about unitary versus federal forms of organisation. In the end, a centralised, hierarchical structure was chosen for the organisation that now represents the civic movement at all levels.

By both design and error, Sanco has transformed a once powerful and complex set of autonomous social movements into a rigid, party-type organisation. The backdrop to this tragic twist — and its implications — deserves to be exposed to the rigours of public debate and to the scores of grassroots civic activists who remain unaware of what has happened.

The origins of the civic movement lie in the post-'76 clampdowns that smashed the Black Consciousness (BC) organisations and blocked up the political openings achieved by the BC movement. There emerged the Soweto Civic Association (1979, led by Dr Nthato Motlana), the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation (1980, led by Thozamile Botha) and the neighbourhood-based residents' organisations in Cape Town.

PIC: KENDRIDGE MATHABATHE/NEW NATION

End of local initiative? *Soweto civic leaders after recent negotiations.*

These local movements popularised the idea of non-party political resident's organisations that represent ordinary people on matters that affect their daily lives. Similar structures quickly spread across SA in the early 1980s, a process in which the United Democratic Front (UDF) came to play a central role. The UDF insisted that 'civics' should not disband but should affiliate to the its regionally-based federal structures. The advice proved correct: civics enjoyed representation at national level, but remained able to harness local energies by developing locally accountable organisations and leaders.

By the turn of the decade, about 2,000 civics had established themselves as major forces in the main regions. Although civics differed in many respects, they tended to share several features:

- executives were elected at a general meeting by members/supporters and were therefore directly accountable to their active constituencies — not to higher bodies or external organisations;

PIC: SHADLEY NASH (ECNA)

Centralising the civics: *Great power is vested in Sanco's executive.*

- a strong attachment to the local area was expressed in the name of the civic;
- the capacity to define local grievances was coupled to autonomous decisions on which strategies and actions were appropriate to the local context;
- they depended on the voluntary work of local leaders and on financial support from members and supporters.

The civics were social movements in the true sense. They were not guided or goaded by an imposed political agenda, nor were they constitutionally compelled to apply the programmes of national organisations. Civics won support because they took their cue from local residents. Some civics evolved to the point where funds collected from residents kept them running. Others raised funds by developing financial management skills and by learning to compile funding documents.

When the ANC was unbanned, the civic movement decided, after consultation, not to collapse civic structures into ANC branches. It was agreed that civics should continue to represent residents irrespective of political affiliation.

However, it was decided to disband the UDF and replace it with national civic structure which would "represent civil society" and which would be built from the bottom, up. To their credit, the organisers of the National Interim Civic Committee crossed the country persuading civics to join into regional federations similar to the old UDF regions.

Some of the federations helped consolidate local civics into effective regional social movements. The federal structure allowed civics to retain their autonomy, and local leaders could avoid becoming overly answerable to the rather loosely organised regional structures. Tellingly, these federations defined themselves in the plural — for example, Civic Associations of Southern Transvaal. The 'C' in Sanco, however, denotes the singular, giving rise to the absurd notion that a civic (which represents local interests) can be a single national body. Embedded in the grammar is a fundamental misunderstanding about civil society.

By the time Sanco was launched, the civic movement had reached a peak for three main reasons. It was filling an organisational and political vacuum created by the collapse of black local government and by the opening of political space after February 1990. In addition, major government, business, political and international aid institutions began recognising civics as legitimate community representatives. And, finally, political clout and access to technical resources enabled the civics to deliver tangible benefits to residents. For example, many of the Independent Development Trust's site and service projects have been implemented through local civic associations.

These conditions will change soon. The arrival of democratic local governments will challenge civics' claims that they represent 'the community'. The brain and skill drain into local political and government structures will probably cream off the best civic leaders. Civics will lose their status as the sole channels into communities for business, government and aid agencies.

The decline of the civic movement is therefore likely. But it is not inevitable. The tradition of participation and lively, grassroots democracy could survive in an altered form. Much depends on Sanco.

Sanco's biggest drawback is its unitary constitution, which was the product of a curious and confused mix of factors. A number of agendas and theories were jumbled together in the disorganised and undemocratic run-up to the launch.

Unitary confusion

Some people argued that Sanco could not be a federal organisation if it supported a unitary state (the contrary example of Cosatu was ignored). Others wanted a unitary structure in order to prevent regions like the Southern Transvaal from getting funding to the exclusion of other regions. A Cape-based ANC agenda aimed to keep Sanco firmly under ANC control. And there were those who saw Sanco as an alternative party-type power base. Obviously many rank-and-file members were extremely confused, as were some key leaders.

In the debates, only one or two people pointed out that progressive forces worldwide are abandoning centralised, unitary structures because they tend to disempower the rank- and-file. The trend now is towards decentralised coalitions and networks that represent civil society formations. In the end, a national civic organisation was formed with a constitution that incoherently mixes unenforceable constitutional provisions, a programme of action and meticulous administrative policies.

Besides creating one of SA's most centralised and multi-tiered voluntary associations, Sanco's constitution transformed a loosely federated movement into a hierarchic organisation. It requires that local civics dissolve their constitutions and surrender their autonomy and local accountability. Instead of being autonomous affiliates, civics have become branches of a national body.

With Sanco up and running, what is happening on the ground? On the one hand, one hears local leaders saying things like, "We cannot do anything now, we're waiting for Sanco national to decide on direction"— which never happened in

pre- Sanco days. On the other hand, some areas ignore Sanco and carry on as if nothing has changed. They view themselves as 'affiliates' of the Sanco regional structure, not as local 'branches' of Sanco national.

The biggest threat is Sanco's attempt to restrict fundraising to the national level. Funds are to be raised on the basis of a unitary budget, will go in at the top and be allocated to the regions which will disburse to local civics.

This financial flow model has failed countless times elsewhere in the world (most recently in Zimbabwe where funders helped demobilise the grassroots by privileging national organisational centres that the World Bank had defined as "apex organisations"). Residents are much less inclined to contribute money to a national organisation than to a local civic that is accountable to them only.

Massive centralisation

Already there are several examples of what Sanco's structures has wrought. Some regions had raised funds, but were suddenly informed that the money would no longer go directly to local level. USAID, for example, has told at least one civic region that it will fund at the Sanco national level only. The effect is massive centralisation.

P/C: DYNAMIC IMAGES

In the Western Transvaal, local civics have for years developed their own strategies in accordance with local needs — and they have made impressive gains in local government services and development. Recently, a Sanco leader halted local level negotiations, obliging some civics to shut down their own local negotiation forums: this action prevented delivery and undercut civic support.

The authority of uniform national policies threatens regional diversity and obscures the fact that grassroots struggles are about different issues in different areas. Sanco's national bond boycott is a case in point. It was appropriate in some of the main metropolitan areas, but meant little to Sanco members in areas where home ownership is not an option. In some regions, members are trying to negotiate loans from financial institutions for people who want to own and/or build their own houses — while having to defend Sanco national policy at the same time.

The Sanco constitution is disastrous both in developmental and democratic terms. Experiences in other countries confirm that centralised hierarchical organisations cannot successfully mobilise the grassroots into people-centred development programmes that are locally accountable and tailored to local needs. If left unchanged, this constitution will precipitate the demobilisation of grassroots civic movements and weaken key elements of a vibrant civil society. A weakened democratic state will result.

But it is not too late to liberate the civics from the tight grasp of Sanco's centralised structure. The deletion of a few key clauses in its constitution can loosen that grip.

In the longer-term, however, the struggle must continue to maintain autonomous residents' associations that are linked in loose federations at regional and national levels. If this struggle fails, we will have taken a fateful step down a road that promises disaster for development and democracy in our country. It is a tragedy we can avoid. ❑

— Jacobs is the pseudonym of an activist who has worked within the civic movement for several years.

TIGHT AND TOP-DOWN

THE PREAMBLE OF SANCO'S CONSTITUTION defines the "civic movement" as comprising the "residents" and Sanco as a body that will "act as a non-partisan democratic watchdog of the community on local government and community development".

Sanco is defined as a unitary organisation divided horizontally from the "national level" all the way down to "streets" and "yards/blocks". Every level is to have a structure identical to that of the region, namely a "conference" that elects an executive committee, a general council, office bearers and a working committee.

Clause 22.1 baldly states that "[t]his constitution shall be binding on all regions, sub-regions, locals, branches, areas, street and yard structures of Sanco".

Clause 22.2 decrees that "the policies, principles and attitudes of the functionaries of all such structures shall not be contrary to the National position of Sanco."

Clause 22.3 says that "[a]ll such structures shall have one name, ie Sanco, and one common constitution ..."

However, civics that wish to stay in Sanco and preserve their vitality and constitutional integrity can exploit an important ambiguity in the "membership" section.

While clause 7.1 provides for individual membership of Sanco by simply paying a R2.00 joining fee and an annual subscription of R6.00 to the "local level", clause 7.4 states that "[a]ny representative residents, civic association or interim civic structure shall become a member of Sanco after paying the affiliation fee at the relevant level." In other words, clause 7.4 clearly makes provision for civics to become members as civics.

This means that two legal persons are defined as members: individuals and civic associations. Civic associations, it seems, can be constituted autonomous legal bodies; in other words, they can avoid being transformed into "branches". ■

THE ABORTION PILL

PIC: KATHY BOROSKY

KIM O'DONNEL *introduces a controversial drug that is changing lives and lifestyles internationally, but is a stranger to South Africa*

IT IS FOUR YEARS OLD, HAILS FROM France, triggers rousing debates around the world, and stands at the centre of massive grassroots campaigns.

It's called RU 486 and is being hailed as a potential wonder drug with a host of applications, from Alzheimer's disease to breast cancer. But its most controversial use is announced in its more well-known name: The abortion pill.

In SA, where the issue is hushed — and women have an estimated 200-300,000 illegal abortions each year — the drug is virtually unknown. The first attempt to introduce RU 486 to popular debate was earlier in the year, when *Cosmopolitan* magazine published an abortion survey. Despite the 73% approval rating for RU 486 among survey participants, prominent women's health and reproductive rights activists say South Africans know very little about the drug.

Developed by a French research team in the late 1970s and tested until officially approved in 1988, RU 486 (the generic name is *mifepristone*) is a steroid that blocks the normal action of progesterone, the hormone needed to prepare the uterus for pregnancy. The uterine wall breaks down (just as in a regular menstrual period), enabling a fertilized egg to expel.

RU 486 is a non-surgical abortion method and is effective only during the first nine weeks of pregnancy.

According to medical practices in France, the procedure takes approximately ten days to complete and involves four steps:

- Pregnancy test and physical examination by a licensed practitioner. However, because of possible medical complications, women over 35 years of age, as well as heavy smokers, are prohibited by French law from choosing this method of abortion;
- After a mandated one-week waiting or 'reflection' period required by French abortion laws, the patient receives an oral dosage at a licensed clinic or hospital. (RU 486 is not available over the counter anywhere in the world — indeed, in France the drug is more strictly controlled than morphine);
- Forty-eight hours later the patient is administered a synthetic hormone which stimulates uterine contractions. The patient remains under medical supervision for three to four hours, during which time 75% expel the fertilized egg. The remainder will expel safely at home within the next 24 hours. Bleeding, which is comparable to a heavy menstrual period, lasts between eight and 10 days;
- Approximately 12 days later, the patient returns for a follow-up exam. Of the RU 486 abortions performed in France since the drug became available in 1988, three to four percent were incomplete, and the patients required surgical abortions.

Manufactured by Roussel Uclaf, Hoechst AG and Rhone Poulenc (the latter two have operations in Johannesburg), RU 486 has a success rate of 95.6%. In France, the drug is the preferred method for one out of three abortions; over 110,000 abortions have been performed with RU 486 in France and the UK, where it has been available since 1991. Sweden is likely to legalise the drug by the end of 1992, and Germany is also a candidate, depending on the outcome of an appeal of their abortion law.

But distribution is not arbitrary. Because of the threat of boycotts, drug manufacturers are sensitive to complaints from anti-abortion forces.

In France, for example, opposition from the Catholic Church and a threatened boycott by anti-abortion forces prompted drug manufacturer Roussel Uclaf to withdraw RU 486 from the market. Two days later, however, the French minister of health intervened and forced the company to reverse its decision, declaring RU 486 "the moral property of women".

The situation in the United States is a bit more complex and considerably more hostile. Although abortion remains legal, the so-called 'moral' debate is fierce

and politicised, both at grassroots and policy-making level. With constant court cases before the US Supreme Court and a well-financed anti-abortion network, the future of abortion rights is uncertain, hence Roussel Uclaf's reluctance to even consider distributing RU 486 there.

In contrast to the French government, the Bush administration ignored the "moral property of women" and in 1989 banned the importation of RU 486, even for research on the drug's other potential uses (see box). As a result, research efforts in the US have stalled. Despite legislative efforts to lift the ban and an enormous grassroots campaign pressuring Roussel Uclaf to change its position, RU 486 remains politically hijacked, and US women are being denied access to a major scientific breakthrough.

The debate — and the RU 486 issue — has not yet erupted with the same force on South African shores, where reproductive health care is in severe crisis. The issues of abortion and contraception remain under wraps and are not to be raised in 'polite' circles; the incidence of rape is among the highest in the world; and an outrageous number of women are forced to risk illegal abortions and undergo teenage pregnancies.

Organisations like ANC Women's League and Black Sash only recently have begun to speak out and adopt policies that can begin to address this largely hidden crisis in reproductive health care. But it is not enough. As Dr Marj Dyer, President of the Abortion Reform Action Group (ARAG) puts it: "There's absolutely no proof that if a new government would come in tomorrow that this [abortion law] would be changed."

For women around the world, RU 486 carries the promise of a "miracle drug" that can enable them to *choose* rather than just accept their reproductive status in society. Although abortion is a reality to hundreds of thousands of South African women, the public debate around abortion remains muddled and timid. As we grapple with the issue — and the attendant matter of legalising drugs like RU 486 — we can do well to avoid the mistakes of the US and let women (instead of largely male politicians) decide their own fate. ❑

A POTENTIAL CURE-ALL

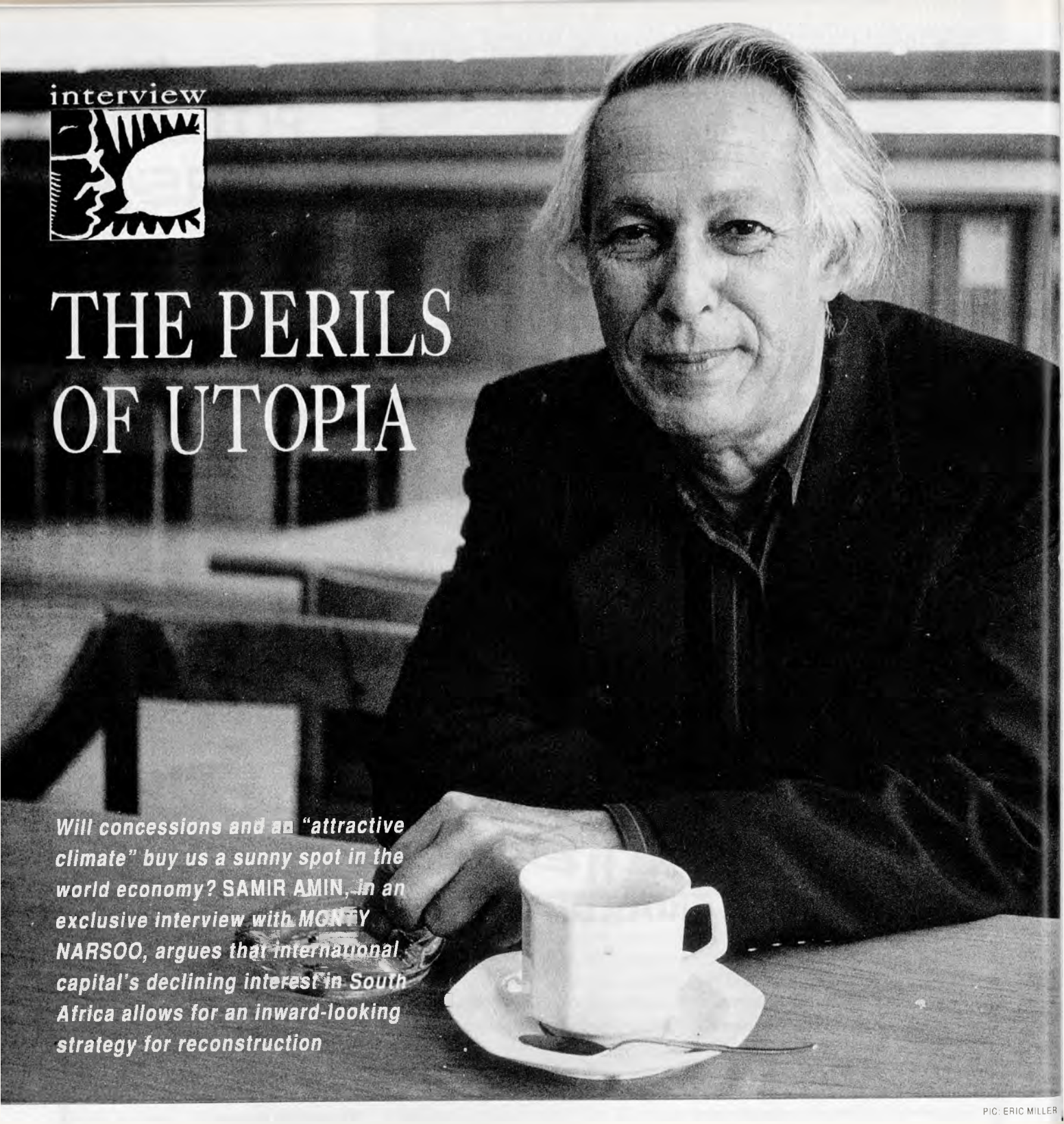
RU486 HAS BEEN STUDIED FOR A VARIETY of uses unrelated to abortion. It has been proven to be effective treatment for Cushings syndrome and meningioma, a kind of brain tumour. And in October of this year, the prominent *New England Journal of Medicine* published the results of a study that shows RU486's promise as a post-coital contraceptive.

Researchers at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland studied the effects of RU486 on 800 women 72 hours after they had sexual intercourse and concluded that it "is a highly effective post-coital contraceptive agent that, if used more widely, could help reduce the number of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies."

Other significant studies are investigating the drug's potential as treatment for breast cancer, Alzheimer's Disease, and anorexia nervosa. ■

interview

THE PERILS OF UTOPIA



Will concessions and an "attractive climate" buy us a sunny spot in the world economy? SAMIR AMIN, in an exclusive interview with MONTY NARSOO, argues that international capital's declining interest in South Africa allows for an inward-looking strategy for reconstruction

PIC: ERIC MILLER

BRIEFLY, A DESCRIPTION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY ...

In a nutshell, SA has two important features. First, it is a kind of microcosm of the world. Side by side, you find aspects of the First World (in fact, more in terms of its consumption than actual production), aspects of the industrialised Third World (newly industrialised with an overexploited proletariat), and aspects of what is now being called the Fourth World.

Let me explain this 'Fourth World'. Basically, it is that gigantic reserve army of peasants who are stuck in a stagnant agriculture that is marked by low productivity; as a byproduct, it is also the urban poor such as squatters and the informal sector. Taken as a whole they fall outside the actual productive sector.

In addition, the inequality between the First World (on the one hand) and the Third and Fourth Worlds (on the other hand) is here of course based on race and so on. That makes the distribution of income in SA the most unequal anywhere in the world — in a gigantic way.

But allow me to stress that the other side should not be oversimplified: it's Third AND Fourth world; there are the industries (mining and other modern sectors) and there are the bantustans, the squatters and so on.

Secondly, the white ruling class (and national and international capital outside SA) over the past 40 years tried to develop SA into a so-called newly industrialised country that exports to

the world market and takes advantage of its cheap, super-exploited labour. That turned out a total failure, in the sense that the productive system is not competitive on a world scale. Compared to the newly industrialised countries of Latin America and east Asia, SA is a failure. In combination, those two features represent the origins of the crisis in SA.

AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE?

I would like to assume that the current advances will continue and will result in a very acceptable compromise that leaves open the prospects for progressive evolution in years ahead. By 'acceptable' I mean a good constitution and elections that bring to power a healthy government with vibrant popular forces supporting it.

It will have to enable SA to start off on a dramatic project — not of socialism, but a project of immense corrections to those specific features that currently characterise the society. Basically, a programme to eradicate inequality based on race, a programme that will transform SA into a society as close as possible to a 'normal' capitalist society. That requires a gigantic redistribution from the First World to the Third *and* the Fourth Worlds — again, I stress the '*and*'. It will require restructuring the productive system in order to achieve the gradual — but real — correction of the pattern of income distribution. I'm talking about a long process which covers perhaps 20 or 30 years, but it must be meaningful from the very start.

The problem is huge. It will require an enormous mobilisation of effort and investment, crucially a relatively high, inward-looking growth based on satisfaction of basic needs such as housing, social infrastructures, popular consumer goods, etc. This must be in favour of both the Third *and* Fourth Worlds.

In other words, it will need a lot of infrastructure and other investments in order to promote an agriculture revolution and to promote social and productive progress in the rural areas and bantustans. And, of course, it must improve not only real income, but all the social dimensions and powers of the industrial working class in the modern sector. My view is that this will not make the industrial or productive sector of SA more competitive — it will remain non-competitive during this long period.

But you are going to run into problems if you want to pursue the dream of accelerating growth by focusing on the more competitive sectors, on correcting the lack of competitiveness. That was precisely the old regime's strategy: to have a minority of consumers, to be competitive and to expand in the international market through the direct super-exploitation of the majority. That strategy failed. Is there any chance that it will be successful just because another flag would be put on it? I doubt it. A mixture of the two is always possible, but I feel very strongly that there is a danger of focusing too much on a new dream.

"You are going to run into problems if you pursue the dream of accelerating growth by focusing on the more competitive sectors."

The old dream of the popular forces was building socialism. The new dream they can develop now is to rebuild capitalism with a more human, democratic face: I mean a social-democratic dream. In the South African context, this is as utopian as the other one.

What is on the agenda or what could be possible is what I call the national popular alliance, that strategy of redistribution.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN DIFFICULTIES?

Firstly, political. The main forces among the majority are concentrated in the Third World dimension: the ANC, Cosatu and others have their main forces organised there. Which is why, in the Fourth World, there appear small but organised forces like Inkatha and why we see the semi-organised and occasionally 'manoeuvred' activities of informal settlers and squatters that do not form part of the productive sector. So, an alliance must be made between the Third and the Fourth Worlds. That is the only way to maintain a strong overall popular force vis a vis capital, even if it is only to negotiate more successfully.

There are additional difficulties because, whatever the type of redistribution, it will be at the expense of the First World. Even if you achieve quite acceptable growth and gradual redistribution, there will be stagnation and perhaps even degradation in the First World, in the main consuming population of SA. How will they react? The National Party has been running this country alone. But it has failed. Perhaps the strategy now is to share the running with the ANC, with the organised Third World — but maybe with the vicious idea behind it that this will be for an intermediary period only. They might assume that the unity which was mustered against apartheid will gradually disappear, and that the Third and Fourth Worlds will produce other forces of Inkatha's kind. And that even the compromise between capital and organised labour will be reviewed in favour of capital. That is one possible strategy.

WHAT ABOUT THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL IN THESE PROCESSES?

I think South African progressive forces are fortunate that SA is no longer that important to international capital. The apartheid regime's project of being a successful newly industrialised exporting country was 'interesting'. But it failed.

On those grounds, SA has lost its attractiveness; it's not a place to invest in on a large scale. Moreover, if the country gradually revises the distribution of income, even if this occurs largely within the rationale of capital's calculations, it's not going to attract international capital. Housing, popular but very ordinary consumptive items, an agricultural revolution — it all makes for a marginally interesting country.

The country's importance has diminished in other areas, too. While the Cold War and the bipolar system lasted, SA was important as a policeman for the region. There is now a high probability that there will be 'no danger' to capitalism from any other country in Africa, and therefore the need for military interventions and so on declines. And thirdly, SA has lost its geo-strategic position commanding the communication between the south Atlantic and Indian Ocean, which now is of little importance.

So, capital is much less interested in SA than many South Africans think. This is an advantage, because it may be the reason why international capital appears to be *relatively* neutral in the battle and can 'let it go'. A number of years ago, capital would have been much more severe with the popular forces and would be supporting the apartheid regime in a much stronger way. Perhaps the NP was clever enough to understand that SA was no longer so important, that they therefore would be 'dropped' at some point, and wanted to make the compromise before it was too late.

BUT WHEN THE WORLD BANK AND THE IMF VISIT SA, THEY SEEM INTERESTED. WHAT IS YOUR SENSE OF THAT?

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund send people everywhere in the world, to important and less important countries. The global capitalist system is global and there is no area that is of absolutely no interest — I'm not saying that SA is non-existent.

But their attitude in SA is different from elsewhere: usually they don't consult labour, but here they do. You can be proud of it and say that this is partly because labour is stronger here. Of course. But perhaps they also see less danger now of a progressive redistribution of income starting in SA.

I analyze the progressive forces' leverage with the World Bank and IMF as proof that the country is strategically not so important. They would not make those compromises in Mexico or Brazil.

That means that SA is not going to find a niche in the world system. During that long period of restructuring the country will continue to be an important exporter of its traditional mineral resources and perhaps a very marginal exporter of partially manufactured goods. But that's all. And that's simultaneously an advantage and a disadvantage. An advantage because there will less pressure from international capital, but a disadvantage because exports will show slow growth or stay relatively stagnant, and restructuring will need imports. Fortunately, the types of industries that restructuring needs are not super-modern technologies — basically, housing, health, education, agricultural, very ordinary manufactured consumption items for the popular classes. What required the high technology in the past was the high priority given to the consumption styles of the minority. The country has an industry of fancy cars, which is hardly essential for redistribution of income and the restructuring process.

IT IS CLAIMED THAT AFRICA IS PROFOUNDLY MARGINALISED IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY. THAT COULD IMPLY THAT IT MIGHT BE EASIER FOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES TO DE-LINK...

I would agree, but I'd come to the same conclusion along a different path. What happened to the Third World (in the old concept of Third World)? Until the 1950s, the capitalist polarisation (centre versus periphery) was synonymous with *industrialised* countries versus *non-industrialised* countries and areas — Asia, Africa and Latin America were almost completely non-industrialised.

Gradually during the late 1950s and accelerating into the early 1980s, large parts of the Third World became industrialised — with a measure of success from a capitalist point of view, in that they are relatively competitive and open, etc. Africa has not entered that stage.

This has introduced a new differentiation within this old Third World and that is why I am now speaking of the Third *and* Fourth Worlds.

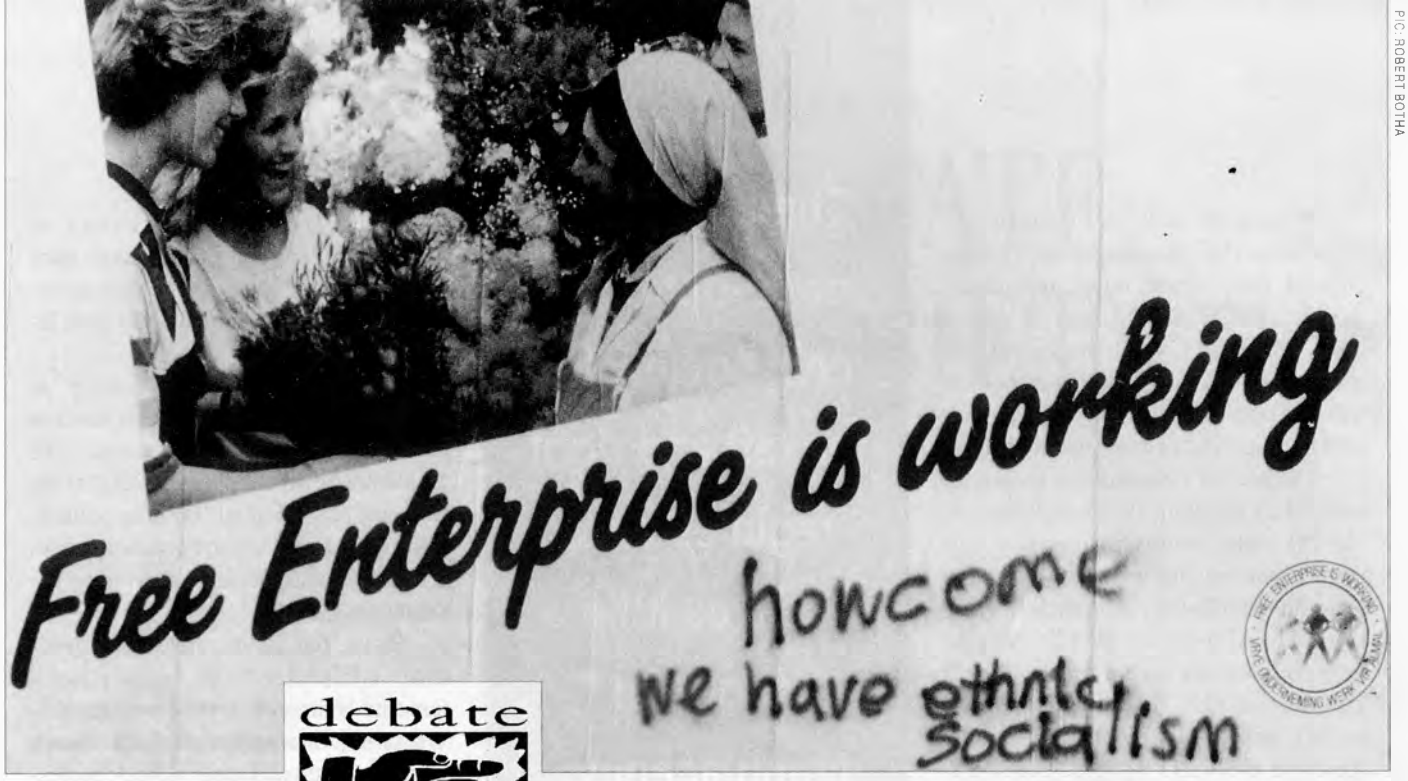
But does it mean that the Third World is catching up — that what socialists failed to do in eastern Europe, capitalists are able to do in east Asia and possibly Latin America? That the polarisation is gradually being eroded and that those countries are 'catching up'? I don't think so. I think the polarisation is just taking a new form. In the future it will no longer be this contrast between non-industrialised versus industrialised countries because the periphery is becoming more and more industrialised, a process that will continue. But the process of polarisation will shift and become evident in other domains, such as the control of the global financial system, new technological monopolies, the control through the mass media and communication of public opinion and politics, and of armaments of massive destruction.

That means that the industrialised Third World is the real periphery of today and even more so in the future. Now what about the Fourth World? Is it (in the famous thesis of marginalisation, of Afro-pessimism) a case of *no hope*? Yes, it is marginalised in the sense that it is less integrated into the world capitalist system. (And the reasons are both internal and external, related to the social formation, the nature of the national liberation movements and the nature of the state that emerged from them, plus crucial external factors.) But, to a certain extent, that's an advantage. Whether we like it or not, instead of being delinked in a passive way (and therefore going into a spiral of degradation), we can change it into a positive feature, to launch an inward-looking rebuilding of society with less outside interference.

For SA that is the issue: how to build, under such conditions, a national, popular alliance which will focus on building an inward-looking system of production in a conjuncture of the global system which has relatively marginalised SA ...

I would be very afraid if in SA you think that a 'correct atmosphere' — the usual language, you know — will attract, miraculously, much capital; in other words, that you are ready to make too many concessions in the hope they can help buy a utopia. ❑

— A world-renowned economic analyst and theorist, Samir Amin heads the Third World Forum in Dakar, Senegal, and is director of UNTAR, a United Nations research institute. Among his many books are "Eurocentrism", "Accumulation on a World Scale", Unequal Development" and "The Arab Nation".



PIC: ROBERT BOTHA

debate

STAKING CLAIMS

– *a liberal view of civil society*

Socialists and conservatives are suddenly proclaiming the virtues of civil society but, unlike the liberals, both seek to control it, argues **LEON LOUW**

Was it Marx? Mill? Plato? Aristotle? Lao Tsu? If you are 'politically correct' you will not only be proclaiming the virtues of civil society, but you will insist that its true roots lie within your philosophical tradition. And you will argue that adherents to this tradition have always known just what civil society means, indeed that they are its natural guardians. You will denounce your 'reactionary' rivals as phoney imposters, or dismiss the whole idea as a dangerous sell-out to bourgeois liberalism.

Socialists (left) and conservatives (right) battle over authorship, but liberals and libertarians anguish about whether to rejoice or lament.

Have the *dirigistes* of the world finally capitulated, or is one of liberalism's most cherished tenets being high-jacked and corrupted by evil forces?

Unlike the left and right:

- Liberals are opposed to curtailing ideas or the rights of people they or anyone else find offensive.
- Liberals distinguish *civil* and *economic* from *political* and *military* society, with the former, especially civil society, being private life which should be none of the state's business.

Non-liberals prefer the politicisation of life in general, and see civil society as a threat to be smashed or an ideological tool to be harnessed. Historically, the chief organs of civil society have been churches, schools and sports bodies. Not surprisingly, they have been smashed, nationalised, regulated or subsidised.

What concerns liberals about illiberal conceptions of civil society is the self-righteous desire of both left and right to define the permissible boundaries and nature of civil society — free trade unions may arbitrarily be in, employers organisations out — and to control or ban those organs of civil society which they do not like. What separates left from right is not whether they are for or against civil society, but the hitlist of their potential victims.

Liberals neither fear civil society nor do they want to mobilise it — the two options socialists currently debate. Naturally, the left is quick to reassure us that civil society does not reflect intolerance, authoritarianism and a hostility to vibrant diversity. I, for one, accept the good faith of most participants to the debate; in fact, I am delighted by it.

But many liberals remain concerned that those themes permeate the literature and rhetoric of the left, even while its gurus proclaim the virtues of civil liberties and civil society at conferences on human rights, press freedom and democracy. Any lingering doubts are dispelled in Don Caldwell's outstanding book, *No More Martyrs Now* (Conrad Business Books, 1992). The idea of the *vibrant* civil society all but a few supposedly want is incompatible with the "monopoly mentality prevalent among activists", he argues.

Witness the calls for a single teachers' union, official language, unitary state, cultural body, trade union federation, woman's league, nationalised TV, soccer body, law society, youth movement, patriotic front, and for "working class control of sport", Afro-centrism, nationalised monopolies, central planning ..."

The idea of a vibrant civil society of what Mark Swilling (*Work in Progress*, No 75) calls "ordinary, everyday citizens" organising things *their way*, is dismissed as frivolous by Mzwanele Mayekiso (*African Communist*, No 129). Mayekiso's commentary on the debate gets off to a liberal start. His organs of civil society include *bourgeois civil society* (business chambers, sports clubs, heritage foundations and so forth) and *working class civil society* (civics, churches, burial societies — representing poor and working people). This generous definition embraces virtually all that is not the state.

Disparate organs representing capital, workers, politics, struggle, recreation, youth and so on are all lumped together. Mayekiso's old-fashioned subdivision of the private sector into two imaginary classes aside, his inclusive definition puts him within a hair's breadth of libertarian analysis, which juxtaposes coercers (the state, criminals) against the coerced. Since this will not do, he rescues the situation by imploding civil society's legitimacy into mere organs of socialist struggle. These continue the class struggle "into the post-apartheid era", ultimately to wither away when communist Nirvana is achieved.

What Blade Nzimande and Mpume Sikhosana (*African Communist*, No 128) have in mind is the sudden death of civil society rather than its gradual suicide. For them it is *necessarily* a bourgeoisie tool — which may, to the extent that it has any freedom and vibrancy, be true. Accordingly, its legitimate aspects must be absorbed by an omnipotent democratic state.

According to Karl von Holdt (*SA Labour Bulletin*, Sept 1990, p 14), the oft-quoted communist grand master Antonio Gramsci denounced civil society in the 1920s as "a system of trenches and forts that protected the [bourgeois] state from onslaught". This calls for a *war of position* to "establish ideological and organisational leadership in the institutions of civil society", from co-ops to sports clubs.

"The destruction or co-option of civil society by the left and right regimes alike leaves little room for complacency."

Most other contributions reflect the same inclination. Civil society has no more to offer than its ideological utility: its "watchdog" function; its ability to promote the "working class" or the "struggle"; its potential for achieving "associational", "national" or "democratic" socialism, and so forth. There is little discussion about whether its organs serve their members in any legitimate way, whereas liberals regard that as is its most legitimising feature.

The *politicisation of civil society* is a contradiction in terms. The notion has to be distinguished from *political* and *military*, and (for certain purposes) from *economic* society. Perhaps unwittingly, the debate has clouded these distinctions.

To Mayekiso, "the most important issues" revolve around how "to use the notion of civil society to promote the transition to socialism"; it must promote the state's ability to "capture resources from the capitalist sector". More fundamentally, liberalism does not share the utopian expectation that it is possible for state or the economy to satisfy all "ordinary, everyday" needs. In the real world, "the people" have a mind-boggling assortment of apparently harmless interests, which can be beloved to them but threatening to others.

Are liberals paranoid? The destruction or co-option of civil society by left and right regimes alike leaves little room for complacency. Mayekiso (p38) observes that under the long history of Communist Party rule in numerous countries "any independent organs of the working-class were periodically and conclusively smashed."

He comforts us by suggesting, as socialists must, that "socialism has not yet been successfully implemented". We should not be deterred by the fact that the medicine has killed all 100 or so patients who have taken it so far, because it works in theory. It was just administered by the wrong physician.

Hitler, like Stalin, took the destruction of civil society to the logical conclusion that Nzimande and Sikhosana contemplate. "All autonomous organisations were destroyed and made illegal: professions, service clubs ... even philatelist and music societies. Such groups were regarded ... as potential sources of future resistance, if only because in them people were brought together for purposes, however innocent, that did not reflect those of central government." (Frances Kendall, *The Heart of the Nation*, Amagi, 1991, p5.)

The liberal perspective is that there is no simplistic either-or world of left and right separated by a single continuum of compromises — the so-called best of both worlds. Both are characterised by *dirigisme*, the idea of a directed or statist society, with intolerance, coercion, social engineering, puritanism, collectivism, central planning.

Liberalism is a distinctive corner of an ideological triangle (or star), further in some respects from left and right than they are from each other. The great liberal philosopher, Friederich Hayek, saw in all forms of statism a sterile imposed order rather than a dynamic spontaneous order; uniformity instead of diversity. A free civil society is the result of human action, not human design.

Its single commandment is 'Thou shalt not aggress'. A vibrant civil society is the inevitable result of such liberty. It is both an end in itself, serving the direct interests of participants, and, usually unintentionally, a means to the end of creative progress. Often it is the government's gadfly, keeping it on its toes and out of mischief, but that is a blessed byproduct. ❑

— Louw is the executive director of the Free Market Foundation.

A STRONG STATE CIVILISES SOCIETY

– *a response to Louw*

ALF STADLER *argues that, far from frustrating it, a strong state is a necessary precondition for a vigorous and creative civil society*

"The threshold of humanity is the threshold of citizenship, and the citizen is only a citizen through the state."
Paul Ricouer

FOR ALL THEIR OTHER DIFFERENCES, classical liberal and Marxist theories shared certain stereotypes about the relationship between the state and civil society.

In both, the state undermined the spontaneity, creativity, productivity and voluntarism of 'civil society', limiting its autonomy and the logic of its institutions. The state legislated to coerce the actors in civil society to accept a logic which would not emerge spontaneously. If this argument is accepted, there is an inverse relationship between the power of the state and the autonomy and spontaneity of civil society.

The arguments may have held in the past; they do not hold true in the contemporary world of advanced capitalism. It may be possible to make formal distinctions between the state and civil society, but it is difficult to attribute exclusive characteristics to each of these spheres.

There are no normative or ethical distinctions between state and civil society. Both occupy social space and involve power relationships. Actors in both claim legitimacy on the grounds of the general interests which they serve. There is no reason why (wo)men ought spontaneously to respect the right to privacy of others; and social morality can be as coercive as state-generated rules.

Politics ever-present

There are no functions distinctive to each: Politics is the ever-present business of contemporary civil society — in churches, trade unions, business corporations, universities, trade associations, and political parties (how not?) — as much as the state. And the state under capitalism has always undertaken economic activities.

PIC: T J LEMON

***VAT attack**: The state must ensure that there is economic stability.*

Politics, including the politics of state actors, is the most creative activity in which (wo)men can be involved. It is also supremely risky. Accordingly, the prerequisite for political participation is economic security; otherwise, political action would become indistinguishable from gambling.

The greater security one enjoys, the more risks one can rationally take. The wider security is spread in a society, the more people are able to take the risks involved in politics.

For its part, civil society cannot smoothly be conceived of as the arena of spontaneity, creativity and productivity. And let us be clear on this: There is nothing necessarily spontaneous about the market. It needs juridical mechanisms like property rights if it is to work.

Furthermore, participation in the market, especially the labour market, is not voluntary. Usually, exiting from the market amounts to economic suicide. Market survival demands respect for rules that are informal, technical and legal. There is little scope in the market place for free and spontaneous action which disregards those rules, though many businesspeople make their fortunes by bucking them — as in politics.

Economic activity is often so constrained by the need to make profits, or by the requirement of accountability, that it often leads to dull and repetitive decision making. In the boardrooms, the business bureaucrats rule alongside the entrepreneurs.

State terror: *The ungovernability arising from New Right policies leads to increased state repression.*

It is not only difficult to make distinctions between the state and civil society on the basis of distinctive patterns of action and behaviour to each. There is a symbiotic and mutually interdependent relationship between the contemporary state and civil society. A strong, authoritative and autonomous state contributes to a vigorous and creative civil society. Weak states are tyrannical and undermine civil society.

Strong state

A strong, autonomous state is the necessary condition for resisting control by particular interests, preserving the integrity of political structures from corruption and patron-clientelism, and curbing authoritarian and arbitrary government. The integrity of the institutions of civil society depends on the integrity of the state.

Only a strong state can establish the conditions for a liberal democratic state, let alone a social democratic one. A strong state is the antithesis of the arbitrary, repressive and corrupt state.

The state's potential contribution to a strong civil society goes far beyond these functions which historically have links with governments in the authoritarian Bismarckian tradition, as well as in liberal and social-democratic traditions of state intervention.

In today's world, only strong, authoritative states can effectively make the 'productive' interventions in the economy necessary to generate the conditions for accumulation. Only such a state can effectively supply the range of welfare goods and services which both contribute to the productive functions and legitimise the social order

The mutual relationship between the state and civil society may best be understood by recognising that economic security is the most important condition for responsible citizenship in the contemporary state. In an argument that can be traced back to Aristotle, only those people enjoying a reasonable degree of security can be relied on to act with the responsibility and civility (ie behaviour of a responsible citizen) required for citizenship.

People condemned to starvation, chronic unemployment or homelessness cannot be expected to exercise political judgment. This leaves us with two options.

We can attempt to restrict effective participation in politics to those people who enjoy economic security, and exclude the rest. Most pre-20th century-societies followed this path, effectively excluding the poor from citizenship.

Or, we must ensure that all people are enabled to act as responsible citizens. This alternative was advanced by T H Marshall, who recognised that capitalist industrialisation implies that in a liberal democracy political citizenship needs to be extended to economic citizenship. This line of thinking, in essence, leads to the welfare state.

That claim was restated in these terms: "(I)f we are going to have universal citizenship, in a political sense, for our society, then we should do it properly and see to it that *everyone* is put in the socio-economic position that we have reason to believe citizens ought to be in. In other words, if we take the idea of universal suffrage seriously, then we should not be content simply to give everyone a vote: we should set about the task of giving them the economic security which ... is the necessary precondition for citizenship." ("Citizenship, Social Citizenship and the Defence of Welfare Provision", *British Journal of Political Science* vol 18 [1988] pp 415-443.)

New Right increases authoritarianism

The New Right claims to be heir to the liberal tradition: in reality it maligns the liberal project by rejecting the implications industrial capitalism holds for citizenship.

New Right thinking and practice on employment and welfare has radically undermined the economic security of the poor, increased unemployment and undercut the public provision of welfare. Under New Right policies, the obligation to pay for increasingly privatised (and increasingly expensive) welfare has landed heavily on the private resources of the citizen. Welfare provision under such circumstances has increased inequality and insecurity, benefiting the rich and depriving the poor. Not surprisingly, responsible citizenship has declined in societies under boot of the New Right.

In turn, the increasing ungovernability of countries laid under the lash of New Right policies has evoked a tide of state repression. Police powers increased radically. Far from advancing freedom, the New Right increases authoritarian government.

The conditions for a civil society minimally requires that all citizens are entitled to equal respect and participation in political affairs. In contemporary society, this can only be achieved through economic and social policies which seriously address inequalities in access to jobs, housing, health, services and education — as part of the economic and social rights of citizens. If these are not built into state policy, then many people will continue to be deprived effectively of full citizenship, even if they win political rights. ❑

— Stadler is head of the department of political studies at Wits University.

Left Alive

Jeremy Cronin

THE LAST TEMPTATION OF THE 'BARBARIANS'

The nineties. As cynicism rages and dreams are traded, can we put morality back into politics? Does the personal still connect with the political?

A FEW MONTHS AGO I WAS ASKED TO GIVE one of those "the-present-balance-of-forces" inputs to a conference of the Young Christian Students (YCS). I did my usual "the world/our region in the world/and SA in the region" routine. But what I found refreshing was that the agenda called for some more circles within circles to be added.

We were asked to link these wider questions of world, region and country to the communities in which we live, to our families and to ourselves. Then, in the inner-most circle (not the outer-most as I would have imagined), the agenda placed God. (I was told, in the friendliest way possible, that my services were not needed for this last circle!)

It set me wondering. In how many of our political organisations do we make space for subjective questions?

In my underground days we used to have an agenda item called "security". In practice this item served as an occasion (perhaps even an excuse) to discuss a whole range of things — irritations with each other's personal conduct, financial pressures, burn-out, family or work problems. After all, any of these concerns could affect our respective underground covers and, therefore, the security of the whole group.

We thought we were simply discussing "security", but we were actually also giving each other personal advice, criticism and moral support.

For many of us, that has become a thing of the past. Perhaps its disappearance is an inevitable by-product of a normalising political situation, where a curtain drops between one's political involvement and one's personal life. Perhaps ...

The new political circumstances have introduced immense, and often new personal pressures. I have just written the words: "a normalising political situation". But for many communities the situation has deteriorated dramatically. The YCS'ers I was addressing were each asked to describe, briefly, their dominant feeling about the present. Almost all said it was fear of the political violence; most had been directly touched by it.

The war that has raged since at least the mid-1980s has not been happening in a place marked "battlefield". It is waged in people's homes, taxis and trains, down streets and into classrooms. The emotional and psychological pressures on millions of people are immense.

Those who dismiss "civil society" as a liberal notion, would do well to remember the immense effort of healing and reconstruction we will have to undertake on this demolished terrain.

Much of the devastation precedes 1990, but the new political situation has brought fresh personal pressures.

Take Seretse, for instance. At first a MK member and later a schoolteacher in a socialist country, Seretse has not returned from exile. He could easily land a bursary to attend university in SA, but he prefers to study in Harare. Why?

Seretse's case is, I believe, not uncommon. He skipped the country in 1977, after completing his first year at university. He left to join MK, but he also left a large working class family in an East Rand township. The family had seen in him, the bright one ("Prof" they called him), a future salary that would reward all the sacrifices they had made to ensure at least one of the children got an education.

Apartheid poverty loaded family expectations onto Seretse's individual shoulders, expectations that really belong on the collective shoulders of society. Seretse is terrified of returning, but remorseful for not doing so. How many young men and women who joined MK for the noblest of reasons were also, consciously or not, escaping from excessive family pressures?

Le Duan, the Vietnamese revolutionary, makes the crucial point that developing cadres is not, as we tend to imagine, just a case of sending activists on courses of various kinds. A cadre can only be built and sustained, says Le Duan, in the context of a correct, all-round strategy of struggle.

That observation has particular relevance to the thousands of repatriated MK comrades

PIC: PAUL WEINBERG (SOUTHLIGHT)

Trick or treat? *Personal morality needs to be taken more seriously to steer leaders away from 'Rome's' grasp.*

who find themselves suspended in a strategic and, therefore, personal vacuum. As a liberation movement we have generally failed to come to terms realistically with what MK is and, above all, with what it is not. Comrades who left to become soldiers, all too often, have returned as refugees.

The new situation at home, of course, is located within the wider realities of the world. Read, for instance, with all the hindsight of the present, the SACP's 1962 programme, "The Road to South African Freedom". The document is a mere 30 years old, but you cannot help being struck by the air of supreme confidence that it exuded. True, by 1962 the Sino-Soviet split was intense. A few years before, in 1956, there had been the Hungarian uprising (ignored in the programme of course) and Khrushchev had unveiled some of the crimes of Stalinism at the CPSU's 20th party congress.

Nevertheless, the socialist bloc still looked like a massive bastion. More importantly for South African communists, in 1962 colonial empires were tumbling down on our continent. The national democratic path brimmed with promise.

Thirty years later, and not only has "existing socialism" collapsed in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, but the national democratic project has proved to be immensely difficult to carry through not only on our continent, but also elsewhere.

The world of 1992 easily encourages moral cynicism, a free market in principles. Add to this the very specific situation in which we, or at least the leadership of our national liberation movement finds itself, and you have a potentially perilous situation.

The regime and its allies have failed to defeat us. We have weathered 30 and 40 years in the underground. We have survived exile, jail and torture. We outlived states of emergency and the total strategy.

But our opponents also have another pillar of struggle. The armaments in this pillar are a gift here and a gift there, watches and three-piece suits, expense accounts, perks, penthouses, kick-backs and junkets.

Of course, few of us would sell out on principles for an odd gift, but this strategy of our opponents is about developing habits and cultivating lifestyles. It is about turning the government-in-waiting into their kind of government: the "barbarians" might conquer Rome, but let's make damn sure we have Romanised them before they do it.

At this point, if I were back in one of my underground units, I would immediately offer this confession: I feel awkward saying some of these things; as a white activist I make moral points without, for instance, feeling the pressures of an impoverished, extended family weigh upon me.

Ironically, I am also not pressed by temptation. I discovered this back in 1989 when I first attended one of those ANC - Big Business jamborees that became part of the Great Trek to Lusaka and Harare. There I discovered that my black ANC compatriots were being doggedly solicited by various corporations, though without success. Nobody asked me for my CV!

Blacks, the corporations seemed to reckon, had become ANC and SACP members out of dire want. Change the circumstance and you change the person, they hoped.

Whites, they probably figured, had joined the movement for reasons that defied understanding. And besides, who wants a white lefty in a management team? It doesn't even earn points for affirmative action.

So here I am, without the dangers but also without the cosiness of my former underground units — where morality was so immediate that we called it "security". Today it has become something distant and abstract.

And I sense that, unless we learn to make space for the subjective within our formations, we might find it overwhelming and undermining us politically.

It seems to me that we have to start, very, very quickly to consider much more seriously the question of personal morality, of codes of conduct — especially within our leadership ranks.

Otherwise, before we get anywhere near Rome, we will have been turned into Romans ourselves. ❑

THE PRICE OF SILENCE

Is it necessary to feed a hungry person before worrying whether she has the right to speak? **ARYEH NEIER** *tackles the argument that social and economic rights outweigh civil liberties*

***Chinese clampdown**: Civil liberties are essential for meaningful economic development.*

In Jakarta in early September, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), numbering 108 countries, adopted a resolution expressing "concern over a tendency to address human rights selectively, often for extraneous political motives, and to neglect economic, social and cultural rights which relate more immediately to humankind's needs for food, shelter and health care and the eradication of poverty and illiteracy".

In essence, the NAM revived an old debate: Are civil and political rights luxuries to be afforded only once countries have assured their citizens subsistence and secured a reasonable level of development? Or must government respect universally recognised civil and political regardless of economic circumstances?

This used to be an East/West debate; now it is North/South. A constant has been China, which in a white paper last year declared:

"It is a simple truth that for any country or nation, the right to subsistence is the most important of all human rights, without which the other rights are out of the question." At the NAM meeting, foreign minister Qian Qichen called on "the developed countries to ... respect the right of each country to independently choose its model of development and economic model, and attach no political strings whatsoever to aid." In other words, quit trying to impose sanctions against us because of political imprisonment, torture and the 1989 Beijing massacre.

The NAM resolution rests on a fallacy: that there is a conflict between protecting civil and political rights and promoting economic and social well-being. To the contrary, the hungry person not only has a right to speak, but may need to exercise that right to avoid starvation. As the philosopher and political economist Amartya Sen has pointed out: "The diverse political freedoms that are available in a democratic state, including elections, free newspapers and freedom of speech, must be seen as the real force behind the elimination of famines."

Sen's own country, vastly overpopulated India, has avoided famine, as has drought-stricken Botswana, one of Africa's freest states.

My colleague Alex de Waal, who has studied famines in many countries has written that "a callous indifference to human suffering and human rights by those in power is the essential prerequisite for a famine".

An example of an unwitting famine occurred in China from 1958 to 1961, the period of Mao's "great leap forward". Between 15 million and 30 million people starved to death as a consequence of Mao's misconceived agricultural and industrial schemes. The catastrophic agricultural failure was not recognised until late in the day by central government because critics had been silenced and rural cadres had falsified reports of crop yields to demonstrate their enthusiasm for Mao's policies and to earn recognition for fulfilling and exceeding production goals. When the disaster finally became apparent, it was covered up to avoid the public humiliation of the great helmsman, thereby preventing a relief effort.

It is not only the hungry whose right to know and to speak is vital but also those endangered by AIDS, who require information and protection; those seeking attention to the degradation of the environment; those blowing the whistle on corruption; those attempting to organise resistance to exploitation by employers and land holders; and all those suffering from government oppression of every variety.

By themselves, civil and political freedoms do not guarantee the elimination of economic and social miseries, as the circumstances of the poor in the US demonstrate all too vividly. Yet the claim that denying freedom of speech will aid in overcoming such ills should be seen for what it is: a means for repressive officials to preserve a type of power that frequently has calamitous consequences for its purported beneficiaries. ❑

document

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Found crumpled in the wastebasket of the Oval Office was this draft acceptance speech former US President George Bush never got to deliver. **TERRY ALLEN** *and* **EDWARD S. HERMAN**, *however, recognised the speech as an historic example of the creative approaches to language adopted by political leaders in the late 20th century, and proceeded to decode the document ...*

My fellow Americans[1], I stand here before you proud to accept the honour and challenge of my term as President of the greatest nation on earth and leader of the **Free World**[2]. Our policy of **containment**[3], the peaceful displacement of **communism**[4] and the arrival of a **New World Order**[5] has reaped great fruits.

In Central America, we helped install **fledgling democracies**[6] whose governments regularly hold **free elections**[7]. In Panama, we rid the hemisphere of a dangerous **demagogue**[8]; in Nicaragua, which fell under the control of **radical-nationalists**[9], we restored democracy; and in nearby Cuba, we continue to work toward **neutralizing**[10] Fidel Castro.

1. The opening words of a political speech, meaning "Ignorant children, for whom my contempt is about to be shown by a stream of contradictory banalities".

2. The group of countries that maintains a door open to private foreign investment.

3. The exclusion of lesser powers from areas in which we intend to establish hegemony (synonyms: "expansion", "attack").

4. The totalitarianism of countries outside the Free World.

5. The Old World Order stripped of any major obstructions to helping our "Little Brown Brothers" enter the Free World.

6. A regime which has our blessing and goes through the motions of a democratic electoral process; democratic substance is not relevant to the designation.

7. A post-pacification election, in which the "hearts and minds" of the survivors are shown to have been won over by the force of pure reason.

8. A foreign political or military leader who refuses to play ball with us.

9. Groups, parties, and nations in the Third World that are not on the US payroll, are unwilling to take orders, and propose an independent line of development. Radical nationalism generates instability.

10. Killing.

11. A Western totem, according to which life is best and perhaps exclusively organized around the private search for gain.

12. Disposing of public sector assets at low prices and high sales commissions to powerful groups. A means of making valuable assets available to First World creditors and investors at fire sale prices in a situation of virtual state bankruptcy.

13. Whatever the US happens to be doing or supporting in an area of conflict at the moment. It need not result in a termination of the conflict or in ongoing pacification operations in the short or long term.

14. The greatest show on earth, with a cast of thousands, shown on TV screens in living colour, and funded by tax dollars and foreign donations.

15. Our casualties.

16. Destroy. As in "It became necessary to destroy the town in order to save it".

17. Invasion of a country by someone other than ourselves without our approval; also, providing aid and comfort to the side that we oppose in a civil conflict; also, resisting a US attack.

18. Allied with us.

19. Stubborn, unyielding, or uncompromising, applied to the leader of an enemy state.

20. The label for the open war against Iraq, designed to suggest that impersonal forces rather than human agencies were levelling that Third World country.

21. Our and our closest allies' right to attack anybody at discretion for any reason satisfactory to ourselves.

Around the globe, especially in Eastern Europe, we helped newly liberated peoples to see the benefits of the **market**[11] and **privatization**[12].

In the Middle East, we advanced the **peace process**[13] by leading America to a spectacular victory in the **Persian Gulf War**[14]. With few **casualties**[15], we were able to **save**[16] Kuwait and uphold the principle of opposing **aggression**[17]. Now, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, are **independent**[18] and both nations can pursue democracy at their own pace.

Our task, however, is not finished. Saddam remains **defiant**[19] despite the pummeling we gave him in **Operation Desert Storm**[20]. Even now, he is rebuilding his army, only a short time ago the third largest in the world, and making threats and thus requiring us to exercise our right to **self-defense**[21]. In short, our **national security**[22] still requires vigilance and a prudent level of **defense expenditures**[23].

Although we must prepare for all eventualities, we will look first to **negotiations**[24] and **diplomacy**[25] to restore **stability**[26] around the globe. If, however, we are challenged by bullies, we will not shrink from using **force**[27].

Here at home, I will be president to all the people. I **pledge**[28] never to bow to **special interests**[29], but instead to always seek and ever serve our **national interest**[30]. For we are a **compassionate**[31] nation, and in this time of temporary economic malaise, we must reach out to the **poor**[32] and encourage them to free themselves from the burden of food stamps, Medicare, and the **dole**[33]. We must end dependency on these ensnaring **safety nets**[34] and replace them with economic trampolines to propel the **homeless**[35] and the unemployed to new heights of self-esteem and success.

But I want **to make it perfectly clear**[36], that if we are to reduce **inequality**[37], eliminate the **deficit**[38], win the **war on drugs**[39], and rebuild our cities, our first step must be to cut the capital gains tax so that those most able to help the less fortunate will be able to do just that.

My fellow Americans, as we march together, bound by common **values**[40], the United States of America will once again be an example to all the world. With God's help, we will internationalize the thousand points of light and we will make them millions of glowing embers of **democracy**[41].

22. Perceived interests abroad, large or small.

23. Outlays which, no matter how large, speculative or mismanaged, are rendered sacred by the nobility of their purpose.

24. The process of accepting the surrender of the ill-gotten gains of the enemy. Negotiations, in its archaic meaning, referred to arriving at an agreement by mutual concessions. This is now recognized to be appeasement.

25. Restating to the enemy the terms of our ultimatum.

26. Political and economic conditions that satisfy our interests.

27. The principal language of the stronger; by a process of transference, said to be the only language they understand.

28. A solemn political promise, whose common use is dependent on reciprocity of abuse, plus the public's short memory.

29. Workers, women, students, farmers, the aged and infirm, the unemployed, blacks and other minorities; the general population; unimportant people.

30. Demands and needs of the corporate community.

31. Regretting what must be done to the unfortunate in the interest of reestablishing and maintaining self-reliance and the work ethic.

32. Those lacking in get-up-and-go.

33. A government handout to insubstantial citizens; detrimental to efficiency.

34. A net made from the guts of the deceased welfare state through which will fall the undeserving poor.

35. The millions of citizens who, through free choice and preference, demonstrate a renewed US devotion to the great outdoors.

36. Somewhat murkier now than previously.

37. The I-word. Ordinarily not discussed because inequality is part of the natural order. Its naturalness and beneficence are very much on the minds of owners of, and advertisers in, the mass media and funders of elections.

38. An excess of government expenditures over receipts, horrifying when liberal Democrats are in power, but only slightly troubling under right-wing Republicans. Along with the urgency of defense expenditures, it provides the rationale for curbing outlays that serve special interests.

39. Replaced the ill-conceived war on poverty by substituting Third World police tactics and suspension of civil rights for bleeding heart social programs in an effort to keep a lid on the inner cities.

40. My moral judgment.

41. A system that allows people to vote for their leaders from a set cleared by the political investment community. Applied to the Third World, it means rule by an elite that understands our interests and needs.

— Edward S. Herman is an author, economist and media analyst. Terry Allen is on the editorial staff of Covert Action Information Bulletin. Reprinted with kind permission of CAIB, 1992.

PREPARING NEW GROUND

A FUTURE FOR AFRICA: BEYOND THE POLITICS OF ADJUSTMENT By Bade Onimode. Earthscan Publications, London, 1992 (£12,95. 177 pages) Reviewed by **NEVA SEIDMAN MAKGETLA**

PIC: *THE STAR*

ACCORDING TO BADE ONIMODE, by the mid-1980s independent Africa had the highest debt relative to GDP in the world. Moreover, it owed three quarters of that debt to official institutions, led by the IMF and the World Bank. Onimode argues that these creditors have used their leverage to embark on a FLIC — a 'Financial Low-Intensity Conflict' — effectively designed to recolonise Africa.

As Onimode develops it, the metaphor becomes less far-fetched. "Instead of old-fashioned military occupation in conventional war," he argues, "IMF and World Bank staff now occupy the Central Banks and Finance and Trade Ministries of independent African countries, while the multinational corporations have been rapidly extending their grip over African economies through privatisation, debt-equity swap, etc."

Onimode uses this central metaphor to stress that Africa must go beyond 'economistic' views of the debt crisis. Instead, they must understand the political and social framework that permits the debt crisis to continue. From this standpoint, debt is not a sacred obligation, but rather a social relationship that governments can modify.

To underline this point, Onimode estimates that between 1974 and 1990, Africa paid as much as it owed the West. Its payments took the form of repayment of high-interest loans, falling terms of trade, capital flight and profit repatriation. Why, then, must African governments still shape their economies almost solely to permit heavy debt-service payments?

Onimode's view suggests that policy solutions should focus both on restructuring relations with foreign creditors and on finding viable alternatives to the IMF's Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Onimode calls for a united African default, and proposes extensive reorganisation of the World Bank and IMF to make them more responsive to Third World needs.

In considering economic strategy, Onimode poses transformation and delinking against the short-run instruments and objectives of the SAPs. He suggests that the very limited and contradictory aims of the SAPs militate against long-run growth. Ultimately, he argues that only reduced dependence on the North can provide a sound basis for development.

Africa could forge a new position in world markets by adopting strong domestic economic policies; rejecting IMF and World Bank staff in central banks and ministries; strengthening continental trade; and reducing foreign borrowing.

As this outline suggests, Onimode falls largely within the dependency school — the tendency to blame all our ills on foreign foes — and his coherent and eloquent analysis generally succumbs to the best-known weakness of that school.

Chapter 6, "The Necessity for Democratic Participation," provides a welcome exception to this penchant. Here, Onimode considers in some detail measures to transform the authoritarian state inherited from colonialism, and little changed since. He focuses on ways to bring about more open, transparent and accountable government at all levels. Much of this discussion seems particularly relevant to South Africa.

This chapter, and indeed the entire book, would benefit from a more analytical method. While Onimode suggests important institutional changes, his proposals are not very detailed. A more fruitful approach might ask, not what Africa must do, but rather what has prevented Africa and indi-

vidual African states from pursuing policies of such obvious virtue. That question could lead to more detailed and practical insights.

It would also almost inevitably require that we reconsider the relative responsibility of foreign institutions and African leaders in the continent's economic debacle. True, the IMF and the World Bank have insisted on inappropriate, indeed disastrous programmes — but it takes two to tango. African leaders agreed to implement those policies, in large part because they saw alternative programmes as requiring a greater sacrifice on the part of the rich. Onimode mentions this problem briefly, but generally submerges it in appeals to the continent as a whole.

An analytical approach might also compel us to explore why, as Onimode points out, the majority of Africans have failed to participate in organised protest against catastrophic economic policies. We can only hope to bring about mass participation in development if we penetrate the factors behind the weakness of civil society in much of Africa.

In short, *A Future for Africa* leaves us with more questions than it answers. Indeed, that is the book's greatest strength.

In addition, for South African readers, it gives a stylish and comprehensive overview of the debates and literature arising out of Africa's struggle with the World Bank and the IMF. As such, it provides a stimulating new perspective on the current debates on the South African economy and state. ❑

GENDER ON THE AGENDA

PUTTING WOMEN ON THE AGENDA,
Edited by Susan Bazilli, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1991 (R43.05, 290 pages)

NEGOTIATORS, TAKE NOTE: as you work yourselves out of deadlock and try to get back to the business of democracy-building, keep these quotes in mind: "The change required in South Africa cannot be brought about by atomised, isolated individuals...We can draw on the forms of organisation that the women's movement has developed which are democratic and non-elitist."

"It is no good saying we want this or that in a constitution if we elect an all-male constituent assembly or we have only a few women in positions of power."

"The struggle ... is not just for majority rule, a liberal democratic constitution and a justifiable bill of rights. It is a struggle for the liberation of women and men to restructure our society into a humanistic one."

"Unless women's rights are taken seriously during a society's transition, they will not miraculously appear afterwards."

These and several other on-the-mark quotes are scattered throughout *Putting Women on the Agenda*. The book's namesake was a conference held at Wits two years ago, and its 14 essays are derived from that event. Contributors, who include lawyers, academics and physicians, have tackled a wealth of topics of timely and critical importance to women: sexual harassment on the job; their inclusion in a future constitution; family and traditional African laws and customs; reproductive health; and stories of successful gender battles fought in other countries like Canada and Botswana.

What distinguishes this collection from other works of critical and scholarly prose is its activism. Going beyond an insular, self-absorbed intellectual posture about the gender inequalities women must battle," *Putting Women on the Agenda* attempts to do just that," as the back cover says. When Desiree Hansson discusses, for instance, the appalling rape statistics (one woman every 2.7 minutes) and domestic abuse in this country, she provides concrete, hard-hitting recommendations to address the crisis.

Other strong papers include a look at the state of reproductive health, which provides some chilling statistics (300,000 illegal abortions annually; 80% of black women studied in Cape Town and Ciskei used as their method of contraception Depo Provera, the high-suspect injectable progestogen) and an feminist analysis of the ANC's May 1990 statement on the emancipation of women.

The range and scale of societal ills the new government will have to address seem insurmountable, but it has become clear that, in order for a true transition to a democratic, non-racial society to take place, the phrase "non-sexist" must be more fully incorporated into the speech and realities of a new South Africa.

This book deserves close attention as we proceed through the transition. ■

Reviewed by Kimberly O'Donnel

Left Behind

FRAME-UP

Last time around, we ran Renamo's claim that a photo we had used to illustrate the stories on MK camps actually depicted Renamo rebels. Well, judging by this letter from the ANC's Department of Information, Renamo's distinctions between friend and foe remain as arbitrary as ever ...

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DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

ANC CAMP PHOTO

We in the DIP can appreciate it when an Information Bureau finds it difficult to furnish others with updated information. But Renamo is certainly in trouble if its Johannesburg outfit cannot identify its own leader, let alone its own personnel.

"For the ignorant" the man with dark glasses is not the president of Renamo. He is popularly known by his *nom de guerre* which is "Kofifi". He is an ex-commander of Umkhonto We Sizwe and would certainly not be amused if he is mistaken for Renamo's leader.

The photographs were taken of the ANC Photographic Unit on a trip to Uganda. All those involved with the photograph are part of " the South African Peoples struggle for Freedom.

ANC Photographic Unit

❖

ONCE I WAS BLIND

Left Behind has been accused of being a little hard on this place we call home. Well, readers desiring a breezier outlook are advised to try The Travel Guide To SA by Les de Villiers, Gary Player and Chris Barnard (1992, Business Books International).

Studded with whimsical ink drawings of assegai-wielding locals and boers whipping reluctant teams of oxen, the book includes an 18-page history section that sums up the apartheid era in 1.5 breathless pages. Among the compressed witticisms is the declaration that apartheid "was segregation with bells and whistles". At last we know why it kicks up such a racket.

Broederbond historians will approve of the absence of any reference to internal resistance. "[W]orld censure and increased incursions into SA from neighboring countries by the ANC's military wing, Imkonte We Sizwe [sic], built pressures for change," we are informed. Miraculously, two short paragraphs later, "State President FW de Klerk stunned the world and SA with drastic reforms". If only shopping were this easy.

Oh, and Soweto residents (who, "every 25 June", celebrate "SOWETO Day") will be happy to learn that "most houses in SOWETO have electricity, television and access to more than 3,000 black-owned stores." Once we were blind, but now we can see. And we can't stop smiling. Why is that?

❖

BULL TALK

Some of Left Behind's best friends are vegetarians and we're as sensitive as the next person to the charge of being "speciesist". Indeed, some of us have been known to talk kindly of dogs.

But we draw the line at animal rights activists, especially those of th variety that was pacing the streets of Yeoville during the Barcelona Olympics, urging passersby to sign a petition.

At the time — and now still — 180 people were dying every month in political violence in the PWV, the Yeoville rapist was on the loose, and homeless kids lay sandwiched in doorways across the city.

But the thoughts of our anxious activist were clouded by other concerns, as he ambushed shoppers with a petition demanding of the Spanish government that it outlaw bullfighting. There's a moral in there somewhere.

GLOSSARY

afro-centrism (p. 32): African-centred
autonomous (p. 34): independent

bastion (p. 37): defence
bourgeoisie (p. 32): middle class

callous (p. 39): cruel
colluding (p. 18): secretly plotting
conjecture (p. 2): to guess
continuum (p. 32): something that is continuos
cue (p. 23): sign indicating a person's turn

euphemism (p. 8): a pleasant name for something unpleasant
evoke (p. 34): draw out memories

gadfly (p. 32): a fly that bites cattle
goaded (p. 23): taunted
grapple (p. 27): struggle with

WIP strives to communicate with as diverse a range of readers as possible. To this end, we give the meaning of some of the more difficult words found in this issue.

guru (p. 31): spiritual leader

incursion (p. 44): invasion
insular (p. 43): narrow
interregnum (p. 23): break between two different reigns

jamborees (p. 37): large, lively gathering
juxtaposes (p. 31): place side by side

libertarian (p. 31): believing in individual liberties

maligns (p. 34): speak badly of
manoeuvre (p. 29): planned movement (usually of troops)
metaphor (p. 42): describing something by its qualities, rather than by name
mustered (p. 29): rallied
mystique (p. 7): mysterious

niche (p. 30): suitable place
(in a) nutshell (p. 28): in short

periphery (p. 30): outer boundary
permeate (p. 31): fill every part

solicited (p. 37): asked for
stagnant (p. 28): unchanging
stereotypes (p. 33): unchanging
succumb (p. 42): give in

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Prof Kadar Asmal, Professor of Human Rights Law, UWC and National Executive Committee member of the ANC

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