

SOCIALISM'S NEW FACE: Ernesto Laclau takes on the South African Left

WORK IN

WIP 90 • JULY/AUGUST 1993

PROGRESS



Message in a bottle

Why young South Africans don't talk much these days

**SPECIAL FOCUS ON
YOUTH**

Editorial comment

The lost generation

We used to refer to young South Africans involved in struggle as 'the young lions'. Today, they're 'the lost generation'. And when they roar, we tell them to shut up.

How did it happen? What went wrong?

Did they get 'lost' — or did we lose them along the way?

This edition of *Work In Progress* tries to answer some of these questions. We try to find out just how young South Africans feel — and warn of the dangers of ignoring those feelings.

In doing so, we try to do more than just pinpoint problems. We search for ways of dealing with the frustration and the hopelessness, looking at a range of solutions — a government youth ministry, a national youth peace corps, and so on.

The overriding impression, though, is that enough has been **said** about the problem.



Enough people have said their bit, whether they are Ken Owen ('the social disintegration of the townships ... has produced marauding cohorts of youngsters, whose behaviour is so savage as to arouse the impulse towards counter-violence') or Jon Qwelane (complaining about 'the near-impossibility of taming the young lions when the time came to put them on a leash').

We need action. Action which will create hope and a sense that there is a future for the millions of young South Africans who have been marginalised. And, most importantly, action which **involves** young South Africans in building their own future.

Too many South African youths have no hope. And they think the rest of us, those who have possibly forgotten what it was like to be young and hungry for change, don't care about them. We need to 'find' the Lost Generation.

— Chris Vick

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WIP 90 • Contents

BRIEFS2

WORLD BRIEFS3

PERSONALLY SPEAKING5

Breakfast with Baldemar Velasquez

COVER STORY: Focus on youth8

- The New Barbarians — *Hein Marais*
- Squaring the magic circle — *Hein Marais*
- Choose your weapon — *Ned Kekana*
- Keep the peace — *Y Abba Omar*
- Dispelling the myths — *Kerry Cullinan*

RECONSTRUCT SUPPLEMENT

Focus on negotiating forums

GENDER23

Giving meaning to the vote
— *Kerry Cullinan*

LAND24

- High and dry: The man-made drought — *Francine Joss*
- Different homeland, same disease — *Nicola Goodenough*

INTERNATIONAL28

- The rise of nationalism — *Graham Usher*
- A South African in Palestine — *Chris Vick*

DOCUMENT30

The UN in El Salvador
— *Dr Alejandro Bendana*

DEBATE33

A panel discussion with Professor Ernesto Laclau

DEBATE37

Beware the shining path:
The future of the SACP
— *Peter Hudson and Stephen Louw*

CULTURE40

Watch your back — *Sandile Dikeni*

LETTERS43

LEFT BEHIND44

- Jan Hofmeyr will no longer be able to contribute his Election Watch column — he has been assigned an election account and, for professional reasons, has decided to 'drop out of public view'
- Jeremy Cronin's column does not appear in this edition because of his pressure of work
- The photo on the cover of this edition of WIP is posed

THE NEW BARBARIANS

Young people are getting restless with the slow process of change, and no one's listening to them. Read what can be done in our special 15-page focus on youth
— *Page 8*



SOCIALISM'S NEW FACE

Professor Ernesto Laclau debates the future with South African socialists. A few holy cows die in the process, and it makes fascinating reading
— *Page 33*



FEW SIGNS OF CULTURE

Watch your back! Writer Sandile Dikeni decides it's time to cross swords with the cultural commissars
— *Page 40*

A SOUTH AFRICAN IN PALESTINE

Meet the former Robben Islander who takes solidarity seriously — braving Israeli shells to meet Palestinian deportees on the Lebanese border
— *Page 30*



PHOTO: WILLIAM MATLALA

NEGOTIATIONS

Cosatu wants a voice at negotiations

WHILE COSATU HAS ACCEPTED IT CANNOT be represented at multiparty negotiations, it is still intent on getting its ideas heard at the World Trade Centre.

Cosatu assistant secretary Sam Shilowa told a recent press briefing that the federation was pursuing two approaches to get its views across to those at the World Trade Centre:

- Discussions with the ANC and SACP.
- Submitting memorandums and oral evidence to the various committees.

"We don't want to leave [raising our problems] to the ANC and SACP

only. We need public pressure to back our demands," said Shilowa.

Cosatu is particularly concerned that the negotiating forum will tie the country to constitutional agreements even before a constituent assembly is elected. The Concerned SA Group (Cosag) and the Democratic Party (DP), for example, are doing their best to try to pre-empt a constituent assembly's decision on a number of issues.

Bill of rights

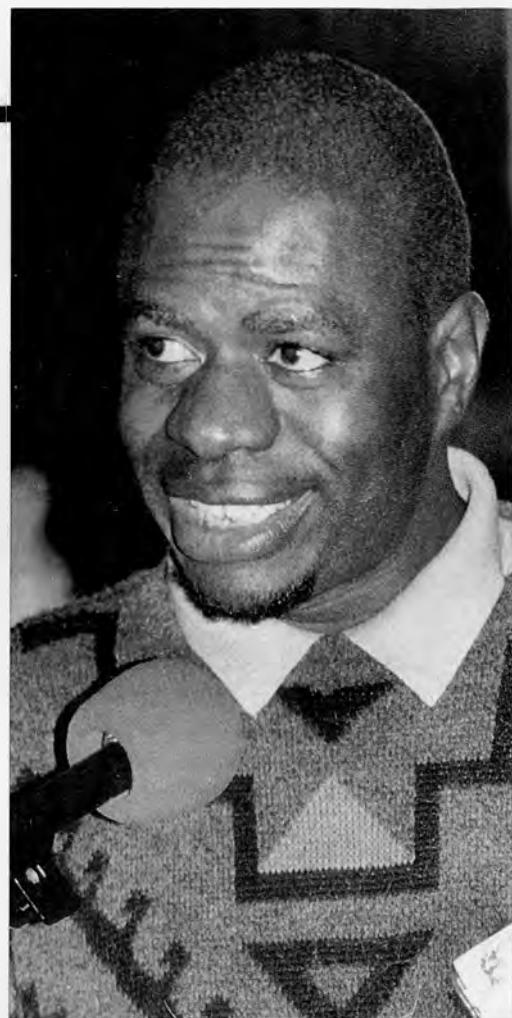
The federation is particularly concerned that "fundamental rights" being identified by the negotiating forum's technical committee will pre-empt discussion on a bill of rights.

The technical committee is isolating the rights it feels need to be protected during the transition.

However, Shilowa argues that the country doesn't need "a bill of rights in the interim, but a schedule of rights related to levelling the playing field and ensuring that we have free and fair elections".

Cosatu also fears that the description of these "fundamental rights" may actually undermine "rights won through struggle".

"Freedom of association could be taken to mean employers have the right to withdraw from centralised bargain-



■ **SAM SHILOWA: Cosatu is against detention without trial at all times**

ing or recognise minority unions," said Shilowa. "The right to privacy could mean ... companies could refuse to disclose information to unions."

Cosatu is also troubled by the clause that allows "rights and freedoms" to be suspended if a state of emergency is declared.

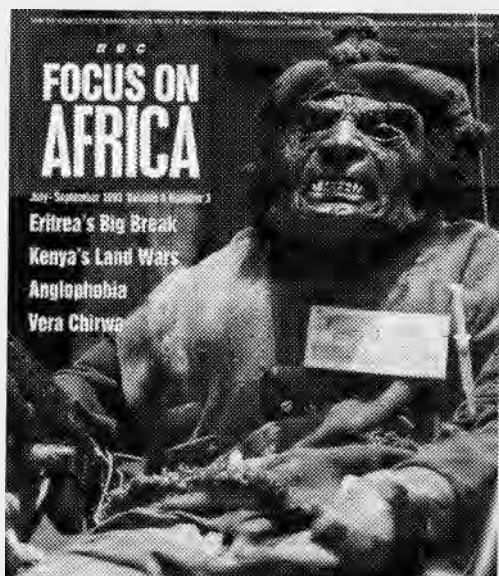
"We are against detention without trial at all times," said Shilowa.

He added that even states of emergency under PW Botha had been unable to suspend labour laws. "Whether the ANC is in power or not, trade union rights should not be undermined by a state of emergency."

At the time of going to press, the technical committee's fifth report on fundamental rights was still being debated at the World Trade Centre.

— Kerry Cullinan

No matter how you look at it, we bring it into Focus



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MOZAMBIQUE

Like hitting a brick wall

OFFICIALS OF ONUMOS, THE UN OPERATION in Mozambique, say publicly "there is no crisis, time has not been wasted". But in private they say they have "hit a brick wall".

Despite months of delays and wrangling, most of the 7 000 United Nations peacekeepers are now in Mozambique, but the peace process remains stalled on several fronts.

The big stumbling block is Renamo. It has managed to find a problem for virtually every solution proffered and is keeping the process on hold by boycotting several key commissions.

After complaining about "inadequate" accommodation in Maputo for its leadership core, Renamo was supplied with 18 houses — among them the former Yugoslav embassy. Complaints persisted, and Lonrho magnate Tiny Rowland has now offered the rebels his sumptuous Cardoso Hotel. The Italian ambassador has also offered to build a house for Renamo chief Alfonso Dhlakama.

Meanwhile Dhlakama has announced that "not one Renamo soldier will be sent to an assembly point until we receive the money we have been promised". He was referring to R45-million allegedly promised by Italy to help Renamo convert from a guerilla



■ MOZAMBIKAN PRESIDENT CHISSANO: Frelimo still hasn't signed UN agreement

movement into a political party. Once Italian officials stopped blushing it emerged that an "informal" promise had indeed been made. The UN Special Representative in Mozambique, Aldo Ajello, is trying to get donor countries to cough up this money and another R51-million destined to other political parties, like the ruling Frelimo. "Democracy has a cost and we must pay that cost," he says.

Demobilisation was to have started nine months ago. To date, negotiators have approved less than a third of the 49 assembly points where the estimated 63 000 government and 20 000 Renamo fighters are supposed to gather and disarm.

The Frelimo government has contributed its share of snarls, too. It has refused to sign a formal agreement with the UN peacekeepers that will allow

them freedom of movement and exemption from exorbitant taxes like import duties and landing fees. Onumoz is currently paying about R3-million a day in fees.

It seems some government officials are peeved that Onumoz might stomp on Mozambican sovereignty. One accused Ajello of acting like the head of an "occupation force". "The UN can't just land troops on the beach here like it did in Somalia," he says.

The good news is that the ceasefire continues to hold. Violations remain rare. And common wisdom in diplomatic circles insists that, despite his posturing and protests, Dhlakama has no choice but to move with the peace process. ■

— *Africa Confidential/Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin*

PERU

Bends in the highway

THE CRISIS IN PERU PROCEEDS UNABATED more than a year after President Alberto Fujimori launched an "auto-coup" that channelled dictatorial powers into his hands, and despite the capture last September of Sendero Luminoso rebel leader Abimael Guzman.

In a new report, the US-based human rights organisation Americas Watch says "Peru's already troubling human rights situation has become significantly worse" since Fujimori suspended the constitution, closed down congress, seized control of the judiciary, and began to rule by decree. The crack-down "has become a tool not just for locking up terrorists, but also for silencing dissent," the report notes.

The "auto-coup" initially drew strong popular support among urban Peruvians (as high as 80% in the capital, Lima) who were swayed by arguments that extraordinary measures were required to achieve stability and national reconstruction.

But the report accuses the government of using its draconian powers to carry out "high levels of violent abuses, including extrajudicial executions, dis-



ANGOLA

Between war and peace

ANGOLA IS TODAY VIRTUALLY PARTITIONED, divided into two armed camps, with the balance of power between the MPLA government and Unita rebels remaining fluid.

The MPLA can still claim majority support across several regions (in the September election, it won a majority in 14 of the 18 provinces), and with the bulk of the urban population lined up behind it. But the support is soft — more by default than anything else. “The people don’t love the government much,” maintains Fernando Pacheco, an official with an Angolan development organisation, “but the prospect of (Jonas) Savimbi seizing power scares them enormously.”

Military still powerful

On the military front, the government army does not face imminent collapse. Its elite force has demonstrated its abilities, notably in the battle for Luanda last December; and the air force remains quite powerful.

The government is also rapidly re-arming itself. “Arms merchants are jostling each other,” says a Luanda-based diplomat. Americans, Russians, French, Brazilians, Israelis and South Africans not only offer arms and equipment, but also “ready-to-use” systems,

including mercenaries to handle the weapons. But the prospect of a prolonged war must scare a government that now has to pay for arms in hard currency.

Angola cannot even meet the interest on its debt, and rescheduling negotiations with the IMF were suspended in January. The economic liberalisation programme pushed by the World Bank has sent prices rocketing (inflation is over 200%) and cost thousands of public service jobs. In Luanda’s shantytowns, anger brews among the 55% of people under- or unemployed — anger deepened by witnessing the military top brass and government bureaucrats flaunting their wealth.

Well-armed

Unita remains an enormously powerful movement: Savimbi protected the bulk of his troops by not demobilising and disarming during the UN-supervised process. As a result, he can count on over 40 000 men, of whom 10-15 000 are well-trained soldiers. Compared to government forces, his army is well-armed — Unita preserved its stocks, and still receives significant quantities of munitions, artillery and vehicles.

The main supply line still leads to SA. Pretoria loudly proclaims its innocence, but powerful sectors of the SA military high command are working hard to support their “historical” ally; and President De Klerk, perhaps with-

out enthusiasm, shuts his eyes. Since January, there have been supply flights almost daily — originating in the south and well-observed by Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe, who claim they are incapable of intervening.

Beyond this semi-official traffic, strong support reaches Unita from among the nearly 350 000 Portuguese-speakers living in SA and the Angolan-Portuguese “diaspora” back in Portugal. To sustain these supplies, Unita has important resources at its disposal, notably profits extracted from diamond mines seized along the Zairean frontier. The income from this trade is pegged at over R1 500-million and the current chaos in Zaire allows the exports to rise with impunity.

Savimbi’s strategy is to hold tight while capitalising on the temporary disarray in Luanda. Time is against him, though: regionally and internationally he is becoming a liability. As he loses his backers, his best option is to push ahead militarily and maintain momentum.

Unita now talks of “federalising” Angola — which could mean a *de facto* partition. But this will not be a lasting solution. It will, in fact, enable Unita to prepare the “final” assault — a bad example for other African countries negotiating their own fragile peace processes.

— Pierre Beaudet

PERU

appearances, torture and rape with little apparent effort to punish those responsible”. The two armed guerilla groups, Sendero and the weaker Tu’pac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, continue “to sow widespread violence and terror despite the capture of important leaders by police in 1992”.

Meanwhile, Fujimori’s economic shock plan — which was not unrelated to the coup — is failing dismally. It

sought to shrink inflation, cut government spending, and attract foreign capital. Over 85 000 government workers have lost their jobs, GDP has dropped by 3-5%, and 67% of Peruvians are living below the poverty line. An estimated 70 000 children die of hunger-related diseases annually.

According to PeruPaz, a local human rights group, 3 000 people died in political violence last year and some

280 documented disappearances occurred, most attributed to the military. The Americas Watch report notes the systematic use of rape as an interrogation technique by security forces, as well as Sendero’s specific targeting of women activists who remain in the forefront of the non-Sendero popular movement. Right-wing paramilitary groups operate with impunity. ■

— Monthly Review/Americas Watch



PHOTO: IOHAN HAMMAN

■ Hein Marais (left) interviews Baldemar Velasquez, president of the Farm Labour Organising Committee. Velasquez recently visited SA to attend a conference on farm labour law

Breakfast with Baldemar

BALDEMAR VELASQUEZ DECLINES A second cup of coffee and smiles. Behind him, on the wall of a neo-rustic Cape hotel, is a painting of those pastoral fantasy scenes where chubby white kids leap around the farmyard, symbolising God-only-knows-what. I've just asked him why he refers to sharecroppers as virtual slaves.

It was after the American Civil War, he explains — the war that emancipated the slaves.

"The slave owners had to figure a way to keep the slaves on the plantations without calling them 'slaves'. So they made this arrangement, were you'd give the former slave some land and the farmer would provide the seeds. The black slave would cultivate the land, and when the crop was sold the owner would get half and the slave would get half."

Which doesn't sound all that bad. "Well," Velasquez follows through, "the trouble with sharecropping was

I organised my father and my mother. And I used them to bring their friends to meetings

that many times the slave would have to borrow so much from the landowner to stay alive until the harvest came in, that when it came to the end of the year he didn't have enough money to pay the debt. So he was always indebted to the farmer or landowner. He became, in effect, an indentured servant.

"The same thing happened to my family — we got stranded in Ohio. We didn't earn enough money to pay for the gasoline to get us back to Texas. We never got out of debt."

That was 30 years ago. Velasquez had already been working in the fields since he was six, the son of a Mexican family which traversed the US, huddled around a barrel of coals with four, five other families on the back of truck, trekking after the crops.

"Living in shanties and chicken coops, barns, whatever the farmer had available. The white communities we'd come into would treat us like outcasts. The only thing we were good for was to harvest the crops." There's a long silence. "Those experiences allow you to see many things — how cruel people can be to other people ..."

A tinge of indignation

Whatever way you cut it, it emerges, sharecroppers were on the losing end. They didn't own the land they worked, they were not renters, and the law didn't regard them as workers. Labour legislation just "passed them by". "Minimum wages, job protection standards and those things did not apply to us — which meant great savings to the industry because they didn't have to pay any federally-mandated benefits." Velasquez has told this story, what, a hundred times? a thousand? but the indignation that creeps into his voice seems unrehearsed.

Excluded from national labour legislation, ineligible for most social services, largely uneducated, dispersed across great expanses of farmland, moving constantly, and locked into a cycle of indebtedness to landlords — if any sector of the American working class seemed *unorganisable*, sharecroppers were it.

Today sharecroppers in Ohio and Michigan have collective bargaining agreements with some of the biggest multinational corporations in the world. "And the cows in Ohio grow wings?" I venture.

Velasquez chuckles politely. "No," he says. "It took a 25 year fight with these food companies. Multinationals like Heinz USA, Campbell's Soup, Dean Foods — these people don't grow their own crops. They contract to farmers, who like these crops because there's a quick return on the investment.

"If we go to the company, they tell us to go talk with the farmer — he's the employer. We go to the farmer and he says 'Oh no, I'm no employer, you're sharecroppers, we farm this land jointly'. That's some Catch-22."

At this point, Velasquez had been accepted into a university — the first time anyone in his family had had this opportunity. It's 1967 and US campuses are in ferment with students interrogating every sacred cow they run across, insisting that society has to offer more than a regime of humiliating work and compulsive consumption.

"Ever since I was 11 or 12, I'd be thinking about ways to improve the situation of sharecroppers," he thinks back, "but it wasn't until this time that I started talking to workers in the fields about it, organising.

A family affair

"At first it was difficult — older men would not listen to me. So I organised my father and my mother. And I used them to bring their friends to meetings. When I'd recruited one of the friends I'd ask them to hold a meeting at their house and they'd have another circle of friends, and I'd talk to them, recruit maybe two or three more, then ask them to have a meeting at their home with some friends. We spent a lot of time building the nucleus of an organisation that way."

The Farm Labour Organising Committee (FLOC) was taking shape. But union affairs, as in so many other places, were still seen as "men's business".

"That's how we came to set up these rules. We said the whole family should attend the meeting, else the wives would think union meetings were just an excuse for the men to get drunk. At first only the men came. Then, when the women started coming, they would just stay in the kitchen.

"My mother helped me break those barriers. I asked her to come and sit in the meeting, and she did with some of her friends. Little by little we changed things."

The time had come for FLOC to pick its first fight, in Ohio. "We picked the nastiest farmer we could find, a guy with barbed wire around his labour camp, private guards, dogs, the works." They notified the media, especially the student press. Then, when everyone had gathered at the compound — workers, police, reporters, guards — FLOC activists tried to hand out union literature to the farm workers. Velasquez was arrested.

"The impact of that incident spread like wildfire through the whole area. Every farm knew who FLOC was after that."

He's lost track of his arrest record since then: "I stopped counting after my 30th arrest." Nowadays, those same farmers who goaded the police invite him into their homes...

Tackling the giant

FLOC's early days, like that of any union, were tests in perseverance and commitment. After several years of laying its groundwork with an organised core of activists and a slightly wider support base, FLOC plotted its first major battle carefully.

The first goal was to organise sharecroppers on all the farms that contracted to one particular company. The next step was to demand that this company and the group of farmers sit down with the workers and negotiate one agreement, a "tripartite collective bargaining agreement". The reasoning was simple: "No-one can pass the buck — everybody's at the same table and they make one agreement."

The big crops in the area were pickles and cucumbers, lucrative cash crops. And the farmers were in no mood to see their cash flow slow. "We struck them at the peak of harvest time. About 40-50 farms, 4 000 farmworkers. The farmers opposed us violently. They beat

us, maimed people, arrested us. They brought in the Ku Klux Klan to break up our campaigns, shot at our offices.

"But I knew the strike was gonna be a prolonged fight, and we had to rely on the consumer boycott to bring about some kind of negotiations."

That's when FLOC opened its second front, launching a public campaign against the principal buyer of all those pickles and cucumbers: Campbell's Soup. Every American knew the name, and Andy Warhol had caused a stir by turning its soup cans into paintings. "We did our own can of Campbell's Soup like that. Instead of 'Cream of Mushroom Soup', we put there 'Cream of Exploitation Soup'. We raised funds for the union with that poster." He's chuckling again.

They struck the farms in 1978, with a rotating group of sharecropper families returning every summer to join the picket lines. Eight years later, in 1986, they got to the negotiating table for the first time — "it took us that long to build our national consumer boycott to be effective."

"We engaged the financial partners of Campbell's Soup — the banks. And we made them part of the problem, picketed them, started a divestment campaign against them. Within a month they felt the pressure. We nailed them on child labour issues. This was all about marketing the boycott. We got a lot of support. We organised over \$1 million worth of bank accounts to be closed in one day. We wanted that bank (in Philadelphia) to sever its relationship with Campbell's Soup and get the president of Campbell's Soup off their board and so on unless Campbell's negotiated some agreement with us in Ohio.

"Eventually the bank came out saying that Campbell's ought to settle this dispute with the workers. Campbell's wouldn't listen to us, but they'd listen to their business partners.

"It was very effective. That, and the consumer boycott, made them negotiate this precedent-setting agreement which everyone said could never be done because no company was going to negotiate a union agreement with a group of workers who were not its employees. But that's exactly what Campbell's did."

With Campbell's at the table, FLOC demanded that it bring in the



PHOTO: SAMSON SELEPE

■ ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN FARM: Same problems, but few signs of solutions

farmers as a third party. After all, how could the agreement be implemented without defining new relationships with the farmers? Campbell's understood this logic. It brought in the farmers, allowed them to form associations for the first time, and watched them sign collectively as a third party. "In effect, the companies organised the farmers for us," Velasquez smiles.

Companies must pay

"There were two cornerstones in building this union," says Velasquez, as he glances across the room at the waiter. It's epilogue time. "One was the issue of multiparty agreements. The other was the question of who pays for the extra costs. I feel we have to protect the farmer economically so that the increases in wages and benefits should not come out of his pocket, but out of the company's pocket. If the farmer was paying us a certain wage, he could continue paying us that wage — any increases and benefits called for by the agreement would be arranged and paid for by the company. And so far so good. The effect for the farmer was that his workers were better taken care of at the company's expense."

I remember something he said earlier: "The aim of non-violence is to win your enemy over to seeing things your way."

Since the Campbell's victory, FLOC has signed collective bargaining agreements between up to *five* parties with other food giants like Dean Foods and Heinz. In the latter's case, productivity jumped by 45% on the signed-up farms, "which more than covered the costs brought on by the collective agreement".

At a talk by Velasquez two days before our breakfast rendezvous, someone asked him about the key to FLOC's success. He reeled off two verbatim quotes from the bible, then summed up the moral: "Good, honest and moral leadership is what makes the difference."

Today, as he finally catches the waiter's eye, he's paraphrasing the French historian Alexis de Tocqueville. One thing we can't forget about capitalism, he says, is that it constantly "strives for the maximum inequality in its own favour". And we've got to answer that.

"I'll have that coffee now," he announces. — *Hein Marais* ■



cover story

THE NEW



PHOTO: GUY TILLIM (SOUTHLIGHT)

■ **ON THE EDGE:** The culture of violence is nothing new — but our current response is

BARBARIANS

South African youth are not simply 'lost'. They are being made to disappear as a legitimate part of our society.

HEIN MARAIS looks at who's doing the pushing, and why its happening

IN THE PUBLIC MIND "YOUTH" ARE being converted into latter-day savages: demented, destructive, demonised. The images are archetypal, primal — the stuff of thousand-year-old myths and sweaty nightmares. Of beasts baying outside the city gates, shadows that swing along the edge of the bonfire, figures watching from a distance, moving in their own peculiar rhythm, ready to violate the zones of order and reason.

Student protestors are whipped and stampeded off trains en route to Jo'burg's CBD, deflected back to the townships. Marchers and rioters are shot and gassed on Cape Town's Parade, herded back to the shacklands. Protea police station seals itself off with a wall of birdshot and lead.

In towns that seldom earn headlines, the theme is repeated to the point of monotony. The barbarians are repelled, routed, forced back to the perimeter.

Black youth have long been quasi-criminalised. Whether in Soweto, Brixton or South-Central LA, a black youth's innocence is regarded by the authorities as a momentary respite from guilt — he's either about to break the law or he has already done it. But there is an obvious difference between the criminalising gaze a policeman casts on a few young blacks killing time downtown, and the way the public imagination in SA today is able to picture youth collectively as a homicidal pestilence.

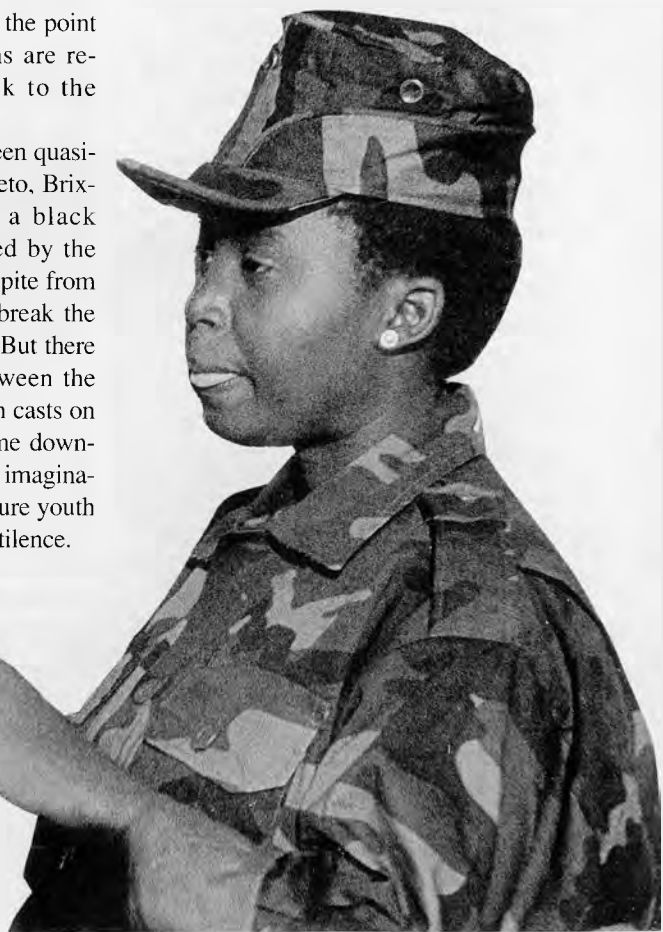
Too often
in the
South
African
paranoid
imagination,
each black youth
embodies the potential

eruption of collective assault (mass revenge?).

This paranoia is becoming increasingly prickly and non-racial (and 'one almost hears the protestation: "Just because I'm paranoid doesn't mean they're not out to get me").

"Dance of death as youths kill bull" was the *Sunday Times* front-page headline that greeted readers a few weeks ago: "It was a horrible, sadistic killing, not just a straight slaughter. It reminded me of the uhuru uprising in Kenya," said Mrs Muir." Four days after Chris Hani's death, the *Cape Times* informed readers: "Twenty-six mourners were injured as others literally toyi-toyed and danced trains off tracks in the Peninsula".

Delirium, death, dance, rebellion



■ **THE CUTTING EDGE:**
We regret to announce
the youth is lost

Once the pride of the struggle, hoisted on a cloud of clenched fists, youth have been transformed into a scourge

— these are central motifs in the imagery of colonialism. They survive here, today still, to capture imaginations, encapsulate fears that no longer can be labeled simply “white” or “black”. They describe The Other. A sector of society deemed lost, beyond redemption or salvation.

The mix of repulsion and scorn aimed at the youth used to be a “white thing”; befitting our new SA, this angst has become thoroughly deracialised. Once the pride of the liberation struggle, lionised by leaders, showered with eulogies, hoisted on a cloud of clenched fists and exhortations, youth have been transformed into a scourge. For many South Africans, and not without reason, a whole range of perils and disasters are concretised in the image of “the youth”. Yes, we are broadminded and understanding enough occasionally to cushion our fear and dread with sympathy for their “anger” and “desperation” ... but all the while we flex our whipping arms.

No longer darlings

Here’s ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa on the day of Chris Hani’s funeral denouncing the thousands of youth battling police outside the FNB stadium with his chilling “agents provocateurs” statement.

Or Dries Bruwer, president of the right-wing Transvaal Agricultural Union, calling for “labour

camps” for loafing youth. Or Ken Owen, palm-reader of the “paper for the people”: “The immediate threat lies in the social disintegration of the townships, which has produced marauding cohorts of youngsters — depraved, as the song puts it, because they are deprived — whose behaviour is so savage as to arouse the impulse towards counter-violence.”

Or the opening lines of a 1990 British news article: “They have been christened the Khmer Noir. They kill. They rape.”

Here’s Jon Qwelane pushing the ‘animalism’ theme, lamenting “the near impossibility of taming the ‘young lions’ when the time came to put them on a leash”.

Criminalising youth

The meanings that attach to “youth” today do not merely *describe* a sector of society — they criminalise it. As Jeremy Seekings notes in his book *Heroes or Villains?*, “youth are not only associated with violent behaviour; violence is largely understood in terms of the youth”. The youth is not merely violent; the youth is violence.

The labelling of youth of course goes back a long way, at least to the tsotsi gangs of the 1940s and 1950s and the mix of fear and wonder they attracted. But it became one of the most significant ideological features of the past 15 years — largely because of the political roles youth has been cast in. And the labels became less ambiguous and more encompassing.

Seekings identifies two stereotypes of the youth in the 1980s: the apocalyptic (Khmer Noir and its varieties) and the liberatory (Young Lions). Both

existed simultaneously, but the latter has been swallowed up by the 1990s. In the imaginations and rhetoric of progressives, youth have “mutated” from heroes (Young Lions) into victims (Save the Children) into the demons (Lost Generation) of today. That passage from adulation to disappearance is signposted by the late OR Tambo’s 1985 praises (“The student and working youth of our country have once more confirmed their place in our hearts as the pride of the nation”) and, by contrast, the omission of any reference to youth in the ANC’s January 8 statement this year.

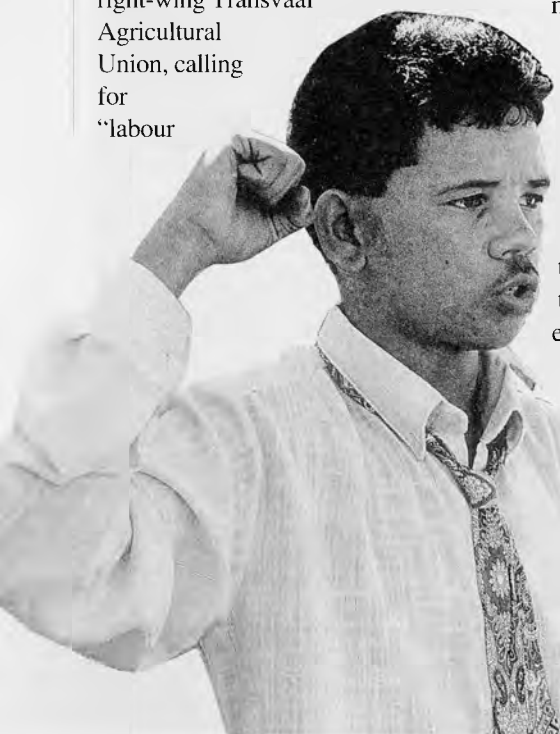
We regret to announce that the youth has been “lost”.

“Lost Generation” is perhaps one of the sadder and more spiteful catchphrases in a country that excels at bitter clichés. It rolls off the tongue to flatten millions of South Africans into grim stereotypes. The dispossessed become the *possessed*: beset by anger, wracked by despair, hell-bent on destruction. “They are truly lost ... ineducable ... there is nothing anybody can do about it,” in the judgment of the liberal editor. As if they have slipped into our reality from some adjacent branch of the evolution tree.

Collective sickness

That there are youth who resort to violence *unusually* often, *unusually* viciously, who terrify those around them, goes without saying. That there are youth who *see themselves* as irrevocably “lost” is tragically documented in the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (Case) survey of SA youth (see box). But, once youth en masse are compressed into such images, it is easy to see how their actions become treated as symptoms of a social pathology, of a sort of collective sickness.

Being young, generally, means biting your tongue, speaking when spoken to, greeting abuse with downturned eyes — battered by the insistence that someone else always knows what’s best for you. In SA, being young, black and poor means all that and more. And it is institutionalised on a scale and with a viciousness that defies description. State repression; the humiliation of watching those you respect being humbled and





■ THE ROAD TO NOWHERE: The youth are being *made* to disappear

shamed; the *structural* violence of poverty, disease, poor education, joblessness; the shredding effect of seeing everything around you disintegrate, sometimes dramatically, always relentlessly.

But youth now bear the mark of beastliness. “[L]abeling protestors ‘youth’ serves to delegitimize them and their actions,” chides Seekings. “The label implies irresponsibility, even irrationality, and disregards the issues that sparked the protest ... it legitimates repression.”

The label “youth” silences especially the language — action, deeds — the dispossessed are forced to resort to. “For the Left and for liberals, defiance and the suffering out of which it comes has to be brought to talk, to reason, in order to become meaningful suffering,” one foreign writer has noted. Virtually by definition, demonised youth are unable to act rationally and reason articulately. Instead of a voice youth have a howl: instead of desires youth have desperation.

That the language of gestures and actions speaks of relatively coherent de-

sires and concerns is not obvious if one relies on the alarm of (always older, generally white) interpreters of reality (see ‘Growing up tough’ survey on page 16).

At the historic joint press conference of Los Angeles gangs after the May 1992 riots, one gang member announced: “The riot has been our voice, the only voice that you will listen to.”

The youth is “lost” in the sense that it is being made to *disappear* as a legitimate sector of society. Let’s not kid ourselves: the labeling and demonisation of youth is shaping public approval for the repression of “deviant” sectors of society, particularly those actively mobilised and organised around socio-political demands. The implications are drastic and far-reaching (see *Squaring the Magic Circle* on page 13). Bruwer’s labour camps and Willie Esterhuysen’s draft-’em-all-into-the-army proposals capture the menace with refreshing, creepy honesty.

They were pushed

But the Lost Generation did not just slide into the crevices of history and so-

ciety: they were pushed.

Discussions on the youth invariably steer towards notions like the “culture of violence”, “culture of intolerance” and the new-fangled “culture of entitlement”. That these trends prevail throughout our society, particularly in the enclaves of privilege, nowadays seems to escape an awful lot of people.

The effect is a classic “blame the victim” twist. Youth’s despair is traced back to their rising up in ‘76, in ‘80, in ‘84; to their positioning themselves as “the cutting edge of the revolution”; their “*self-denial*” of an education. Dare you to rebel, and the full weight of your misfortune shall rest on your shoulders...

In liberal and left circles there are also bitter judgments of political leaders who prodded youth into the 1980s frontline as fodder for the revolution — and then failed to rein them in when defeat became obvious. (Sadly, some of those leaders’ reputations were enhanced rather than deflated by that single-mindedness.) The anger is justified, though it might be balanced by reflecting on the effect of disappearances and

mass detentions on organisational discipline.

Several thoughtful studies have sought to untangle the crisis of the youth. Most of them restore youth to a wider context that is shaped by the most distinctive feature of our society: the "culture of neglect", of *systematic* neglect, lest we forget.

Most studies agree on a basic set of structural factors that have dumped youth into crisis: numbers, education, economy, urbanisation. Colin Bundy's often-cited summary remains evocative: "Take politically-rightless, socially-subordinate, economically-vulnerable youths; educate them in manners be-

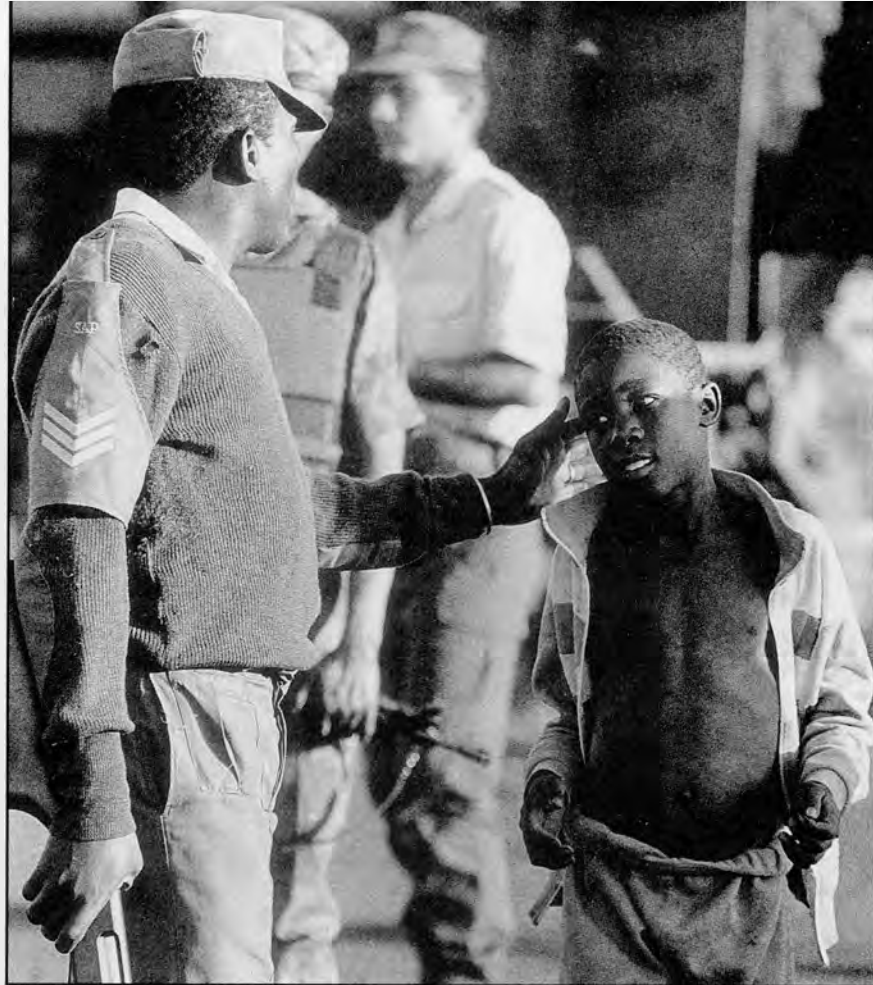
yond their parents' wildest dreams, put them in educationally grotesque institutions; ensure their awareness is shaped by punitive social practices in the world beyond the schoolyard — and then dump them in large numbers on the econom-

ic scrap-heap."

The system of "anti-education" (as Ramphela terms it) continues to yield dismally low pass rates and sky-high drop-out rates among African students.

The failure of the education system is also social. When asked in the Case survey why they left school, 66% of African high-school "drop-outs" said "no money". Thirteen percent of young women had to leave because they were pregnant. And a couple of figures to rub into the smug faces of establishment pundits: 69% of youth still want to study to the level they had originally planned, and only 1% of African youth (but 10% of coloured youth) identified politics as the reason for cutting short their schooling.

Unemployment hammers black South Africans under 30 hardest. On average, 8% of new entrants in the job market find employment every year (down from almost 50% in the early



■ ON THE STREET: Young people bear the brunt of SA's structural disasters

1970s); in 1993 only 5% of matriculants are expected to find jobs. The Case survey found 3 million people between 16 and 30 out of work. Meanwhile, rural poverty will see "people pour into cities even while unemployment rises and resources shrink", reminds Bundy, with "informal settlement" and squatting their housing options. Most of them will be young.

Clearly, the youth bear the brunt of a massive structural disaster. But deducing a "marginalised" or "alienated" youth strictly from those factors, implies that we're dealing with an undifferentiated mass. The youth become flattened into a stereotype of another sort. Seekings puts it well: "The youth need to be treated as actors in a meaningful sense, and not simply the bearers of structural conditions ... (political behaviour and violence) may be shaped by general conditions, but are not determined by them."

Marginalisation

Striking in the Case survey are the concerns that most preoccupy those youth defined as "marginalised" on the basis of their other responses. Way ahead of other concerns comes generational con-

flict, the feeling that it's terrible being young in SA, and the sense that they have no future in our country.

In her attempts to link alienated youth to the "social disintegration of the black community", Ramphela has tried to add this missing dimension: subjectivity. The ability to choose, reason, decide, initiate. At the ideological level, one antidote to the demonisation of youth is to invest the *public image* of youth with these features.

We have a long way to go. We have not lost a generation: we are gagging, scorning, squandering it.

The standard response is to thicken the voice, issue promises, preach patience and threaten discipline. "We will try to discipline them and lead them in the right direction," as more than one leader on the Left assures us. On a bad day you denounce them in front of the world's eyes. On the plus side, ANC President Nelson Mandela's bid to lower the voting age to 14 reflects *his* belief that what really matters to the youth is a stake in their own future — which translates into the hope of a future. Anybody who's ever been young knows that much. The trouble is that most of us forget it in an eyeblink. ■

The Lost Generation did not just slide into the crevices of history and society: they were pushed



SQUARING THE MAGIC CIRCLE

WE EMERGE FROM A HISTORY shaped by a paradigm of “Us” and “Them”, “Insiders” and “Outsiders”, those allowed “In” and those kept “Out”. Here, at the end of an old era, we cuddle sweet anticipations that the New SA will end all that. But it’s not turning out that way.

Both politically and ideologically, our transition is proceeding precisely on the basis of inclusion/exclusion. At the national level, locally, wherever, the transition is about establishing, consolidating and fortifying expanded arenas where **consensus** (or at least a compromise) is reached — the various negotiations and bargaining fora and processes where foes (with both long and short memories) unite in the quest for solutions.

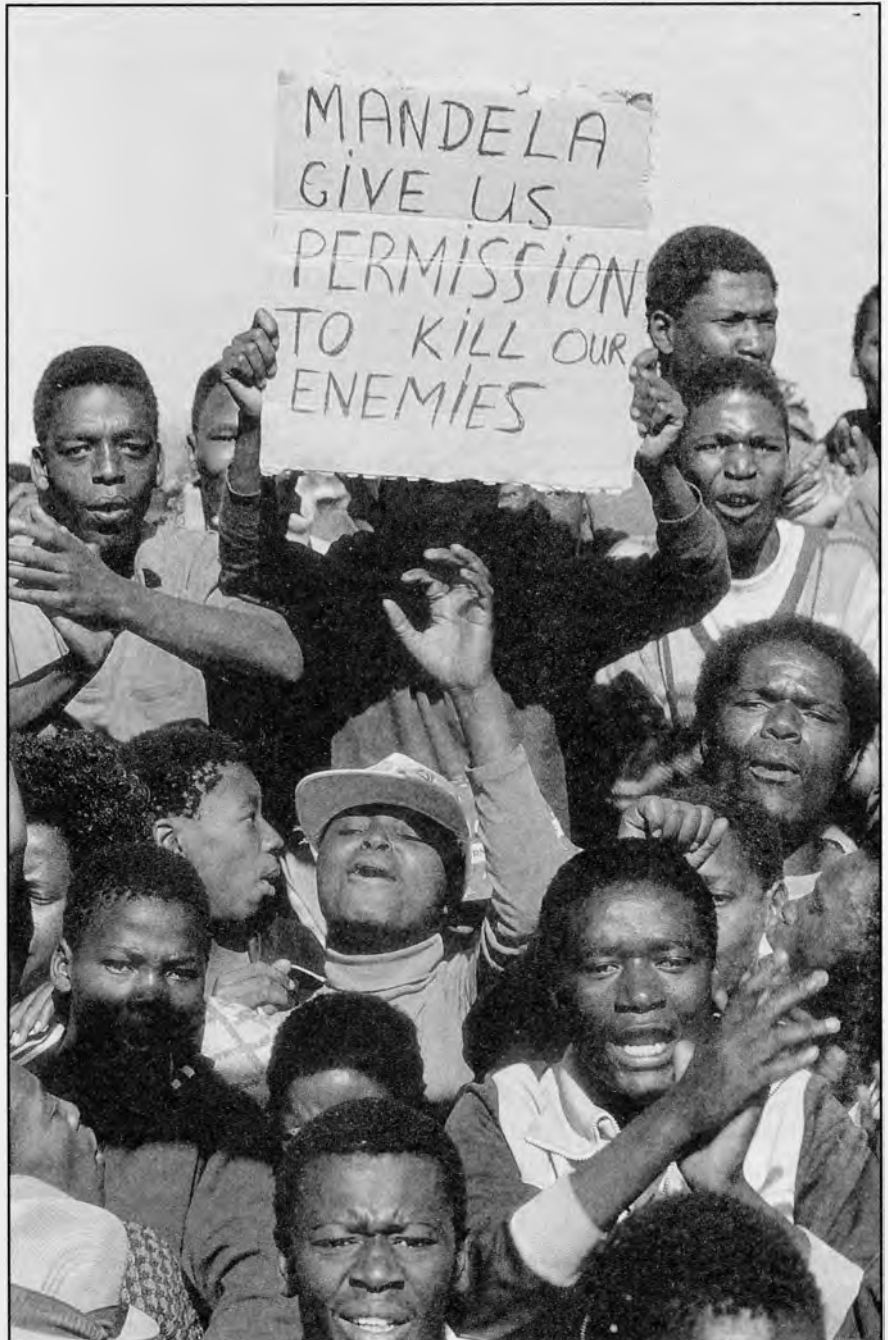
We’re talking sacred ground here. Whoever enters the arena of consensus politics is anointed with legitimacy and is issued with the badge of reason and reasonableness. Entry implies agreement to a set of norms that regulate conflict. In consensus politics, conflict — especially of the radical kind — is symbolically banished to the political margins, and stigmatised.

The magic circle

The government has tried vigorously to mark out and seal off the terrain of negotiations as the only space where politics can be practised. The ANC has succeeded in resisting, by defending politics in the public sphere (though on occasion, like the schools crisis, this defence has been rather lacking in enthusiasm).

But here’s the rub. The prevailing balance of power imposes certain limits on what is up for grabs in these consensual arenas. Certain demands are not achievable — indeed, some demands are not even negotiable — in these in-

The marginalisation of youth is part of a general onslaught on ‘deviants’, argues HEIN MARAIS



■ **AG PLEEZ DADDY:** Ignoring those outside the ‘inner circle’ fuels a return to fundamentalism

The embattled inner circle might be ambushed by fundamentalist, scorched-earth politics

stitutionalised combat zones.

Black students' actions in May stemmed from that fact. Likewise the land occupations we soon will be seeing a lot more of, and the plant-level strikes (a la the Mercedes Benz "disturbance" of 1990) in defiance of central union bureaucracies.

Partially through an ideological process and partially because of the sweep of its desires and needs, the youth also finds itself locked out but spoken for.

Of course, it is in the ideological realm that stigma is attached to certain forces, actions and demands — for instance the efforts to "outlaw" student rebellion. As British theorist Stuart Hall has noted: "Since the form and content of consensus is highly problematic, it has to be powerfully advanced in ideological terms ... the drift and drive to consensus politics not only engenders its own types of conflict, but tends to produce, as a response, a specific type of oppositional movement: political deviance, (which) is the form in which conflict reasserts itself at certain nodal points in a system drifting and driving towards 'consensus management' of the state." If this is true in Britain, how much more so in SA?

These arenas enclose certain parties and forces, and inevitably exclude others, potentially rendering their demands and actions illegitimate. It might sound like Zen, but the legitimacy of the centre is dependent on the illegitimacy of those forces blockaded on the margins.

Don't break the rules

Foolish, brazen, dangerous — the government's decision to play brinkmanship by criminalising the PAC in late May was all those things, but it fitted this logic of the negotiations process. The PAC got roughed up because it transgressed the norms of the consensual club. The choice posed was: End your "deviance" and you may sup with us, confirm it and you (in the classic language of political control) banish yourself from our circle. Judging by its response, the ANC's stance on this sort of framing has become unnervingly "ambiguous".

The generalised logic is precisely

that of democratic pluralism, the system we were still moving towards at the time of writing. Hall again: "While in theory democratic pluralism allows for the entry of new groups and associations into the political arena, concretely and in practice it operates in such a way as systematically to ignore and disenfranchise certain emergent groups and interests which are outside the consensus, while maintaining intact the existing structure of political interest." Exclusion occurs in a variety of ways and on many pretexts: by actually criminalising forces, organisations or actions (arrests, bannings, withdrawing mandates), by delegitimising demands in the public mind, by invoking the presumed opinions of the ("silent") majority to discredit minority demands ("orderly, peace-loving, reasonable people are still in the majority in this country..."), courtesy of Ken Owen), or by defining a political force as a "social problem" thereby rendering its actions "non-political".

The youth is being subjected to all these procedures.

Back to fundamentals

Just how dangerous is this? Marginalise and discredit huge swathes of society, push them to the fringes of political life, whip their hands off the levers of power, deprive them of the sense of progress, and you eventually reap what you sow. Because you've created the conditions in which back-to-basics, fundamentalist politics is cultivated.

Notwithstanding its own particular features, the spectacular rise of the Hamas movement in Palestine has occurred under such conditions. Likewise the brutal bid for power by Sendero Luminoso in Peru. ANC Midlands leader Harry Gwala's grasp of Maoism enables him to understand this perfectly well. Perhaps instinctively, Winnie Mandela, Tony Yengeni and Peter Mokaba sense the opportunity to foster a left fundamentalist challenge down the road. But

the ideological bonds within the Congress movement remain strong enough to postpone a no-compromise challenge from within its ranks several years down the road.

The capacity for left fundamentalism lies more within the Pan-Africanist Congress (although, as Colin Bundy has noted, it is almost by default that one terms the PAC "left"). It is perhaps the only force on the Left whose programme and rhetoric still resemble one another — embracing, uncompromising, totalistic. It can scan the near future and see little chance that conditions of lived life will undermine the pull of radical desires. Moreover, it has made explicit and cast in political form the knot of racial tension that's imbedded in every gesture, every engagement in our society.

The danger, simply, is that the embattled inner circle of "realism", "appeasement" and "consensus" might be ambushed by fundamentalist, scorched-earth politics.

Popular pressure

The antidote lies not so much in expanding the magic circle to enclose larger sections of the dispossessed; the smell of co-option and expediency is too thick. Rather it lies in extending the range of interests heeded by power. That implies a (revitalised) loyalty to programmes oriented along a clear line of bias towards the dispossessed. Good intentions are not enough to haul power along such a path — it requires the jostle and shove of popular pressure.

And there lies the backhanded danger of allowing this framework of inclusion/exclusion to pass untrammelled and unchallenged into the new era. Once forces and interests are effectively marginalised, and the stigma of "wrecking" and disorder is attached to them, protest becomes criminalised, and repression becomes "legitimate". Demons and deviants, after all, "have no rights", right?

It's all fair and well to argue that right-wing minorities deserve all that and more. But history has provided far too much proof that all too often it is the Left — and its constituencies, including the youth — that are made to soak up those hammer blows. ■



CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

Destruction or reconstruction — the two choices facing young South Africans, says NED KEKANA

ANC YOUTH LEAGUE ACTIVIST Tebogo Mosenogi witnessed many marches and other political activities in Alexandra township through the lens of his camera: the frustrations, pain and anguish on the faces of young and old alike.

When he left the country for military training late last year, he abandoned his video camera out of sheer frustration. Like many other youth activists, he had grown impatient with the slow pace of negotiations at the World Trade Centre. The talks simply failed to deliver the goods.

Unfortunately, Mosenogi died at a military camp in Uganda recently before he could cast his vote for a democratic South Africa.

He is one example of the millions of frustrated youth in this country.

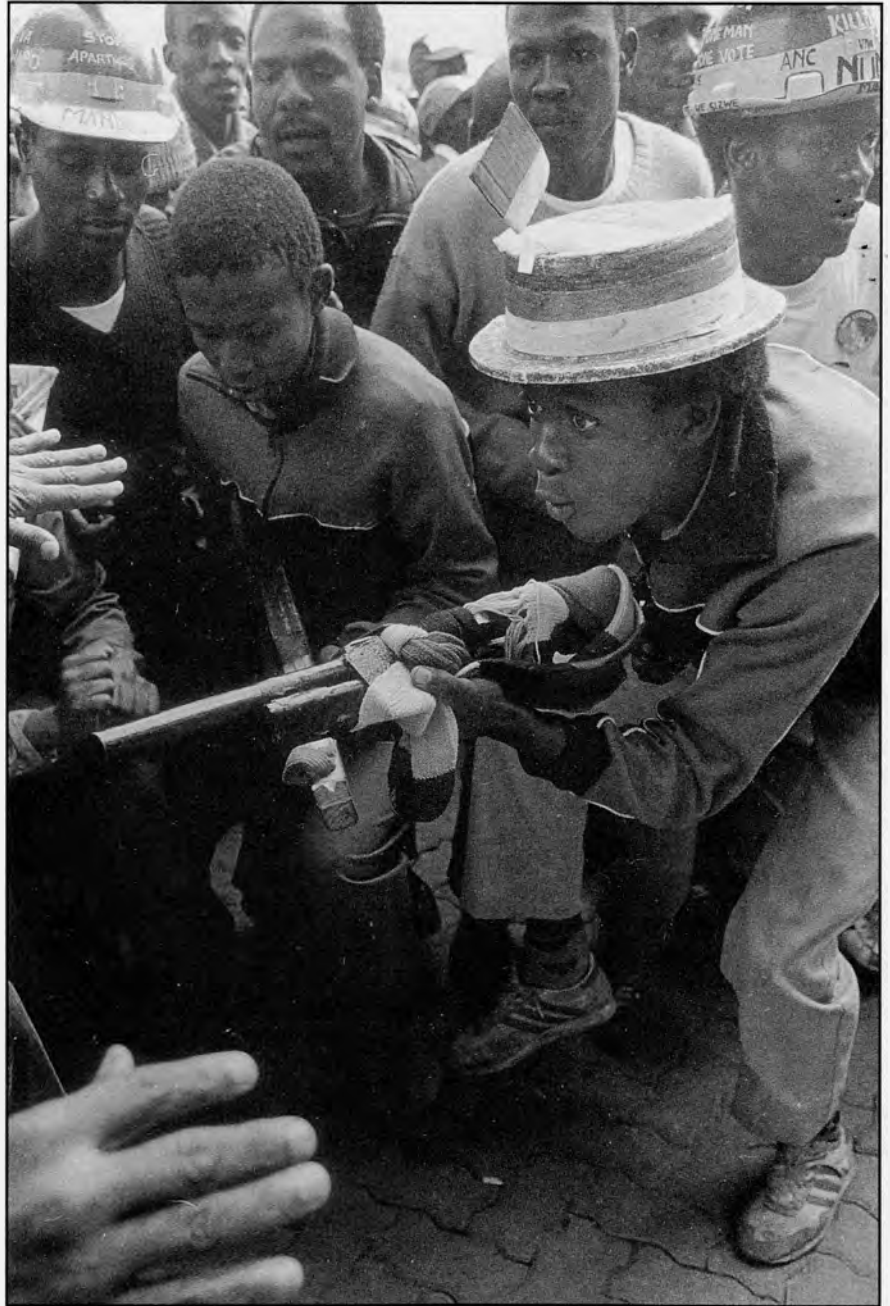
Despite their frustration with negotiations, militant youth in many townships and villages were — until recently — still prepared to listen to the leadership of the liberation movement.

Their patience was, however, broken by the assassination of Chris Hani. The events that followed the assassination, like the exam fees issue and the isolated incidents of stoning and looting, seemed to bring with them a new sense of urgency. The future was clear, they were saying: unless there was a change in the socio-political system in South Africa, the country was heading for complete destruction.

Early starters

The debate introduced by ANC president Nelson Mandela on the voting age demonstrates the importance of involving youth in the political solutions of this country.

South African youth are early



■ **GUNS AND POSES: Mobilised youth need to be channeled into reconstruction**

starters — they are generally active in politics from the age of 12. The high school leadership of the SA Student Movement (SASM) and later the Congress of SA Students (Cosas), for example, were instrumental in the mass uprisings against apartheid rule.

Young people below the present voting age of 18 years are thus an im-

portant interest group that should not be ignored in any political dispensation.

The history of mass mobilisation among the youth should be channelled and used as a tool for reconstruction and development.

At the moment, youth interests are primarily advocated by people like Sheila Sisulu of the SACC, Dr Mam-

Growing up tough: The survey

Views of youth as a uniform mass are contradicted not only by common sense but by a wide-ranging new survey conducted by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (Case).

Perhaps the most extensive survey yet on SA youth, "Growing up Tough" culled its data from face-to-face interviews with 2 200 people aged 16 to 30 years, of all races and in all parts of the country — including the TBVC states.

These are some of its findings:

- There are 10,7 million youths, 8,1 million of them African.
- At least 20% of African youth (1,5 million people) live in shacks and another 9% in huts. In contrast, nearly all white, coloured and Asian youth live in houses or apartments.
- Only 47% of young Africans live in homes with electricity (compared to 87% of coloured, 99% of Asian and 100% of white youth) and only 36% in homes with running water (compared to 84% of coloured, 92% of Asian and 97% of white youth).
- Youth are very religious, especially young women — more than half of whom attend church every week. Fewer than one in ten youth don't attend church at all.
- Fourteen percent (1,1 million) of young Africans and 10% of coloured youth (110 000) never reached secondary school, but all white youth did and all but 2% of Asian youth did. Fewer women than men finish high school or receive diplomas and degrees.
- More than half (52% or 3 million) of employable young people are out of work — 57% of young Africans, 46% of young coloureds, compared to 17% of young Asians and 4% of young whites. Women are hardest hit.
- Young South Africans, notably women, suffer distressing levels of violence. One in four young women had either themselves been raped or knew someone who had. Five percent said they were being beaten by their partners, while 23% knew of other women suffering this violence.
- Youth are organisationally involved, though politics ranks low as a choice. Almost half the women interviewed are involved in the church or choirs, while one in two men belong to a sports structure.
- Politics is a male domain: of the 12% of youth who belong to a political organisation, more than two-thirds are men.

Based on respondents' answers, Case then analysed the extent of marginalisation and types of concern experienced by youth in SA. They found that:

- Youth of all races are anxious about their future.
- African and coloured youth (both male and female) register high degrees of generational hostility, while young whites score higher on racial antagonism than their counterparts.

The researchers conclude that more than a quarter (27%) of the sample might be classified as "marginalised youth" and recommends they be "targeted with specifically tailored programmes".

Tragically, 5% or half a million young South Africans are deemed "lost", having "slipped through, or been shoved through, the social net entirely". — *Hein Marais*■

● Read Kerry Cullinan's review of *'Heroes or villains: Youth politics in the 1980s'*, on page 21

phela Ramphele and recently Nelson Mandela.

This is an indication that youth organisations are weak and unable to champion their members' needs adequately. Recent surveys show that only nine million youths belong to organisations — and only 12% of this figure belong to political organisations.

Building infrastructure

Building youth organisations should be linked to the creation of an infrastructure in many communities. Youth organisations must have access to fully-serviced youth centres. This will contribute to building capacity and will improve the image of youth organisations. Access to general information on health care, vocational guidance, etc should be readily available in these centres.

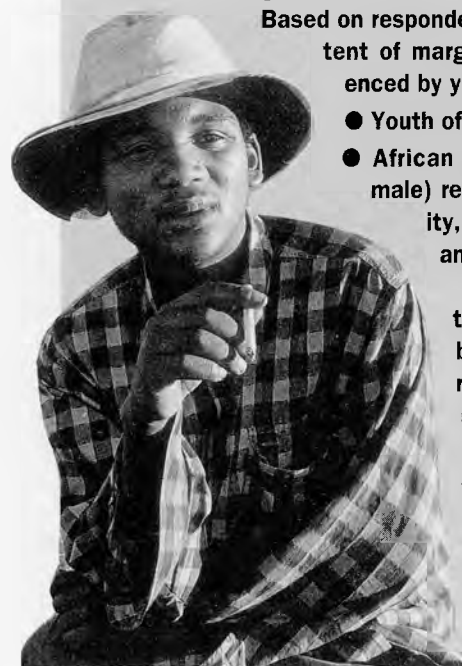
Lack of money and facilities are also a major cause of youth organisations' poor profile. A typical example is in Sebokeng township, where the ANC Youth League branch has access to only three halls in the entire community of almost a million people. In Thokoza, organisations must pay R50 to hire a venue, while in Alexandra, venues cost R60 per meeting.

Any reconstruction programme in South Africa must seek to empower and involve one of the largest sectors of our communities, the youth. Development is currently in the hands of funders and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Oppressed communities are generally reduced to being recipients of development.

While there are attempts to involve communities, little is done to build capacity. Thus the communities continue to depend on the providers for further development and expertise. These initiatives have not focused specifically on the interest of youth.

Enterprises like the Joint Enrichment Project (JEP) and the ANCYL youth front programme have begun introducing ideas on youth development policy. These initiatives have organised several national youth conferences, with a focus on unity and mapping out the future.

But these undertakings emanate from the top and have limited impact on grassroots memberships of youth organ-



isations. Ways of achieving this include:

- Making more resources available, especially from big business, to help filter these national discussions to regional and local levels.
- The participation of non-political youth structures should be encouraged to widen the scope of consultation.
- A national Youth Development Policy Forum should be established to link with other sectoral negotiation forums.

A youth development policy

Studies over the years have shown that young people in South Africa are mostly concerned with unemployment, education, political conflict and other community needs.

The Community Agency for Social Enquiry (Case) was commissioned by JEP to research various African countries' youth development policies. Case identified two basic approaches: economic skills training and life skills training.

Economic skills training generally involved training young people to be self-reliant in the informal sector. **Life skills training** aimed to integrate all components of youth development namely: social, economic, medical and psychological. Case concludes that there is a need for a youth development policy in South Africa.

The democratic elections will enable youth over 18 to influence national politics and policies through their votes. This will, however, not be enough to cater for the interests of young people.

A **government youth ministry** should be established under a new constitution. This ministry should recommend to parliament policies on youth interests such as sport, recreation, etc.

The youth ministry should establish organic links with extra-parliamentary youth structures to ensure that the ministry represents a diversity of youth aspirations.

A project to engage the unemployed youth in **public works**, as suggested by Cosatu, should be supported by youth organisations across the political spectrum.

The development of people's parks and the clean-up campaigns of the mid-80s were rudimentary forms of youth involvement in community public

works services.

However, a massive public works campaign involving building roads, low-cost houses, schools, dams etc. is needed to redress the under-development of black residential areas. Youth brigades could play an important part in implementing such a campaign.

There is consensus from major political organisations on the establishment of a **Peace Corps**. Youth organisations should be the backbone of the corps, which would concentrate on community policing.

The SACP has proposed that the Peace Corps should also act as a development resource in communities. In its proposal, the party suggests that public and private funds, as well as donations, be mobilised to ensure the success of this project.

In countries such as Nicaragua and Ethiopia, student and youth brigades were key in uprooting illiteracy. This is an important lesson for South Africa, where 50% of the population is illiterate. The complete overhaul of the present system of education is important for the success of any reconstruction.

Young people in South Africa were on the receiving end of apartheid policies. They sacrificed their future to fight this inhuman system. Unless there is affirmative action for the youth and other victims of apartheid, the future of this country remains bleak.

The increase in the crime rate and the mistrust of authority among young people are sociological problems that are worsened by the general lack of political uncertainty. It is thus important for a democratic state, business and organs of civil society to engage the youth in all developmental programmes.

As OR Tambo said: "... a people, a country, a movement that does not value its youth does not deserve its future." The onus however lies with youth organisations to seize the present moment to make the future of the youth a focal point for the resolution of the South Africa conflict. ■

● *Kekana is a former chairperson of the ANCYL in Alexandra and is presently the ANCYL's PWV deputy chairperson*

Young, gifted — and hungry for change

Name: Andy Phophi

Age: 18

Current status: Wits Technikon students. Card-carrying member of the Congress of SA Students.

Parents: Father is a sales rep. Mother unemployed. Three siblings.

Address: Four-roomed house in Meadowlands, Soweto. 'The house is too small for all six of us. When I want to study, I have to wait for everyone to stop watching TV in the sitting room.'

Feelings about education: 'At school, I was never encouraged to acquire a broad knowledge about the world. Education seemed to suppress creativity in black kids.' **Attitude towards his parents:** 'I respect them. I might not agree with them, but I



give them the opportunity to state their feelings.'

His parents' attitude towards him: 'They care about the youth and our plight. But they seem unable to express themselves clearly.' **How to resolve this:** 'Parents and youth should exchange views in an orderly manner.'

Problems facing students: 'These must be addressed as soon as possible; they include the creation of jobs and the provision of skills training for those who have dropped out of school.'

What a future government can do for the youth: 'The youth must be involved in developing programmes that will improve our lives, like providing recreational facilities — soccer fields, libraries, and the like.'

Biggest fear: 'The number of my friends who are using drugs and involved in crime — take the frustration of knowing you will probably never have a job, couple this with the abuse of drugs, and you have the making of a criminal.'

Views on the future: 'The violence worries me. I am scared South Africa will turn into a war zone like Mozambique ... at the end of it all there will be a lot of dead bodies and a wasteland.'

— Zolile Mtshelwane ■



■ **PEACEKEEPERS? MK cadres could be included in a National Peacekeeping Force**

KEEP THE PEACE!

So many youth, so few jobs. So much crime, so few credible crimefighters.

ABBA OMAR looks at ways of solving the problem

THE CREATION OF A PEACE CORPS could go a long way towards meeting the needs of a youth which is poorly educated (or not educated at all), frustrated at not being able to do anything to help bring about peace, and feeling ill-prepared for the future.

In addition, a vibrant peace corps could help combat the spiralling levels of violence, the lack of SADF/SAP legitimacy and the rise of militarist forces.

But we must be clear about one thing: it will not provide magic solutions.

As UN peacekeeper Lieutenant-General Emmanuel A Erskine has pointed out: "Peacekeeping missions do not by themselves resolve problems, but

they help reduce tension and stabilise their area of operation, providing an environment conducive to a satisfactory resolution through governmental, diplomatic and political machinery."

Erskine should know what he is talking about: a Ghanaian, he spent 12 years in UN peacekeeping missions in the Middle East, including a three-year stint in one of the most difficult UN peace briefs — Lebanon — from 1978 to 1981.

The implication of what he says is that a political solution is necessary for long lasting peace; and whatever respite peace structures attain should be seized to achieve peace through political means.

Three main types of peace groupings have been suggested by those exploring the possibility of long lasting peace:

- A National Peacekeeping Force.
- Peace Marshals.
- The Peace Corps.

National Peacekeeping Force

Supporters of a National Peacekeeping Force (NPF) point out that no security formation is capable of single-handedly playing the role of peacekeeper.

At the same time, the international community will not send a peacekeeping force to SA. At best, it will expand on existing monitoring efforts.

The thinking behind an NPF comes from the notion of a "third force" in the Napoleonic sense — a force between the military and the police. Proponents of such a force suggest that it be made up of signatories to the National Peace Accord. This means including the SADF, SAP, MK, APLA, the KwaZulu Police, as well as the security forces in the bantustans.

It is envisaged that an NPF will fall under control of the Transitional Executive Authority (TEC), which will establish a committee to provide command and control.

The committee will be chaired by an international personality, and its commander will be appointed by the United Nations in consultation with the TEC. The command element will have equal representation from each of the military functions.

The South African NPF is expected to be 5 000 strong, and its members will be trained by the international community. (The UN Interim Force in Lebanon was five battalions, each of about 600 soldiers. The total strength, taking into account logistics support staff, was 4 000.)

The establishment of such a force will have distinct advantages in a future South Africa. It could serve as the nucleus of a para-military formation along the lines of the National Guards in the US or the French gendarmerie.

It would also help in mopping up disaffected elements within the SADF and MK.

Critics of the proposal say it may be difficult to bring such a force together within six months, but agree that the closest alternative to such a peacekeeping force is the SAP's Internal Stability Unit. And while it may have the infrastructure, the nature of ISU training and its methods leave a lot to be desired.

Peace Marshals

A further suggestion gaining support is that of Peace Marshals. The popularity of this force is due to its successful handling of crowd control under trying circumstances.

The ANC in particular has been developing a marshal component to its organisation. It has proven a useful vehicle for channelling the energies of young people wanting to play a constructive role during the process of change.

We need to build a broad Peace Corps within our townships and places of work. Should we not have township based, non-partisan SDUs funded and trained by a future democratic state? I am thinking of paid or voluntary services, let us say 500 people from a township like Sebokeng doing a two-year stint assisting with crime control, patrolling, clean-up campaigns and general service to their townships.

— Chris Hani, several days before his assassination

Marshals usually take their duties very seriously, wear their uniforms with dignity, and follow a well-defined line of command. The demise of the self-defence units, due to their abuse by certain elements in certain areas, strengthened the profile of the marshals.

The phenomenon, however, is not restricted to the ANC. The IFP has also been developing its own marshals. ANC and IFP marshals are currently undergoing brief training under the auspices of the Wits/Vaal Peace Secretariat. Crowd control, mediation, conflict-resolution, unarmed combat training and crowd psychology is included in their training. The SAP has been making inputs into this training.

Peace Corps

The term Peace Corps shot to prominence with the call made by Chris Hani just before his death. It was meant to be based on a combination of the existing SDUs, peace marshals and the envisaged community police playing some kind of socio-developmental role.

The youth brigades, which FW De Klerk has been calling for, are meant to play a developmental role and are meant to address the problem of growing youth unemployment.

It is important to distin-

guish the peace corps from military or police roles and structures, and to ensure they focus on development programmes alone.

The problem with involving police or para-military structures in developmental programmes is that it increases the tendency for such structures to think they can intervene in all aspects of society — creating an interventionist/coup mentality.

There are numerous international experiences of production corps or brigades of a non-military nature. One of the most successful was the Botswana Brigades, which adopted the Education with Production system pioneered in Zimbabwe.

Non-military national service is one of the forms which such Peace Corps could take. While they could be organised along military lines — such as brigades — they would not have military roles to play. To develop esprit de corps and discipline, aspects such as non-military uniforms, first aid and physical education could be included. Among its areas of work would be:

- Repairing schools
- Building parks
- Health care
- Assistance to the disabled and elderly
- Child care

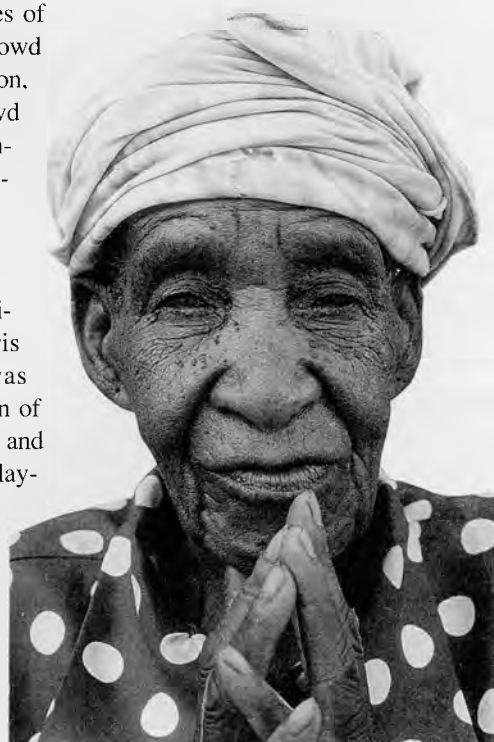
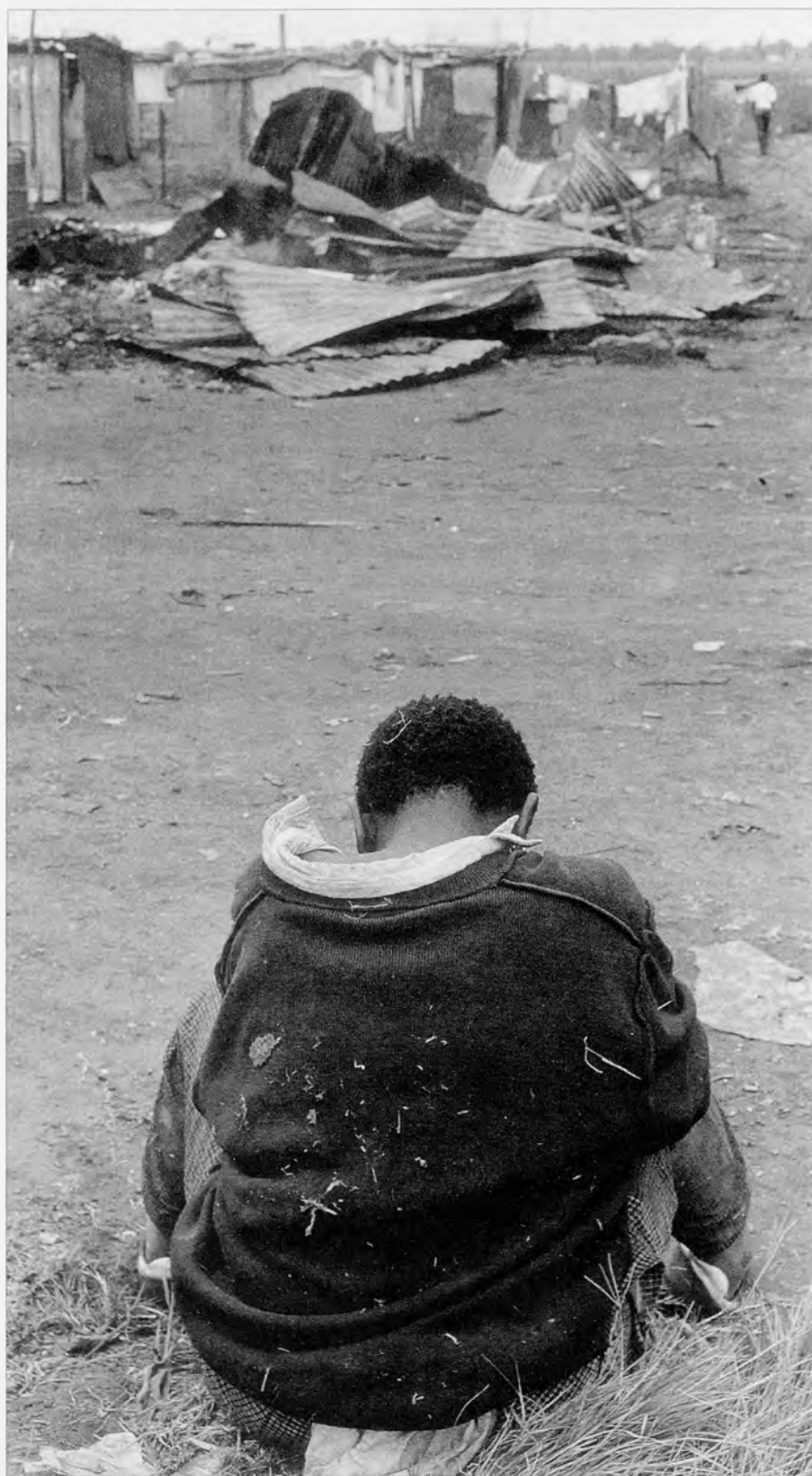


PHOTO: GILL DE VLEIG

■ A GOOD-LOOKING CORPS: Peace workers could assist the elderly



■ DOWN BUT NOT OUT: Peace forces could get youth off the streets

- Teaching
- Literacy education
- Housing construction
- Conservation of natural resources
- Disaster relief
- Agriculture.

Proponents of the Peace Corps suggest that it could become, as the ANC said in its January 8 statement, "a cement which binds a nation at peace with itself". This is similar to the work

of the Nigerian Youth Service Corps, created after the bloody Nigerian civil war.

The idea of a Peace Corps is also currently being revived in the US. According to the proposal, young people will receive educational assistance in the form of scholarships — in exchange for a year or two of community service.

Discussion within the democratic movement about the Peace Corps has

come to the following areas of agreement:

- That it be community (as opposed to party political) based.
- That it operate on a non-partisan basis.

A role is envisaged for structures such as MK and the SAP in the training of the Peace Corps. Proponents suggest that army barracks and disused buildings (such as white schools which have been shut down), could be used for their training and future operations.

It is hoped that the training will be linked to institutions such as technikons, so Peace Corps members can continue with higher levels of education.

Proponents of the peace marshals also have their eye on some kind of community police service emerging from this experience. This will make a lot of sense given that the SAP has a very militaristic look, with a top-heavy command structure, and operates in a quasi-military manner. It has long been regarded as a power-base for the right-wing.

ANC policy on policing encourages a reorientation towards a community role where the police "will work with the community to decide what the policing needs of the community are."

One can envisage a situation where detachments of the current police force gravitate towards the National Peacekeeping Force while others combine with the marshals to become more community-oriented — with the symbolic truncheon as their only weapon.

Vital for development

The setting up of the above structures will be vital for the future development of our country.

Those who dare reduce the importance of such initiatives because of the costs involved should bear in mind the words of Lt Gen Erskine: "The financing of a peacekeeping mission is a considerable burden because peacekeeping is, quite simply, very expensive."

"However, it is much less expensive than war and all the destruction of both human and material resources that it causes". ■

● Omar is a member of the Military Research Group (MRG) and works in the Communication Division of Technikon RSA



YOUTH POLITICS: DISPELLING THE MYTHS

Heroes or villains: Youth politics in the 1980s by Jeremy Seekings. Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1993.

Reviewed by

KERRY CULLINAN

Heroes or villains attempts the impossible: to sum up Charterist youth politics in the 1980s in 101 pages. Given these space limitations, the book's most important contribution is probably to define who "the youth" were.

"Youth in South Africa is a political rather than a sociological or demographic construct," says Seekings. He backs Case researcher Dave Everatt's assertion that "South Africa has white teenagers, but black youth".

Seekings rejects the stereotyping of black youth as either militant, politically committed, liberatory heroes or as undisciplined, destructive and violent villains.

Both are "oversimplifications". The category of youth "was an amalgam of many different types of young people, with a wide range of goals and motivations".

Generally, "youth" is used to describe people who behave in a particular way, rather than in sociological or demographic terms.

Seekings questions assumptions made by Colin Bundy and Mark Swilling that politically active youth — particularly those who engaged in violent protest — were generally unemployed.

There was little evidence of an "unambiguous qualitative difference" between the contribution of unemployed and employed/ student youth to youth activities, argues Seekings.

"More importantly, evidence from

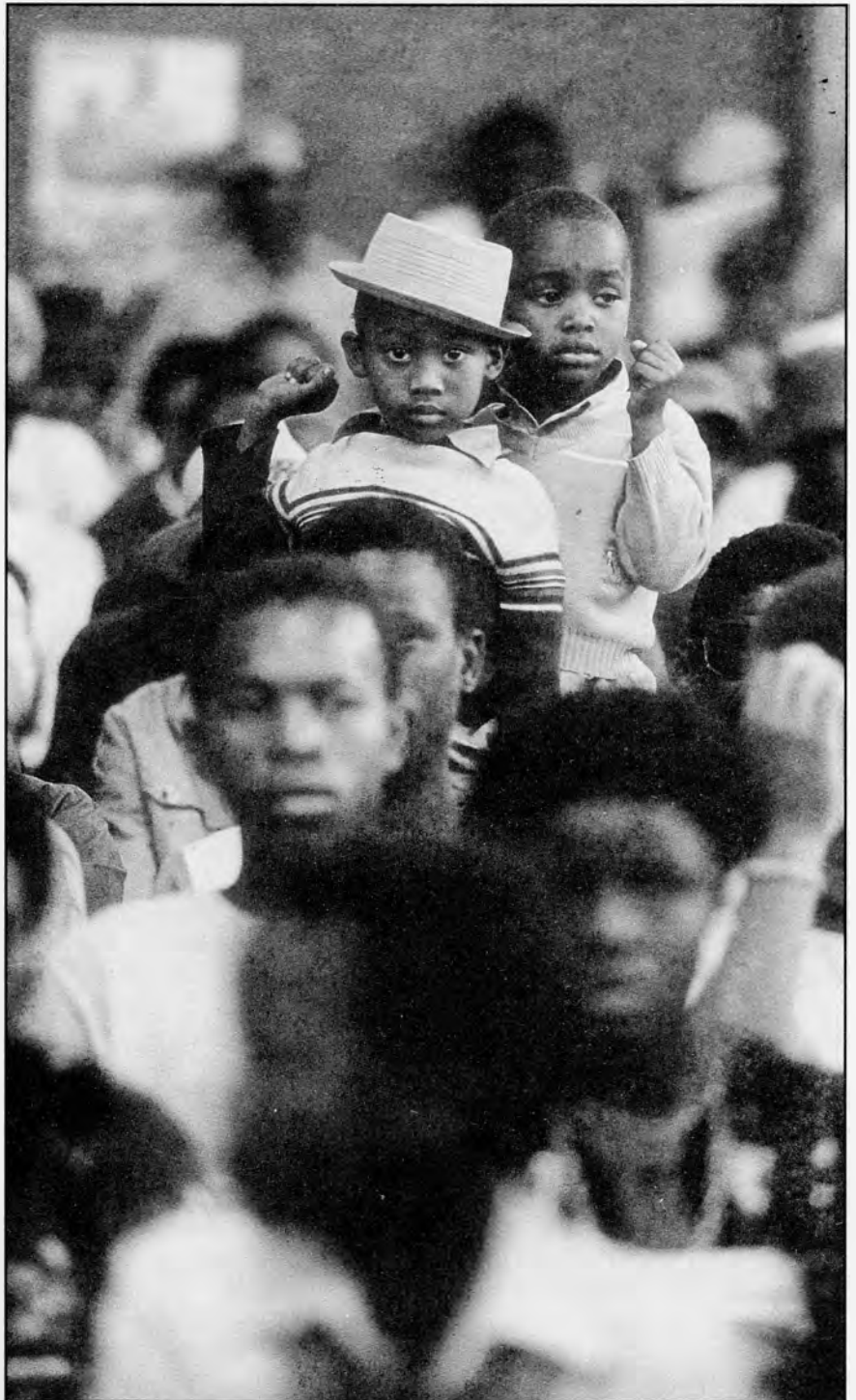


PHOTO: PAUL WEINBERG (SOUTHLIGHT)

■ **TINY TROTS?: 'Youth' tends to be a political construct rather than a sociological one**

As youth protest became more violent, young women were marginalised and politics became a male activity

townships such as Duduza indicates that a range of employed and unemployed people, as well as students, participated in the kinds of actions generally attributed to the youth."

This assertion is borne out by that fact that the Congress of SA Students (Cosas) was one of the most active resistance organisations in the early 1980s.

However, the one characteristic youth could be said to share from the mid-1980s was their gender. *Heroes or villains* points out that, as protest became more violent and dangerous, young women were marginalised and politics became a male activity.

Organising the youth

Aside from defining who the youth of the 1980s were, Seekings traces the development of youth organisation in this period. However, he cannot do more than sketch an outline in the limited space.

This sketchiness is very frustrating at times. For example, Seekings speaks time and again of tensions and divisions within the youth. However, his most detailed explanation of "ideological disputes" is as follows:

"The most widespread dispute involved factions based around 'Freeway House' and the acting UDF leadership respectively. The 'Freeway House' group (named after the building in Johannesburg which housed several service organisations with extensive resources) came to adopt a left critique of the UDF leadership, and were labelled as 'ultra-leftists' by their rivals. It is unclear, however, to what extent the ideological character of the conflict was its cause, or developed subsequent to division."

This account confuses rather than clarifies, begging questions such as: What was this "leftist critique"? Who were the acting UDF leadership? Seekings also fails to mention that these "ideological disputes" were not restricted to the youth, but wracked the entire UDF.

There was a theoretical basis to these "ideological disputes", which raged through the UDF, and not just in the youth movement. A key debate at the time was whether "racial capitalism" or "colonialism of a special type" should be used to describe the South African situation. In addition, there were

allegations that a "cabal" was operating within the UDF, controlling resources and directing the front through secret caucuses.

Crucial conflicts

These conflicts were key to youth politics. When the SA Youth Congress (Sayco) was launched in 1987, it played a leading role — under its president, Peter Mokaba — in taking on the cabal. This earned it the everlasting wrath of some UDF leaders, who today hold key positions in the ANC.

Another area that begs more accurate definition is Seekings' account of Sayco's transformation into the ANC Youth League (ANCYL). He gives the impression that bureaucracy was the main stumbling block plaguing the transformation. Had he dug deep enough, Seekings would have been able to record that there was significant resistance to this transformation, particularly from some Youth Section members who argued that Sayco should remain autonomous of any political party.

At the time, these Youth Section members were seen to be trying to safeguard their positions and negating the fact that the ANC was the natural home of most Sayco members.

In retrospect, however, this position holds great merit. Sayco's transformation into the ANCYL was painfully slow, regulated and unimaginative, destroying rather than building organisation. As Seekings notes, "the membership of the Eastern Cape [of the ANCYL] was one-tenth of that claimed by the Sayco region in 1987".

The Youth League has also been hamstrung by the fact that the ANC controls its purse strings, and it has had to be cautious that its programmes do not contradict those of its mother body.

And once the ANC is in — or sharing — power, it is likely that the ANCYL will once again have to under-

go soul searching to decide whether to become the "youth wing" of the ruling party, or an autonomous political force.

Too sensitive

Seekings concedes that "huge gaps remain both within available literature [on youth in the 1980s] and in this book". In addition, he says, researchers generally have no personal experience of the subject, and many aspects of youth politics were considered "too 'sensitive' to be written about in a highly polarised political context".

The lack of available information perhaps explains why Seekings draws so heavily on the experiences of youth in places like Duduza, Tumahole, Kagiso, Leandra and Lamontville — areas that he or other researchers have studied.

But it is unfortunate that he did not look at a single youth formation in the Northern Transvaal. This region was crucial to the development of Sayco. It was also very strategic, bordering on Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. By Sayco's April 1990 congress, the Northern Transvaal region had the most local branches.

This lack of information cannot, however, excuse inaccuracies. For example, Seekings maintains that the only coloured areas on the Reef that had youth congresses were Bosmont and Reiger Park. However, the strongest "coloured" congresses were in Riverlea and Eldorado Park. Bosmont was simply part of the Westbury-Bosmont-Newclare youth congress (Webco).

In addition, a shortage of information cannot excuse Seekings' tendency to describe youth activists by their titles instead of names — such as "the president of the East London Youth Organisation"; "Sayco's new publicity secretary". By failing to name key youth leaders, Seekings is reinforcing the marginalisation of youth.

Seekings does, however, point out that the book "began life as a report" commissioned by Case and the Joint Enrichment Project (JEP), following a national conference in 1991 on "marginalised youth".

As an extended report, *Heroes or villains* is an important appetizer. But the main course, containing the full history of youth struggles in the 1980s, has yet to be written. ■

Reconstruct

A Work in Progress supplement

Issue no.11

JULY 1993

Forums could broaden democracy



PIC: KERRY CULLINAN

■ **COORDINATION NEEDED:** In Dobsonville (above) shackdwellers have electricity but no proper houses or water. Forums need to coordinate development to be effective

IN THE PAST YEAR, FIVE national forums have been established in an attempt to negotiate an end to crises in the economy, housing, electricity, local government and drought relief. A sixth forum, to deal with education, is in the process of being set up.

These forums reflect both the National Party's failure to rule and the multi-party negotiations' failure to deliver solutions.

While the establishment of these forums was a way of telling the national negotiators "we can't wait for you", forum decisions are still subordinate to decisions reached at the multiparty negotiations.

As the ANC's Billy Cobbett says: "Whatever happens at the talks will impact on the forums — for example the decision on the boundaries, powers and functions of regions will impact fundamentally on their work."

But once democratic elections have taken place and an interim government of national unity is in place, will the forums simply vanish?

Devan Pillay and Pete Richer (pg 2) argue that the forums must remain in place under a democratic government, as the state and political parties alone cannot make

decisions on developmental issues. They call for a socio-economic council (SEC) to be set up to coordinate the forums in a democratic SA.

Political parties may not take too kindly to this suggestion, as they may see it as an attempt to undermine their power. But Cobbett, speaking in his individual capacity, says an SEC sounds like a good idea: "While political parties would have to leave the forums, as they would be in government, the remaining players could provide useful inputs into the policy-making process. But the forums would not be statutory bodies."

In a country as polarised as ours, broad expert forums to advise government on issues of national concern should be welcomed. Not only would these forums provide valuable advice, but their presence could act as a check on politicians seeking to use certain issues — such as housing — to win votes.

Recent surveys show a growing number of South Africans do not support any party. Giving civil society — like the civics, unions and NGOs — a bigger say could help to draw in the disillusioned and forge a truly democratic country. ■

FOCUS ON NATIONAL FORUMS

*Local
could be
lekker*
4

*NELF
lights
the way*
7

*Slumlord
Toise
falls*
10

CONTRIBUTIONS

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AS SOUTH AFRICA ENTERS THE final lap to democracy, attention is increasingly being focused on how policy-making can be democratically structured.

Over the past few months, various broad forums have been set up to deal with critical developmental issues — such as the economy (National Economic Forum), housing (National Housing Forum), electricity provision (National Electrification Forum), local government (Local Government Negotiating Forum) and peace.

These forums — where organisations representing a wide spectrum of different interests have come together to develop policy — point to a major role for organs of civil society in the reconstruction of the country.

They are also an explicit recognition that the state and political parties alone cannot make decisions on developmental issues.

But is this a temporary phenomenon for the transition, or can it be structured into a permanent feature of a democratic SA?

The case for a council

It is in this context that a case for a socio-economic council (SEC) is made. An SEC would coordinate all these forums and play a major role in formulating development policy.

Such a council would also ensure that organs of civil society play a decisive role, alongside the state and capital, in shaping a growth and development path for the country.

Grassroots participation in decision-making would be increased and the concentration of power in the hands of a few bureaucrats in government would be limited.

An SEC would also bring coherence to the current process, where the interrelated nature of the various forums is explicitly recognised.

The issues that would fall within the ambit of an SEC are already being discussed in existing forums, or in forums that may soon be established.

These include macro-economic policy (growth, investment, trade, etc), human resource policy (education, training, job creation), labour market policy (workers' rights, wages etc) and social security policy (health, welfare, housing).

Coordination for forums

National forums have mushroomed in the past year, but a socio-economic council is needed to bring them together, argue **DEVAN PILLAY** and **PETE RICHER**

The formation of an SEC would also overcome three emerging dangers:

- That the government can “pick and choose” from a variety of contradictory proposals emanating from different forums, thus devaluing their status and effectiveness.

- That unions and community organisations are being strained by the proliferation of forums (including committees on the restructuring of various industries), and this is limiting their ability to adequately represent their constituencies.

- That a few major stakeholders involved in all the forums make up a disguised coordinating core, which is able to manipulate policy.

An SEC will make explicit who the dominant groups are, where lines of accountability lead, and what the mechanisms are to influence the policy-making process.

Structure of an SEC

The recent Old Mutual/Nedcor Professional Economic Panel report, *Growing Together*, suggested how an SEC could be structured.

What follows is a slight variation of that proposal, in that it gives capital and labour a primary role in the SEC.

Capital and labour constitute the heart of modern, market-based societies.

It is generally accepted in SA that market realities have to be acknowledged. This means that, at least in the medium term, an “accord” between labour and capital has to be reached to achieve greater levels of economic growth and the effective redistribution of wealth.

Thus labour and capital, alongside the state, will be the most power-

fully organised sectors for some time to come.

Businessmen and trade unionists already play major roles in all the forums formed thus far. They are the decisive players in the National Economic Forum, which deals with macro-economic issues that, to a large extent, other issues feed into.

It therefore makes sense for the NEF to grow into the core of a SEC, which would gradually unite all the existing forums and policy advisory bodies.

Such a council would ultimately be accountable to a democratic parliament, while the role of the government of the day is limited to the implementation of the policies adopted by parliament.

Power and democracy

There is, however, the danger of a narrow corporatism that excludes other interests in society. This is particularly dangerous where the organisations of capital and labour do not represent the majority of their potential constituencies, and these constituencies do not comprise the bulk of the population.

In SA, only 40-60% of the economically active population are in formal employment. At most, according to Wits sociologist Eddie Webster, 40% of this is organised.

The national employer bodies — such as the SA Chamber of Business (Sacob) and the SA Coordinating Council on Labour Affairs (Saccola) — also do not have the support of their entire potential constituency.

The power of capital and labour has to be balanced by considerations of democracy, where all major sectors of society are involved in the policy-making process.



■ **HOLISTIC APPROACH:** A socio-economic council could deal with the needs of South African households in a more integrated way

However, because other sectors are much less organised than capital and labour and the council needs to be as efficient as possible, great care has to be taken when defining how these sectors are incorporated into the council.

The core of the SEC could consist of national organisations representing capital and labour. Other producers and consumers (eg. farmers, professionals), as well as historically disadvantaged groups (eg. women, youth), could make up the rest of the SEC.

The mere existence of an SEC would encourage the organisation of under-organised sectors. Each sector could also be represented by one over-

arching organisation, not a proliferation of national organisations. This would encourage interest groups within sectors to unite.

Role of the state

Such a council would have to be independent from the government of the day, as governments are always weighted in favour of some interests rather than others. In most cases, these are the interests of powerful elites.

But the SEC should eventually be accountable to an interim/democratic parliament, which represents the full spectrum of political society.

Policy proposals could either come from parliament and be discussed in the SEC, or vice versa.

An SEC lends itself to a transparent process of policy formulation, as its negotiating forum basis requires that organisations constantly seek mandates from their various constituencies. Transparency could be enhanced by ensuring that the deliberations of the council are subject to public scrutiny through media reporting and open sessions.

Government representatives could attend the SEC as observers to ensure that policies to be implemented are fully understood and are in harmony with national goals set out by government.

This proposed structure differs markedly from those in other countries. In most countries, SECs act as advisory bodies to the government, which can either accept or reject their proposals. This ultimately reduces the council to a government body, and not the organised expression of civil society.

However, a future interim/democratic government is likely to resist power being dispersed among such a range of interests.

Exciting prospect

The mere existence of a rich variety of organs of civil society is of tremendous importance to building a democratic country.

These organisations represent the will of the people at grassroots level. This source of power can either be collapsed into the formal institutions of government, or developed as a crucial plank in the construction of a real participatory democracy, where the people do much more than vote for politicians once every five years.

An SEC can provide a forum where the people — in the vast array of organisations that constitute civil society — can make their voices heard on issues that affect their daily lives.

It also has the potential to check government's abuse of power and the powerful influence of international capital and local elites, who currently dominate policy-making.

● *Pillay coordinates the Social Policy Programme at the University of Durban-Westville and Richer is general manager of Umanyano Publications*

Delport softens stand on local elections

DESPITE A NUMBER OF SETBACKS, the Local Government Negotiation Forum (LGNF) may still be able to agree on transitional local structures within the next few weeks.

This follows local government minister Tertius Delport's recent announcement — at the Institute for Town Clerks' (ITC) congress — that municipal elections set down for October 1994 were likely to be postponed to allow for further negotiations about the transitional structures.

By KERRY CULLINAN

Six weeks earlier, Delport had told parliament that local elections should take place soon. He implicitly rejected Sanco's proposal that existing councils be replaced by nominated interim councils.

This led to a crisis within the LGNF, with Sanco — which heads the forum's non-statutory side — accusing Delport of undermining the forum and continuing to unilaterally restructure

local government.

Lechesa Tsenoli, Sanco's vice-president and co-chair of the LGNF, warned: "Should the government refuse to move on negotiating interim appointed structures, we will be left with little option but use other methods to apply pressure on them."

Some of the methods being considered were a national rent and service boycott, withdrawing from the forum, and consumer boycotts.

Elements within Delport's own delegation to the LGNF — the statutory side — were also unhappy with his initial speech. The Major Cities, which is part of organised local government, stated that it had no principled objections to nominated interim structures (See block).

Had Delport insisted on elected structures, the forum may have collapsed or been forced to restructure. At present, the LGNF is a two-sided table. The two delegations — statutory and non-statutory — are expected to reach consensus and present single proposals to the forum.

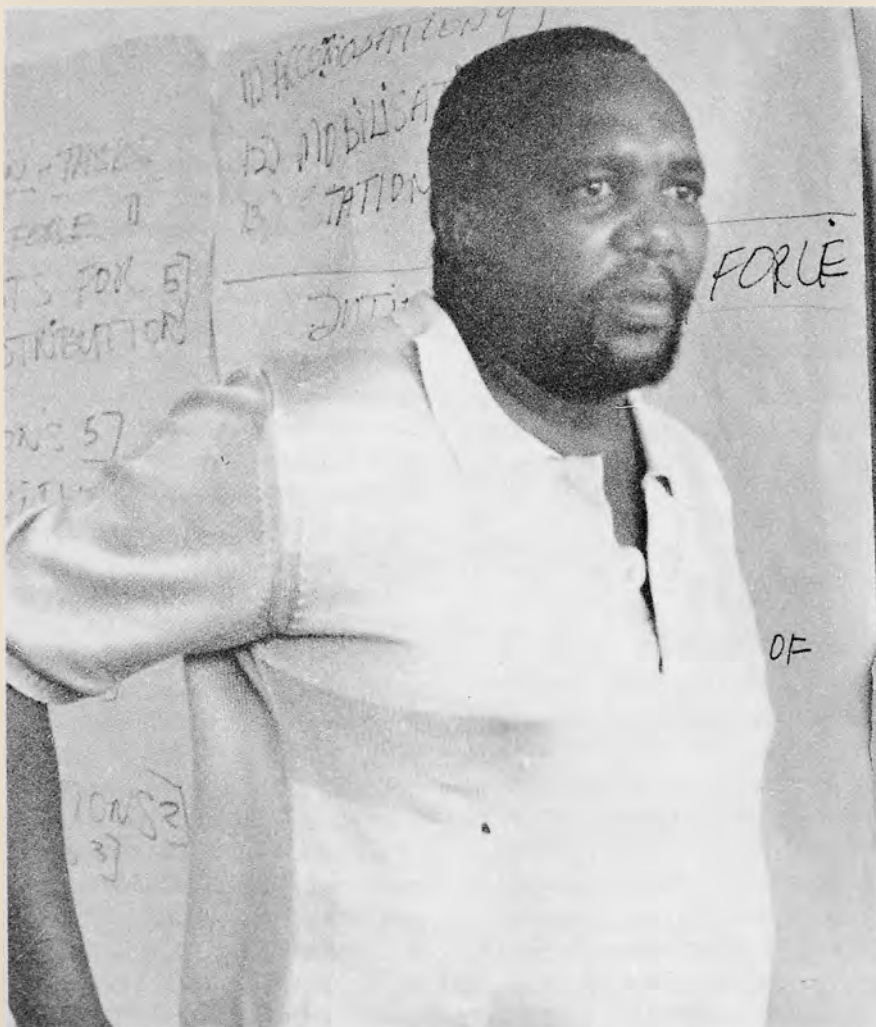
Although Delport still insists that there is "no reason why local government elections cannot be held as soon as possible", he acknowledges that appointed councils are favoured by extra-parliamentary groups and elements within organised local government.

"Maybe the solution to what should be implemented lies within local negotiations," said Delport.

Delport's recent softening towards appointed structures indicates that the statutory side will probably be able to agree on an approach to the transition — if not the transitional structures. This means it can at least respond to Sanco's proposals and actual negotiations can begin.

The statutory delegation has failed to put any proposals on the table or respond to Sanco's proposals since the LGNF's launch in March. This led to the first plenary session being postponed from 18 May to 30 June, as working group one — dealing with constitutional matters — had made little progress by May.

At very best, an agreement in principle will be reached by the end of July. This agreement could then be passed at a parliamentary session in



■ Sanco vice-president and LGNF co-chair Lechesa Tsenoli

September.

LGNF secretariat member Andrew Boraine estimates that once the interim arrangements have been agreed on and passed in parliament, they could take nine months to implement.

But while negotiating transitional measures is the main issue for the LGNF, another problem holding up the forum is its representation.

Sanco has been criticised for not representing all non-statutory interests, as it does not represent established ratepayers and residents' associations.

In addition, sources at the LGNF said tensions within Sanco had led to the sidelining of the Soweto Civic Association (SCA), which could "destabilise the forum", as the SCA represented a large constituency and its officials had a great deal of skills and experience in local government negotiations.

The exclusion of political parties has also been criticised as a factor that undermines the LGNF's effectiveness. But the Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber recently voted to invite political parties to join it. The LGNF could well take its cue from the chamber.

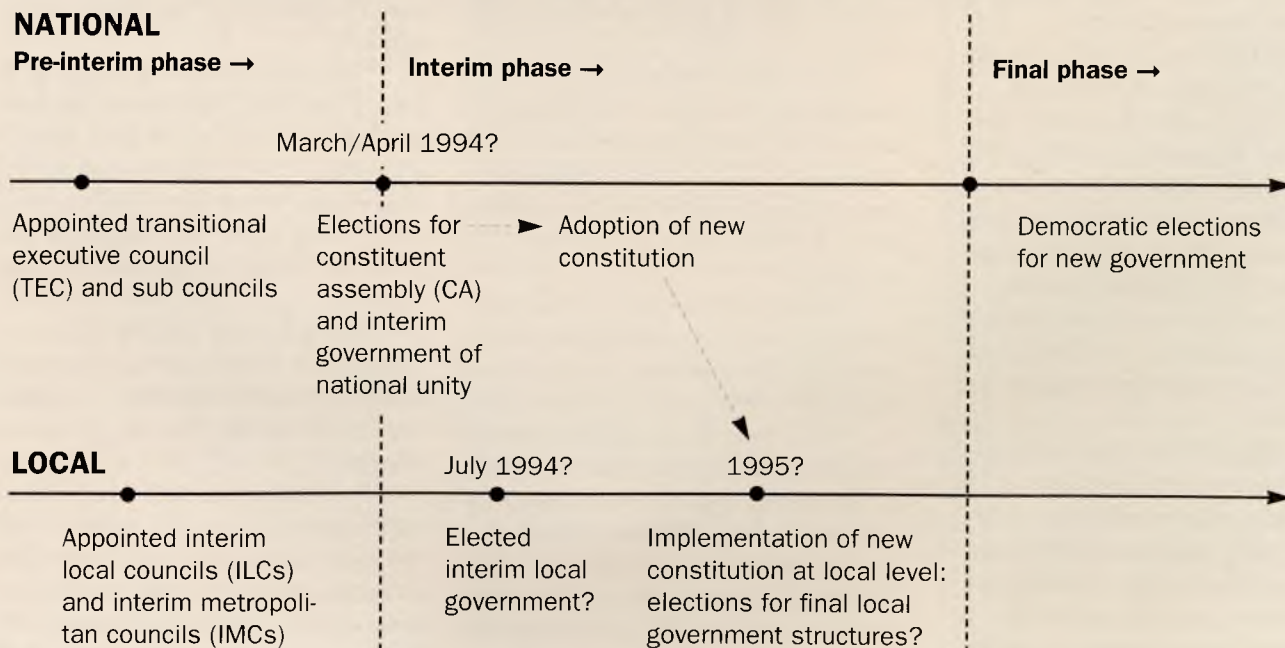
However Tsenoli said the question of membership was being discussed and should not hold up the forum. ■

Cities' way forward

The Major Cities, which is an important component of organised local government, recently formulated its own vision of the way forward:

- It has no principled objection to nominated local councils for the pre-interim (pre-election) phase, provided they have a limited lifespan that ends in elections. Such an election should happen within a set period after national elections.
- Such interim structures should be nominated by local negotiating forums, not imposed by regional or national forums. This could mean that legislation guiding the transition of local government would make it compulsory for all areas to establish negotiating forums.
- Local and metropolitan transitional executive councils (LTECs and MTECs), made up of 50% statutory and 50% non-statutory reps, should be set up. The purpose of these would be to share political responsibility for providing and financing services.
- It is essential that reps chosen to be on the MTECs and LTECs are selected for their experience of local government, not simply because of party political affiliations.
- Existing management committees should be retained to ensure continuity and stability in the transitional period.
- It is not in the interests of local government for all existing councillors to be removed (as demanded by Sanco) and replaced by politicians. Many councillors are independents, yet have a wealth of experience in local government.
- In smaller towns, existing councillors could be incorporated into interim structures. Metropolitan areas are more complicated, as it would be difficult to accommodate all existing councillors. Interim measures must, therefore, differentiate between different communities.
- There should be strong, metropolitan government, either structured as two tiers or as a mega-city.

Sanco's proposal for transition



NHF: It takes time – but we're getting there

Although progress in the National Housing Forum is slow, it is steady.

KERRY CULLINAN

speaks to the ANC and Sanco about how they see the forum

The NHF in a nutshell

The NHF was launched in August 1992 (See Reconstruct 8).

AIM: To negotiate a workable future direction for housing.

IMMEDIATE ISSUES OF CONCERN

■ Joint administration of housing budget with the government

■ Negotiating joint control over R326-million the government has set aside for upgrading hostels

■ Opposing the sale of state land

■ Opposing the unilateral government restructuring of the housing sector.

PARTICIPANTS: ANC, Azapo, Association of Mortgage Lenders, Cosatu, Construction Consortium, DBSA, IDT, Inkatha, Kagiso Trust, Life Offices Association, Material Manufacture and Supply Sector, PAC, SA Coordinating Committee on Labour Affairs (Saccola), SA Housing Trust, Sanco and Urban Foundation.

STRUCTURE: A plenary, which meets four times a year, and co-ordinating committee consisting of one representative per organisation meets regularly and oversees the six working groups.

THE NATIONAL HOUSING FORUM (NHF) is one of the most representative forums established so far. It is for this reason that the government has been forced to engage with it — to the extent that it has agreed to let the NHF in on the allocation of part of this year's housing budget.

Initially, the government was part of the forum. But it withdrew after accusing participants of trying to introduce "an interim government by stealth".

"The only word I object to is 'stealth'," says Billy Cobbett, the ANC's representative to the forum.

"The government has no legitimacy to implement policy. Forums have been set up to counter unilateral restructuring and to negotiate a more saleable product. In effect, they do amount to joint control."

Although the government is legally entitled to make the final decision on housing matters, Cobbett believes it would battle to disagree with the NHF because of the extent of organisations represented on the forum.

Getting involved

Cobbett says the ANC has had no problems in getting fully involved in the NHF.

"All decisions are taken in the coordinating committee. This means that even if the ANC is not represented in a working group, it cannot be bound to that working group's policies as these have to go through the coordinating committee."

Sanco's representative to the NHF, Lechesa Tsenoli, says his organisation is constantly trying to improve its involvement.

"I cannot say we are fully satisfied with our input into the NHF, especially as far as involving all our regions is concerned," he says. "We are continuing to look at maximising our participation. Recently, we developed a draft housing policy document which is being discussed by our regions. This will make

up the framework for our input into the NHF."

Both Cobbett and Tsenoli said progress, while slow, had been sufficient.

"Given the constraints and the complexities of housing, sufficient progress has been made. But one can never be satisfied, as no delivery has taken place yet," said Cobbett.

No credible structures

Tsenoli pointed out that the NHF's progress was also being hampered by outside factors, such as the "absence of credible local government structures".

He added the forum was trying to avoid repeating the government's ad hoc approach by "developing an appropriate structure".

To do so, the NHF is "consulting widely around the models we have drawn up for housing", said Cobbett.

"These models will have far-reaching macro-economic consequences over time. Housing is a long-term process. You can't just stop a housing project after a few months. So it is important for the implications of these models on all sectors to be considered."

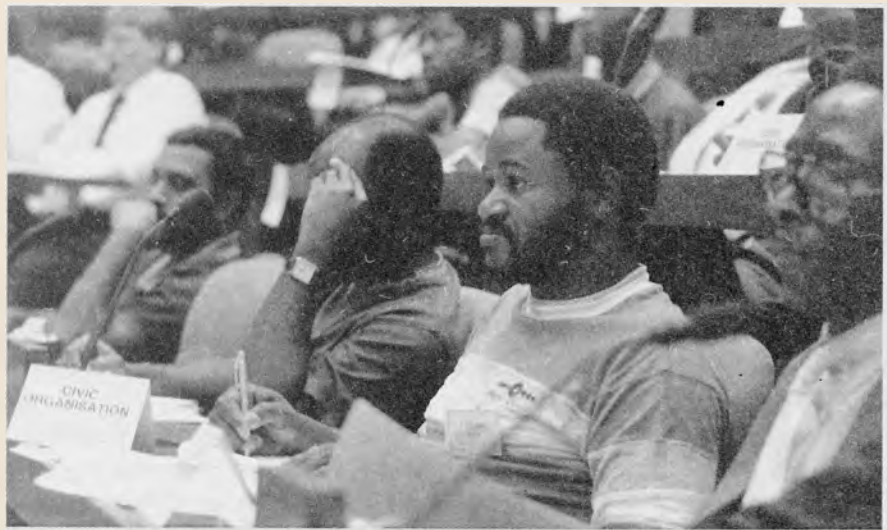
Tsenoli added that the NHF had only completed the first phase: that of research.

"The second phase has to define the route of the NHF. There is anxiety about the lack of policies. While there is acceptance by the government of the importance of the NHF, they say they want details about how the forum proposes the housing budget should be allocated."

This was easier said than done, said Tsenoli, as "there are no acceptable financial models, either from the state or the private sector, that the forum can draw on".

As a result, the NHF had to "draw up proposals in a policy vacuum". This obviously affected the speed with which an acceptable model could be agreed on both within the NHF and between the NHF and the government. ■

NELF: Making life a little brighter?



PHOTOGRAPH BY KERRY CULINAN

■ **SWITCHED ON:** Civic delegates at NELF's launch

THE NATIONAL ELECTRIFICATION Forum (NELF) was finally launched on 14 May, eight months after the first attempt to get it going was abandoned due to disagreements.

The launch was remarkably tension-free. Delegates from government to ANC officials agreed on NELF's overall aim (see box). They also agreed on the need for community involvement in electrification and for the NELF proceedings to be transparent.

ANC delegate Billy Cobbett said he was optimistic about the NELF as "all the major players are involved and there is general commitment to a common vision of restructuring the electricity industry, in close coordination with the Local Government Negotiation Forum (LGNF)."

In addition, said Cobbett, extra-parliamentary groups have now been appointed on to the Electricity Council (EC), which governs Eskom. "There is an overlap between NELF and the EC, with six people serving on both. In effect, there is a form of joint control in the council. And NELF will work very closely with the council to achieve its objectives."

NELF plenary chairperson Johan Kruger said the forum had to be committed to "implementing agreements and transparency, in terms of information and process". New tariffs had to be affordable, and rural communities and women had to be drawn into NELF.

"Electricity can improve education, open up entrepreneurial opportunities, increase the quality of people's

lives and ensure the economic development of our country," said Kruger.

NELF's success will be judged by the extent to which electricity is spread from the approximately 2,4-million consumers at present to the 30-million others still in the dark.

Most whites have electricity, while only 15-20% of black South Africans have electricity in their homes.

NELF says it is committed to "integrated energy planning", but bringing order and unity to the electri-

fication industry is a formidable task. At present, Eskom supplies electricity to some 450 bodies — usually municipalities — who then distribute it to consumers and determine rates.

A number of delegates at the NELF launch also emphasised that the forum could help resolve conflicts around power at local and regional levels.

Ironing out conflicts

If the NELF is to play a role in ironing out conflicts, one of its first tasks will have to be ensuring that Eskom — rather than the black local authorities (BLAs) — take over supplying electricity to townships. This has been a central demand from a number of civic associations in their negotiations with local authorities. BLAs, say the civics, lack the capacity to provide a decent service to consumers.

This was also made clear during an ANC conference on electricity held in February last year, when the NELF was first mooted. In motivating for such a forum, Cobbett pointed out: "The severe structural shortages of personnel, skills and finance in the BLAs is normally the major reason for the absolute chaos that characterises their administration and, in particular, meter-reading, billing and collection".

By Eskom becoming the direct supplier, service and tariffs would be standardised. Revenue from electricity would also go directly to Eskom, rather than into the coffers of municipalities (who often use this money to cover expenses such as salaries). Eskom could then use this revenue to extend the electricity network. ■

NELF in a nutshell

AIM: To develop and implement "a strategy that will lead to general access to affordable electricity for the population as rapidly as possible".

PARTICIPANTS: The ANC, Association of Municipal Electricity Undertakings (AMEU), Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Eskom, National Union of Metalworkers of SA (Numsa), National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), Sanco, United Municipal Executive (UME), Chamber of Mines and the SA Chambers of Business (Sacob).

STRUCTURE: A plenary, management committee and seven working groups dealing with a regulatory framework, structure and policy; human resources; supply technology; setting up a data base; financing and tariffs; facilitating the transition of the distribution industry; end-use of energy and electricity.

The National Economic Forum

The National Economic Forum (NEF) was launched in November last year, a year after Cosatu first called for its formation as part of the protests against value-added tax (VAT).

The NEF's main aim is to negotiate the restructuring of the economy and the reconstruction of South Africa.

Its highest decision-making body is the plenary. Two working groups have also been set up to look at long and short-term economic demands. Sub-committees have been set up under these working groups, eg. on job creation and job security.

The NEF is a tripartite forum made up of representatives from government, business and labour. Business is represented by Saccola, Fabcos and Nafcoc, while labour is represented by Cosatu, Nactu and Fedsal.

Criticism has been levelled at the NEF for its narrow membership. Regional economic forums — established in the Western Cape, Border, Natal, PWV and Eastern Transvaal — have a much wider membership. In some areas, such as Border, the ANC is one of the major driving forces, rather than Cosatu.

If the NEF is to develop a relationship with these regional forums, it will have to broaden its membership. ■

The National Consultative Forum on Drought



The National Consultative Forum on Drought (NCFD) was formed in June last year at a conference called by Kagiso Trust (KT) and the Independent Development Trust (IDT).

Its main aims are to ensure that relief is provided effectively and speedily to those worst hit by drought, and to empower the rural poor.

The NCFD is chaired jointly by KT's Eric Molobi and the IDT's Wiseman Nkuhlu. It has over 60 members, including business, unions, civics, government (including homelands), welfare organisations and NGOs. The forum is directed by a steering committee. Five task forces have been set up: water supply, nutrition, employment, agriculture and long-term development.

The NCFD has gone beyond simple drought relief. It is working on models for labour intensive public works programmes in rural areas to provide employment. It is also assisting communities to set up income-generating projects, such as vegetable gar-

There is an unprecedented electrification drive in the country at present, aimed at connecting some 2,4-million homes by 1998. About a third of the responsibility lies with Eskom; the rest with local authorities.

This is exciting news, but begs the question: why now? It seems clear that electricity distributors feel the need to be seen to be delivering in order to survive the democratisation of local and national government.

In the South Western Cape, there is a comparatively high level of electrification. Only about 70 000 urban dwellings and 30% of farmworkers on electrified farms do not have access to electricity. Within the region, access is around 70-80% — far higher than the national average of 30-40%.

The energy service

There are two main components related to gaining access to energy services: adequate access to fuels like electricity, wood, coal etc. and access to appliances like stoves, heaters and lamps to use fuel effectively.

When looking at providing energy, it is necessary to consider both the fuel and the appliance.

The present electricity technology, the readyboard, comes with a light and three plug sockets. The household then has to acquire appliances and extend the power point to the appliance. Very often, the household can only afford old, inefficient appliances. This makes electricity costly and strains the suppliers and distributors.

Electricity is generally more versatile and convenient than other fuels. A recent study of a partially electrified area in the Western Cape showed that households without access to electricity used twice as much money for energy requirements than those that were electrified.

But electricity may not be the answer to all energy service requirements. A recent regional survey concluded that gas and paraffin are cheaper than electricity for cooking. In areas such as the PWV, coal — although highly polluting — is far cheaper than electricity for a number of functions.

■ IDT's Wiseman Nkuhlu

Balancing access and affordability

STEVE THOMAS and **GROVE STEYN** look at problems in electricity supply, and some of the solutions the Western Cape regional electrification forum is considering

At last count, there were 431 electricity distributors in the country — most of whom are local authorities or municipalities.

White local authorities (WLAs), who supply industry and commerce as well as homes, make a profit from electricity. However, black local authorities (BLAs), who have entirely domestic customers, usually make a loss. This loss is often paid for by “bridging finance” from the provincial administration.

Neither the WLAs or BLAs want to lose the right to distribute, as this may decrease their income and their rating, in terms of the Remuneration of Town Clerks Act. This would then mean salaries would drop.

Non-payment is also a problem. In some of Cape Town's older townships, like Langa, Gugulethu and Nyanga, up to 85% of homes with electricity are in arrears. This is generally in protest against the poor service and because households cannot afford to keep up with payments. No consistent policy to address arrears has been formulated.

Some solutions

A regional electrification forum has been established in the Western Cape to advise the electrification process. The forum has become a sub-committee of the Urban Development Commission of the Western Cape Economic Development Forum, and maintains links with the National Electrification Forum.

The two main problems identified by the forum are access to electricity and affordability.

Access

In the past, developers in the area of electricity supply controlled by the Cape Town city council have had to guarantee a certain level of consumption to cover the costs of electricity infrastructure. This involves developers putting down deposits.

This discourages building houses that are efficient in electricity consumption and has delayed the electrification of self built areas. The guarantee was, however, waived in the case of Tambo Square, a self-built area where no developer could be found to guarantee consumption levels.

In Khayelitsha, the Lingeletu West City Council (LWCC) was unable to deliver electricity, as the council was not creditworthy. The civics then asked Eskom to electrify the area. Eskom agreed, and the Cape Provincial Administration (CPA) agreed to give Eskom a licence.

Eskom has promised to electrify 60 000 households by the end of 1996, but negotiations continue on the type of delivery and whether Khayelitsha will be electrified as a joint venture with Electricite de France and East Midlands Electricity.

Affordability

There are two sides to affordability, one related to the affordability of the electricity service for the household and the other related to the financial viability of the supplier.

Energy services cost households large portions of their income. This portion increases as the income of the household decreases. Small users could qualify for lower tariffs and eas-

ier payments methods (eg small weekly payments), as well as access to more efficient appliances.

Affordability in terms of access to efficient appliances and house wiring could also be paid for through the tariff. Such an arrangement has been agreed to in principle by Eskom in relation to Khayelitsha.

Much thought is also going into installing a supply limited to providing enough power for lights and television. The tariff for such a load-limited supply could be seen as a “lifeline”. The first 100 or so units a month could be very cheap. This system would make electricity more affordable to more people, as well as being open to upgrading.

In the process of electrifying Khayelitsha, emphasis is being placed on maximising the employment potential of the R150-million project. Most of the work is going out to tender among residents, who are being trained in tendering procedures and other skills necessary for the electrification process. Responsibility for bulk supply of materials for electrification and other services could be passed on to residents.

The financial viability of suppliers is also important to protect consumers from large tariff increases in future, and to ensure they will be able to service consumers and extend the process in future.

Conclusion

In the present development vacuum, electrification is proceeding in isolation from other service needs.

Until there is a development policy in place which could maximise the benefits of electricity, the national electrification programme will have to be based on a balance between customer and supplier affordability.

New customers will have to be connected at low cost and their tariffs will have to be cost effective. A special supply package with lifeline rates will be required. ■

● *The authors are policy researchers at the Energy for Development Research Centre at UCT, and members of the Development Action Group*



■ **SHATTERED AMBITIONS:** Christopher Toise holed up in the local school before his flight from Browns Farm

PIC: FANIE JAS

The rise and fall of an ANC warlord

BROWNS FARM'S CHRISTOPHER Toise is a prominent ANC and Western Cape United Squatters' Association (Wecusa) member. His opponents are also ANC members, who say they are opposed to corruption and a lack of democracy.

Toise's rise and fall makes a compelling story. On the one hand you find Toise the praise singer, ANC leader, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) supporter, and long-time anti-apartheid campaigner. On the other, stands Toise the warlord, oppressor and exploiter.

Besieged by thousands of angry residents, Toise was forced earlier this year to seek refuge, first with the

Conflict and change in the ANC stronghold of Browns Farm has opened up a can of worms for the democratic movement, reports
CHIARA CARTER

SAP, who allegedly tortured him in the mid-80s, and then with the warlord implicated in the destruction of his settlement in the mid-80s.

Toise came to the city from the Transkei in 1966. Despite not having a pass, he managed to secure a succession of jobs: first as a security guard, then a fisherman and finally a helmsman.

He lived in the single-sex quarters in Langa and was repeatedly arrested for pass offences. Later he defiantly occupied a plot opposite the then Western Cape Administration Board offices in Crossroads. The move marked the beginning of his political career.

He joined forces with Mali Hoza to head the Nyanga Bush Committee. The partnership was short-lived and Toise fled to Nyanga Extension camp, then run by Alfred Gwiliza. Toise assumed control of the camp in 1983 and the following year occupied the Portland's Cement site opposite Crossroads.

Toise was progressively aligned

and, unlike many other squatter leaders, allowed Cape Youth Congress (Cayco) activists to operate freely and harboured ANC cadres.

To the "fathers", it seemed Toise was siding with children and a period of conflict with the conservative leaders of Crossroads followed. Toise and his committee were repeatedly castigated, in particular by former Crossroads mayor Johnson Nxobongwana, for "harbouring bad elements".

There were repeated attempts on Toise's life. In May 1986, his house was destroyed by "witdoeke", allegedly accompanied by police. Portlands Cement was destroyed in the subsequent battle between "witdoeke" and comrades. Toise and his followers then moved first to Butter Square, then Mpetha Square and finally to Browns Farm.

Signs of dissent

The first signs of dissent came with a row in 1990 over upgraded sites which the authorities were providing in Browns Farm. Three groups — led by Toise, Alfred Siphika of Millers Camp and Melford Yamile of Black City — were supposed to benefit.

Toise attempted to claim the land for his followers alone, saying: "There is not enough space even for my followers. How can we divide the sites equally?" The discord extended to within Toise's committee — a divide which later was to contribute to Toise's demise.

Eventually, a compromise which suited no-one was reached. All three groups were allocated sites but those opposed to integration would not be split up. But residents' grievances lingered. Toise's opponents say they favoured integration to avoid "increasingly heavy taxes."

They allege that Toise recruited people from outside the community to occupy the non-integration sites. Some claim he sold sites. "He recruited homeless people, people from the hostels, to occupy sites on the non-integration side. He taxes them heavily," a teacher said.

Those living within Toise's ambit agree they were forced to pay dues. Some say this was for rent, others that it was payment for the upgrade, still others that it was to pay Toise and his committee's salaries.

Dealing with squatter lords

According to the Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town is the fastest growing metropolitan area in the country, with about 7 000 new arrivals each week. Most migrants settle in informal settlements.

While most of these areas owe allegiance to the ANC, power is wielded by the squatter lords who are locked into rivalry with the civics.

Wecusa's roots lie in the Masincedane committee set up in KTC in 1983. Youths in KTC subsequently established one of the most radical branches of the Cape Youth Congress. In 1987, the youths demanded a civic in KTC and branded the Masincedane committee "conservative". Violent clashes ensued and continued into 1988 when refugees from the youth moved to a new base, Tambo Square.

The rival organisations were called to Lusaka to discuss the tensions and Wecusa claims that it was formed as a result of this meeting. The organisation was launched in February 1989.

According to Wecusa secretary Enoch Madywabe, the organisation has branches in most major squatter areas in the Western Cape. He says the organisation promotes the development of squatter areas.

Ironically, Sanco's predecessor, the Western Cape Civic Association (WCCA), was formed by the now discredited Johnson Nxobongwana. WCCA commanded support not only in the townships but also in some squatter areas, notably Khayelitsha.

The launch of Sanco in the Western Cape was preceded by conflict between civic leaders, backed by the Hostel Dwellers Association, and Wecusa, which eventually pulled out of the unity process.

Says Madywabe: "We feel they should organise in the brick areas and leave us to organise among the squatters. We need to get together to demarcate areas for organising but it is not easy to discuss matters".

Sanco's Western Cape publicity secretary, Welcome Zenzile, says: "Our intention is to accommodate all. We still hope to be able to persuade [Wecusa] to join hands with us."

Josette Cole, in her book *Crossroads: the politics of reform and repression*, terms the system of wardmen and headmen that emerged in Crossroads as "neo-traditional" structures which draw on the experiences of people in the bantustans.

The same system, or variations, exist in most squatter camps. According to residents and field workers, the system has become the means by which a group of male leaders become affluent and powerful at the expense of the residents who live in their area.

Crucial to the system is control over resources: the allocation of land, the collection of dues and ultimately the threat of force against dissidents and rivals.

The new opportunities presented by the provision of serviced sites and upgrading hold out promise not only to communities but to the squatter lords who, by manipulating the process, can reap considerable rewards.

The stakes involved are gigantic. The IDT, for example, is presently engaged in partnership with Wecusa on a development totalling well over R30-million in Khayelitsha.

If the demise of Christopher Toise mirrors the quirks of history, it also has implications for future development in the Cape.

How should "progressive warlords" be tackled? To assume that an alliance with such leaders amounts to winning the support of the community is suicidal. To declare war on these leaders is equally suicidal, given the depth of historical divisions within a city which still recalls the witdoek terror.

As political strategists grapple with these questions, the Browns Farm community is continuing its daily life under a steering committee, rather than a single leader. The shell of Toise's house stands as a reminder of the limits of absolute power, and the twists of fate.



■ **AWAY WITH TOISE:** A Browns Farm resident urges ANC leaders to expel Toise and his cronies

Another source of conflict was a simmering row over a new school. At the end of 1989, the Squatter Community Education Project was established. Browns Farm's schools and creches fell under the Project's auspices.

The local school received funding from Kagiso Trust in 1990, but management failed to re-apply for funding. A huge row involving complex allegations of financial mismanagement ensued, alongside a bitter disagreement over creche funding. Both issues have played a central role in swinging the support of youth and women away from Toise.

A rival grouping slowly coalesced, comprising mainly of teachers who were determined to remain independent of Toise.

Meanwhile the co-ordinator of the KTC relief fund, Hugh Jagoe, pressured the DET into providing a school for the area. The DET apparently stipulated there should be a single trust to manage and administer school finances. With the promise of a subsidy came a power struggle over who should control the school.

"We occupied the brick classes while they were still being built," a teacher recalled. Meanwhile Toise engaged in a fierce recruitment programme and demanded a final say over the appointment of teachers and

enrolment of children. The teachers say the DET backed Toise, not least because the local circuit inspector is allegedly Toise's brother-in-law.

In another move which earned community disapproval, Toise allegedly opposed a move to start a soup kitchen. According to field workers, this would have threatened his wife's catering business.

By 1992, Toise was commanding a private army which included homeland men and "freelance" former MK cadres. The activities of this "army" increased the level of insecurity and fear in the community.

Final straw

The final straw appears to have been an increase in levies. Residents claim they were ordered to pay R12 to Toise — a claim confirmed by a former member of his committee. "It was a joining fee. You had to join the ANC and Wecusa, which has never even been properly launched here, or leave the area."

Toise has denied all allegations that he misused his power. Instead he says opposition to his rule came from "outside" and was linked to the feud between Wecusa and the Western Cape region of Sanco. "The attacks were carried out by outsiders. It is the civic people who want to drive Wecusa out," Toise said.

However the revolt was clearly popular, with local women playing a prominent role. Within a month, there were four attempts on Toise's life. In April, thousands of people took to the streets to protest against his rule.

Toise had just completed building his dream home — a double storey mansion overlooking the area. He and his committee were forced to flee. They seized the school which they turned into a mini-fortress before retreating to Nyanga police station. Toise is believed to have gone into hiding in Crossroads.

The dramatic turn of events presented the ANC with a huge dilemma. Repeated crisis meetings at the ANC office, peace rallies and inquiries have met with no success. The squatter communities adopted the mass democratic movement's own tactics of protest marches and placard demonstrations. Meanwhile violence has spread.

For the ANC's Jan Van Eck it is a question of "progress". "The old systems of traditional government have to give way to new progressive forms of organisation," Van Eck commented. ANC vice-chairman in the region, Lerumo Kalako has made similar observations, breaking with a tradition of silence on the issue.

● *With thanks to Sobantu Xaiya*

IDT can play crucial role

By **Jolyon Nuttall**
IDT communications director

AS THE COUNTRY MOVES TOWARDS new government, development funding organisations like the Independent Development Trust (IDT) believe they can play a crucial role in helping to underpin the transition.

The IDT is convinced that the hard-earned expertise which it and its peers, such as Kagiso Trust (KT), have gained in the development field will enable them to undertake socio-economic upliftment programmes on a "contract" basis and thus relieve the new government of some of the massive tasks it will face.

Highest among its credentials for justifying such a role is the IDT's proven capacity to deliver. In a climate of political power-play, accompanied by high levels of violence and disruption, it has singlemindedly got on with the job it was created to do. This small organisation knows, two and a half years after its formation, that it has impacted on the degree of deprivation suffered by the poorest of the poor.

This impact has not been achieved without criticism. Why? Chiefly because the IDT has gone out and done things.

When you do things in this world, rather than merely talk about

doing things, you stimulate response — some of which is bound to be negative.

In no way is it deterring us or deflecting us from our goals. Just the reverse, in fact: the IDT recently took a strategic decision to become a permanent organisation.

Those involved in development work know it is never easy. It suffers unexpected reverses. It takes time. There is an endemic conflict between product and process. Organisations such as Planact and ourselves have learnt some hard lessons in places like Phola Park.

The IDT is reconciled to working within such pressures and finding a way through them. We know that the sense of possession, ownership and responsibility created in communities by effective development programmes represents an even more lasting legacy than physical provision through the large-scale funding we have been able to provide.

Taxpayers' money

How have we come to recognise and understand these outcomes? It may be helpful to remind readers of the IDT's origins. The trust came into being in that dramatic first quarter of 1990 when Nelson Mandela was released from jail and the extra-parliamentary organisations were unbanned.

The purpose was clear: to underpin cathartic political change with socio-economic upliftment. Put another way: to provide empowerment over and above granting the vote.

The trust was funded with taxpayers' money: R2-billion of it, allocated by the finance minister in the 1990/91 budget.

Because of the origins of the funding, it was necessary from the beginning to ensure the independence of the IDT. In the first instance, this was done not only by building the word into the name, but by seeking — and getting — all the funding in one tranche: it took four months to extricate such a large sum from the treasury.

Secondly, great focus was laid on the selection of trustees. Founding chairperson Jan Steyn travelled the country — and further afield, including Lusaka — in a consultation process that led to the appointment of a vigorously independent, widely-representative board.

The trustees alone have the task of approving the allocation of funds with policy guidelines they themselves have laid down. And by April 1993, they had agreed to support over 500 projects costing more than R2-billion.

Thirdly, identical agreements were signed between the IDT and the ANC (in the person of Mandela), and

For the record

The IDT has raised a number of objections to the editorial in *Reconstruct* 8 (February 1993), including:

- The IDT's vision is not confined to "toilets and taps", but it does not have the budget to build houses. For the price of 110 000 serviced sites, the IDT would only have been able to provide some 40 000 houses.

The IDT also believed that while it would aim to address the needs of the poorest people (those earning below R1 000 a month), the government would address the needs of households earning between R1 000 and R2 000. This has not happened.

- The IDT does not see its future as "uncertain". It

has decided to become a permanent development actor, and has a number of plans (See article).

- Its most serious objection was to the description of IDT chief executive Wiseman Nkuhlu as a "close ally of Kaiser Matanzima during his days as rector of the University of Transkei".

IDT communications director Jolyon Nuttall said this was "a one-dimensional view of Nkuhlu", who had served on Robben Island, passed matric through correspondence while working at Loraine gold mine and become the country's first black chartered accountant.

Although our sources, ex-Unitra students, are adamant Nkuhlu was close to Matanzima, we accept that we did Nkuhlu an injustice by focusing simply on his time as rector, and ignoring his other significant achievements. ■



■ **DIGGING IN:** Regina Ndima builds her home on her own plot in Langa, Uitenhage

the IDT and Inkatha (in the person of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi) that the three organisations would cooperate in identifying initiatives that would support efforts to achieve reconciliation and a peaceful resolution of conflict. The first such area of focus to be identified was Mpumalanga in Natal, where IDT funding has been deployed for reconstruction.

The largest project on the IDT's books is the funding of 110 000 serviced sites at 104 different venues around the country, through the provision of a R7 500 capital subsidy per site, payable to developers as individuals take ownership of the sites.

The second largest is the earmarking of R300-million for the building of schools and classrooms, owned and controlled by community organisations through 10 regional trusts

spanning the country.

Even more important than this massive physical provision has been the emphasis placed on capacity-building — through support for community participation and the empowerment of organisations directed by members of the disadvantaged sector.

No school, clinic or cluster of serviced sites are funded unless an inclusive process has been followed.

Recently, that inclusive process has embraced many of the non-governmental organisations, which have been able to scale up their operations substantially as a result of IDT funding. Because they can now function on scale, it has proved possible to integrate them into other major IDT programmes.

So, for example, when the IDT

provided 90% of the funding for a new school at Ivory Park near Midrand it was able to draw in the expertise of NGOs such as READ, TOPS and SEP to add quality to the teaching provided at the school.

Cooperative ventures

In the years ahead, the IDT will participate in cooperative ventures with other development institutions. In this way, not only will the collective impact of each organisation's funds be much greater but the capacity will be created to absorb and administer grants and soft loans from overseas donors.

Already, the IDT has worked together with KT and the Development Bank of SA (DBSA) in drought relief programmes, tertiary loan funding, facilitating the National Housing Forum and micro-loan funding for small entrepreneurs.

The latest cooperative venture centres on the establishment of Mvula Trust, which will focus on water and sanitation programmes in rural areas. Funding totalling some R150-m has been obtained from a R48,5-m grant from the European Community via KT and the matching grant from the IDT, plus a similar sized loan from the DBSA.

Emphasis on such cooperation has been lent by the appointments of Professor Wiseman Nkuhlu as chief executive of the IDT and chairperson of the DBSA, and Eric Molobi, chief executive of KT, as an IDT trustee.

Still in their forties, the two stand to play key roles in the development field in years to come. Already they are becoming used to working together, jointly chairing the Consultative Forum on Drought Relief.

Both have done time on Robben Island. Both have extensive experience in development. Both serve on private sector boards. Both are determined that development plays a positive role in the transition to democratic government in South Africa and thereafter.

Nkuhlu says there are two major things for him in development: "giving people access to services essential to their dignity and enabling poor people to engage in income-generating activities." The IDT represents an outlet for the achievement of these goals. ■

Letters

Reconstruct

In the last Reconstruct (June 1993), an article entitled "Little headway with local negotiations", was said to have been written by Leila McKenna and Pascal Moloi. However, the article was an interpretation, by the editor of Reconstruct, of a paper written by McKenna and Moloi.

— Leila McKenna and Pascal Moloi

Editor's note: We are sorry that there was an misunderstanding. However, we would argue that the article was a summary, not an interpretation, of the authors' paper. In addition, McKenna was sent two drafts of the article, including the version that was published. Unfortunately, she says she did not receive the final version.



Kaiser Family Foundation

The attached article (Reconstruct 8, page 2) was recently brought to our attention. I am writing on behalf of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation to tell you that the references to this foundation are entirely factually incorrect.

In the light of this, the foundation hereby requests that you print this letter in its entirety in the next edition of *Work in Progress*.

First, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation was established as a private, philanthropic trust in the late 1940s by Henry J. Kaiser, a leading American industrialist and founder of the Kaiser Aluminium Corporation. Mr Kaiser never set foot in South Africa and has never had any sort of association with the US State Department.

The Kaiser Family Foundation's grantmaking income is derived entirely from an endowment of approximately \$400-million, bequeathed by Mr Kaiser and his wife, Bess, which is presently invested in a highly diversified portfolio.

Secondly, the NPPHC's decision

not to join Sabsso last year was a democratic decision taken by all the regions of the NPPHC after intensive discussion among NPPHC members nationwide. Neither the Kaiser Family Foundation, nor I personally, made any effort whatsoever to influence this decision. I have no doubt the NPPHC executive committee would attest to this.

The NPPHC and its leadership is entirely independent in its actions and very accustomed to dealing with funders, and the Kaiser Family Foundation in particular. In my experience, the NPPHC leaders and membership would certainly not have tolerated "threats" of any sort from the Foundation. This statement and Dr Dasoo's comments are entirely devoid of truth and a serious slight against the leadership of the NPPHC.

It is very troubling that you publish these statements as truth without checking the facts. Why was nobody from NPPHC's leadership asked to comment on these statements? Furthermore, it is common journalistic courtesy, when planning to print allegations of an institution or individuals, that the organisation/ individuals concerned are given an opportunity to respond, especially where the context

of the allegation is so potentially harmful to the reputation of the Kaiser Family Foundation. We are now requesting that courtesy.

We trust you will oblige our request.

— Michael Sinclair.

Programme director

NPPHC response

The decision on the part of the NPPHC not to join Sabsso was taken after due consideration by our grassroots structures in our eight regions, and was in no way influenced by the Kaiser Family Foundation or any other donor agency.

The author of the article did not confirm the veracity of the statement with any member of our network, and we deplore the publication of factually incorrect information without the courtesy of checking with the organisation involved.

We ask that in your next edition you publish an apology as well as a correction of the incorrect information.

— Eric Buch

NPPHC general secretary

● See article on page 16

legal and contractual complications we are advised that:

(1) The NPPHC (specifically the national executive committee) may not directly or indirectly subordinate its decisionmaking autonomy and/or authority to any other organisation.

(2) The NPPHC may not transfer any of its assets (financial or otherwise) to any other organisation.

(3) The assets and resources (i.e. equipment, offices, personnel etc) may not be employed by any other organisation or for purposes different from those for which the grant funds were made available.

(4) Any change in the NPPHC's constitution would require approval by our legal counsel, and may necessitate changes in existing contracts."

However, Buch says this letter was "taken totally out of context" after NPPHC wrote to the KFF

■ EXTRACT: Legally binding or legal advice?

Health's hornet's nest

IN RECONSTRUCT 8 (PG2), WE UNINTENTIONALLY stepped on a hornet's nest in the health sector with an article on foreign donors.

In summary, we said:

● Mike Sinclair of the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) had threatened the National Progressive Primary Health Care Network (NPPHC) with a funding cut if they joined the SA Health and Social Services Organisation (Sahsso)

● Sahsso's publicity secretary, Dr Aslam Dasoo, said this jeopardised numerous health projects and derailed a major political initiative.

● That Henry J Kaiser was a former US state department official, based in Pretoria.

Hands on approach

Our intention was to show the "hands-on" approach of some funders, not to discredit the NPPHC or to downplay the important contribution of the KFF to funding health projects.

It was extremely difficult to find someone who was prepared to go on record about how some foreign funders try to influence projects they fund. Shortly before going to press, Dasoo agreed to comment on funders in the health field.

His comments were supported by a series of letters circulated in progressive health circles in 1991 and 1992 in the

build up to the unity process in the field.

In one of the letters, the KFF's Sinclair told the NPPHC's general secretary, Eric Buch:

"..... we are concerned that the form of affiliation eventually chosen by the NPPHC should not violate existing grant contracts between the foundation and the NPPHC. In order to avoid possible legal and contractual complications we are advised that:

(1) The NPPHC (specifically the national executive committee) may not directly or indirectly subordinate its decisionmaking autonomy and/or authority to any other organisation.

(2) The NPPHC may not transfer any of its assets (financial or otherwise) to any other organisation.

(3) The assets and resources (i.e. equipment, offices, personnel etc) may not be employed by any other organisation or for purposes different from those for which the grant funds were made available.

(4) Any change in the NPPHC's constitution would require approval by our legal counsel, and may necessitate changes in existing contracts."

However, Buch says this letter was "taken totally out of context". He said the letter arose after NPPHC wrote to the KFF asking what the legal implica-

tions would be for funding, should they become part of Sahsso. KFF's reply was based on legal opinion.

"This was not an issue or an obstacle in our decision not to join Sahsso," said Buch. "After various meetings, an NPPHC national meeting decided it was not in our best interests to join Sahsso. Our primary objective is to promote progressive primary health care. If NPPHC became one cog in a larger health organisation, our specific emphasis on primary health care may be toned down."

Regional support

Buch added that this position was supported by the majority of NPPHC's eight regions. He added that, should NPPHC decide to reverse this decision in future and join Sahsso, the KFF may well withdraw its funding after Dasoo's allegations.

The article has also been discussed by Sahsso's national executive committee. The organisation resolved that, in the interests of unity in the health sector, the matter would not be debated any further in public.

Finally, while a Henry J. Kaiser did work for the US state department in Pretoria, it appears that he was not the same man as the Henry J who founded the KFF. ■



Giving the vote meaning

Kerry Cullinan

WHEN OVER 200 WOMEN FROM over 60 different organisations came together recently to discuss voting, there was broad consensus that issues of concern to women cut across political barriers.

Delegates, brought together by the Voter Education and Elections Training Unit (Veetu), identified as a priority the need to build strong, non-sectarian women's organisations to pressurise political parties to take up women's concerns.

As one delegate said: "It doesn't really matter which political party wins the election, as long as the winning party addresses women's demands."

Her view was echoed by a guest from the Philippines, Aida Santos. "Democracy must be something people can hold on to. It must mean something to rural women ... to all women," said Santos, who heads an NGO committed to training Filipino women.

"In my country, women got the vote in 1936. But it did not mean much to my foremothers, because women's issues were not addressed. They just voted according to how their husband or clan voted."

Big decisions

Until the early 1980s, "women made the sandwiches and men made the big decisions" in the liberation struggle in the Philippines, she added. This changed with the formation of progressive women's organisations that united into a women's coalition in 1984.

Today, said Santos, political parties "come knocking on our door, asking for support". Support is only forthcoming if the party has policies that the women approve of.

Ugandan MP Miriam MaThemba said Ugandan and South African women faced similar problems. These included a high illiteracy level; heavy workloads; lack of economic independence (which meant their vote could be

bought) and a lack of unity amongst themselves.

"You are a woman before you are a member of a political organisation," said MaThemba. "Once South Africa is independent, there will be so many priorities. The women's question will be pushed aside. You must take it up now!"

Taking talks seriously

MaThemba also challenged women to take the multiparty negotiations more seriously. Women may have forced every political party at the talks to include at least one woman in their delegation, but were these women delegates being held accountable to other women?

Lena Naslund of Sweden's Social Democratic Party said the success of elections in South Africa would inspire oppressed people all over the world.

"What are you women going to do [with your new power] and how will you stop men from taking it all?" asked Naslund. "It is now the names for the ballot papers are named. Get women in now!"

Fellow Swede Kirsten Olsson-Berglund said activists had to overcome four obstacles within women to persuade them to vote: ignorance, fear, insecurity about the future and a feeling

that their vote was not important.

The Women's National Coalition's (WNC) Pregs Govender and Debbie Budlender sketched where South African women were to be found to be organised.

Over 70% of organised women belonged to church organisations, according to a Durban study conducted in 1988, said Govender. In addition, most stokvels were run by women.

Over 35% of the national workforce were women, usually in the lowest paid jobs in food processing, textile and garment factories and in border industries.

Only nine of the ANC's 51-strong national executive were women, while five of the PAC's 38-person executive were women.

Budlender presented a regional breakdown of where women lived, based on the nine development regions as defined by the Development Bank of SA (DBSA). (See table)

Delegates were surprised to find Natal had the highest percentage of women, although the PWV region had the most women per kilometre, 126 compared to Natal's 44,3.

The challenge, the conference agreed, was to reach women wherever they lived, and persuade them that it was in their interests to vote. ■

Where women live

Region	Description	Percentage of SA women
A	Western Cape	9%
B	Northern Cape, Bop districts of Ganyesa, Kudumane, Taung	3%
C	OFS, QwaQwa, Thaba'Nchu district	6%
D	Eastern Cape, Border, Ciskei, S Transkei	13%
E	Natal, KwaZulu, N Transkei	25%
F	Eastern Transvaal, Kangwane, part of KwaZulu's Simdlangentsha district	5%
G	Northern Transvaal, Lebowa, Gazankulu Venda	13%
H	PWV, Moutse, KwaNdebele, Bop's Odi, Moretele districts	20%
J	Western Transvaal, remainder of Bop	5%



High and dry

South Africa's man-made disaster

THE DROUGHT HAS BEEN BROKEN. Many rivers around the country are flowing close to capacity. Why, then, are an estimated 10-million people in rural South Africa still without access to a safe and consistent supply of water?

The answer, as is often the case in this country, has more to do with politics, people and development than it has the weather.

Because, like most things, the drought is not a natural disaster; it is a man-made tragedy, the result of years of neglect, inadequate investment, mismanagement, corruption, inept maintenance and apartheid policies.

Structural deprivation, inequalities in water development and the creation of the homelands have left whole sections of the population without access to safe and reliable water supplies.

Dr Johann Erasmus, agricultural meteorologist for the Institute for Soil and Climate Control, explains: "Under apartheid policies, a false situation was created. Large numbers of people were pushed onto small tracts of unproductive land ... apartheid created a drought-like situation which should not have been there."

Whites first in the queue

Part of the problem has been the government's definition of the word "drought". This definition has generally hinged on the needs of white farming communities — and the bulk of drought aid has been aimed at supporting these flailing white farmers.

Drought policy in the past has only allocated minimal funds to homelands, without assessing the type of assistance needed or the degree of the crisis. These developmental "black holes" have been almost totally neglected. Few villages in

The water crisis in South Africa's rural areas has more to do with mismanagement, corruption and structural deprivation than it does with rainfall. **FRANCINE JOSS** reports on what she found during a two-week trip to the Northern Transvaal

rural South Africa (including the homelands) have a formalised water supply.

Of the R200-million in government drought allocations, only 19% goes to black people — despite the fact that they constitute 93% of the rural population (see chart).

Commercial interests take preference over survival. In the last five years over R2.5-billion was spent on emergency drought aid to white farmers. "Farmers are willing to take risks and jeopardise a successful crop, knowing drought aid exists as compensation," says Erasmus. He points out that most drought aid goes to white farmers because they know how to tap into drought relief — and they use their political clout to draw heavily on the funds.

Irrigation is another area of blatant bias. Sixty percent of South Africa's water is used for this purpose; in some areas farmers are paying 5c per cubic meter for untreated water, while in rural areas people pay up to R25 for the same amount.

Hands across the water

British engineer Ian Johnson was brought to South Africa through the Register of Engineers for Disaster Relief (Red-R). Paid by the British government, he came to SA — at the re-

quest of the South African government — to assess the emergency relief needs. He spent most of his time in Venda, one of the areas hardest-hit by the drought.

Johnson told *WIP* the drought was "not only predictable — it was avoidable."

"With such extensive resources and expertise, a drought like this should not have happened," he says. "There seems to be a lack of commitment by both the Venda government and the South African Department of Water Affairs."

Johnson wrote a damning report on his findings, which was submitted to the Water Supply Task Force (WSTF). Johnson — who has been involved in drought relief in countries like Somalia and Iraq — says he has never worked in a more chaotic situation than in South Africa.

The burdensome state bureaucracy, including the fact that there are some 52 departments dealing with various aspects of the drought, has hindered effective intervention.

In the homelands and self-governing territories, he says, the lack of organised relief distribution, resources, and expertise has led to inadequate planning and poor management.

"Had the growth and maintenance of water supply schemes kept pace with population growth in the homelands, there would not have been a drought related emergency," he concludes in his report.

The spiral of drought

It is the black, rural poor, living in marginalised communities, who are most vulnerable to drought as they do not have alternate coping strategies. For these people, lack of water has a compound effect: drought stress causes nu-



■ **GOOD AND CLEAN AND FRESH: Women and children scramble for water in the village of Makhasa, Gazankulu**

tritional, economic and social stress.

Current conditions have led to problems of unemployment, malnutrition and enforced migration. Add to this an economic recession and it is clear to see how millions on the poverty line are pushed over the brink to destitution.

Those remaining in rural areas are presently unable to plant for basic subsistence. They face escalating prices and cannot continue to rely on remittance from towns due to increasing retrenchment and unemployment.

Livestock losses have been high; in the Transkei alone 150 000 cattle have died since the beginning of the 1992-93 season, and 200 000 more are expected to die if the drought continues through the winter. For those who measure their wealth by cattle, destitution looms.

Bill Gibson, a drought relief worker from Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (Voca), says that in certain areas it is difficult to distinguish between water problems, political problems and food relief problems.

Although there is little starvation in South African villages, malnutrition is evident in many rural areas. Food aid programmes are limited, clinics are few and far between, and facilities are poor. The drought crisis is therefore related more to the endemic poverty of rural South Africans than to simply a shortage of water.

High and dry

The visiting British engineers found a number of communities with broken pumps and faulty equipment, no middle-management, and technicians without relevant training, tools or equipment to repair the damage.

The development of water programmes has also relied mainly on consultants and experts, disempowering communities from decisions, planning or maintenance. In many villages residents didn't know how to report problems or faults. In the Natal/KwaZulu area, an estimated 2 500 boreholes exist without pumps. In Venda, at the end of March, 40 boreholes remained unequipped, and 58 villages still had no regular water supply — and this after eight months of relief work in the area.

Rumours of corruption and patronage abound. Aid, access to water and food packages can be used as political

weapons, given to those favoured by or subservient to the ruling elite. As a result of mismanagement the relief effort is hindered by a network of bureaucracy and garbled communication. White farmers irrigate their lands while black, rural communities live daily in hope of water.

According to Michel Kassa, coordinator of the French relief agency Medecins Sans Frontiers (MSF), the government needs to understand that the first concern is communities, not commerce. Initially in South Africa to work with Mozambican refugees, MSF got involved in drought relief efforts because “you can’t do anything without water.”

Kassa said a disturbing feature of the drought was the number of crisis areas which had been provided with equipment such as pumps, but where the equipment itself was broken.

What is to be done?

All the visiting engineers I spoke to warned of the need for a comprehensive restructuring of the state’s response to drought. This includes better organisation and implementation of emergency relief, and long-term development of the rural areas to prevent the drought recurring.

They say water and water equipment must be prioritised (communities, not commerce) and funds should be channeled into an “early warning system”. Nutritional development programmes are also vital for marginalised communities.

But their overall impression is that a substantial change has to come in the allocation of government resources. As one engineer told me, “the obstacles are ingrained in the system and need to be addressed in order to prevent a recurrence”.

The examples of other developed countries clearly illustrate that drought preparedness can nullify certain aspects of low rainfall. An effective drought policy — one which meets the needs of all South Africans, rather than those with political clout — is essential to the future development of this country. Until then, thousands of mothers in rural villages will continue to pray that today there will be water, and perhaps tomorrow enough rain to make the mealies grow. ■

You can almost see the drought from your office window

“There is no longer a drought,” the peeved Venda Department of Works official insisted. “It rained in late December and January, and now the people have more than enough water.”

His attitude is typical of the numerous homeland civil servants who gauge drought and water supply by the monthly rainfall charts which pass over their desks.

But reality translates quite differently for the villagers of northern Venda, who still wait anxiously for the development of a safe and reliable water supply.

The homeland was declared a drought area in May 1992. Foreign engineers were brought in a month later to assess the situation, but say they were unable to get the Venda government and the Department of Water Affairs to take action until October.

The engineers made a series of recommendations to the Venda government, and within three months a quarter of these recommendations had been carried out — most of them under the supervision of British engineer Ian Johnson.

After the December rains, Johnson and the other Red-R engineers were withdrawn from the project on the pretext that the drought was over, leaving the remainder of their recommendations to be implemented by South African and Venda government departments.

Johnson then took up a position with the SA Disaster Relief Agency (Sadra). He returned to Venda during April — on Sadra business — and found that hardly any of the work had been done. By his estimates, 70% of the tasks that were to be completed by March had not even been started. Half of the villages on his “crisis list” still did not have the vital equipment necessary to supply their own water. Instead, they had to rely on the expensive tankering system for water delivery.

An angry Johnson told WIP he had left a full brief with officials before his departure, but that “incompetence, mismanagement and blatant disregard for the welfare of the people” had prevented many things from being done.

Drought relief workers in the region back this up, saying exorbitant fees are being paid to “consultants”. They claim government employees receive double salaries when working in the field, contractors are paid for incomplete or faulty jobs, and equipment has even been fitted in the wrong villages.

Over 35 boreholes have been drilled but pumps have yet to be installed to allow villagers access to the underground water. Several motorised pumps cannot be used because they have run out of fuel, according to relief workers.

The Venda Department of Works has refused to comment on these claims, insisting that there is “no water supply problem”. ■

The water women of Gazankulu

Women’s lives in Gazankulu seem to be controlled by water. The water supply itself is controlled by men.

Women spent entire days queueing to fill huge plastic containers which weigh as much as a ten-year-old child when full.

Men make the decisions about where the pump will be installed. If you don’t like it, your only form of recourse is with the very men who made those decisions. If you’re still not happy, you can turn to the chief for assistance; he might raise it with the district commissioner, who can take it to the homeland cabinet, where it somehow manages to get lost in all the bureaucracy.

Throughout all this, the women and children wait silently, invisible to the men who control their survival. ■



LOOKING FOR THE CAUSES OF Ciskei's drought? Then don't look up at the sky — look inside the offices of the government officials who have neglected to intervene in what has become a critical situation.

British engineer David Williamson says the homeland government is largely to blame for the crisis. In a report prepared late last year, he pointed out that the water supply of almost 30 north-western villages was at critical levels — largely owing to a lack of government capital expenditure and maintenance.

In all but one of the villages, the water supply available was "far less than 15 to 20 litres per head per day", which is internationally recommended as the daily minimum health requirement.

Williamson said it was apparent in many of the villages that "nothing had been improved since the installation of windmills some 20 years ago — when populations were probably a tenth of the present levels".

Border Rural Development Forum (BRDF) fieldworker Howard Stofile agrees. "When you look around these areas of Ciskei, it is green. You think: there is no hunger here. But people are starving."

Headmen have access

Stofile points out that those villages which are home to a headman or chief have access to piped water and other infrastructure, while neighbouring villages do not.

He mentions one particular chief who controls six villages. "In all the villages, people walk at least two kilometres to streams and back to fetch water. But in the chief's village, residents have taps and diesel pumps."



PHOTO: G. HORLOR

Same sickness, different homeland

The Northern Transvaal is not the only region to suffer the ravages of a man-made drought — as **NICOLA GOODENOUGH** found when she investigated water provision in the Ciskei

In an attempt to alleviate the situation, the BRDF has contracted technical teams to fix broken windmills, pumps and reservoirs and install water tanks. But in this, too, the system of chiefs and headmen proves an obstacle.

these would be subject to debate in "the appropriate forums," the council said. — Ecna

● *Nicola Goodenough is media officer for the Grahamstown Rural Committee*

Stofile again refers to the chief with his six villages, and says he objected when the forum wanted to install water tanks.

Stofile says in one of the villages, Mkwangele, the tanks were rejected on delivery by a headman on grounds that the chief had not given his consent and the delivery was "not known in Bisho".

Stofile shakes his head. "People should not have to ask permission to drink water. It's ridiculous".

The Ciskei government is represented on the forum, but has often obstructed its initiatives.

Stofile says: "There have been very serious water problems in Whittlesea and Northern Hewu which we have been trying to address. The Ciskei said its department of works would see to it, that our engineers should not get involved. But then nothing is done."

These stalling tactics are a way of exerting political pressure on those communities which resist homeland policies like the headman system, he claims.

The Ciskei government was asked to respond to these criticisms. Its Council of State issued a press statement which said the government gets involved in, and always supports, "efforts with the good intentions of developing the quality of life of the people."

The government had produced several guidelines pertaining to "economic and social development of this region and its people", and



PHOTO: BIGGART, IMPACT VISUALS

■ **FROM STONES TO STATEHOOD: Credibility is earned in the street, not the negotiating chamber**

Nationalism on the rise

IN DECEMBER 1992, IZZADIN EL-Kassem — military wing of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) — launched a series of guerilla attacks that claimed the lives of six Israeli soldiers in as many days.

The spectacular success of these operations — coupled with the fear they aroused in Israeli society — inaugurated a period that ranks among the bloodiest of the intifada, with mass expulsions, mass killings and, from April onwards, the “indefinite” and “irreversible” separation of the occupied territories from Israel.

Hamas first appeared in February 1988 as “the wing of the Muslim Brothers (MB) in Palestine”. Under the leadership of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the MB had emerged in the late '70s as a culturalist movement whose primary goal was the “establishment of the Is-

Disillusionment with the Palestinian peace process has lead to increasing support for Islamic nationalist groups, writes
GRAHAM USHER

lamic personality”. In practice, this meant an abstention from all forms of struggle against the occupation.

Aided by Saudi money, the MB built up an impressive social infrastructure. By 1986 it controlled 40% of Gaza's mosques and its university — the largest in the occupied territories.

Ironically, they were also aided by the Israelis, who viewed the rise of political Islam as a useful tool for fomenting dissension within Palestinian nationalist groups.

When the intifada erupted in De-

cember 1987, the MB were faced with a dilemma: either forego relations with the Israelis or lose the Palestinian street, where legitimacy was born less of piety and more of resistance. It resolved the contradiction by forming Hamas, an Islamic movement whose aim was national liberation.

In August 1988, it published its “covenant” which spells out “who Hamas are and what it represents”. Essentially a political manifesto, the covenant is a pastiche of Islam, PLO nationalism and Eurocentric anti-semitism. Territorial nationalism — once rejected by Yassin as “idolatry” — now became “a function of religious belief”. And the distinction made by the PLO between anti-Zionism and anti-semitism became so obscured that the Jews were held responsible, not just for Israel, but “for the murder of the prophets and the second world war”.

Although in the early years of the uprising Hamas proclaimed "unity with our PLO brothers", on the street it organised independently of them, issuing its own bayan (leaflet-communiques) and following its own calendar of strike days. It refused to acknowledge the sole representative status of the PLO and mounted a vicious social offensive against all manifestations of "un-Islamic behaviour" — particularly in Gaza where women were forced to wear the veil as a sign of modesty and nationalist rectitude. The PLO's defensive, apologetic stance vis a vis this campaign was to cost them dear among the crucial constituencies of women, youth and Christian Palestinians.

By the end of the '80s, Hamas were an integral part of Palestinian political culture, regularly polling second only to the PLO's Fatah faction in professional and university elections throughout the territories. They were not, however, hegemonic.

Two events propelled Hamas on the road of outright political challenge to the PLO:

- The PLO's decision in 1988 to recognise Israel as a state defined by its pre-1987 "borders". Hamas rejected this on the grounds that "Palestine is a holy trust afforded to Muslims by God".

- The PLO's embrace of the Israeli-US peace plans in the wake of the Gulf war which, for Hamas, smacked of "autonomy" rather than liberation.

Split the PLO

In response, Hamas called a series of actions against the "peace process" which effectively split the PLO between its Fatah and leftist factions, and which were ominously well-supported. In October 1991 — the month of the Madrid Conference on Palestine — Hamas shut down Gaza with three days of strikes, demonstrating that "the talks" enjoyed little consensus in the territories.

Subsequent events confirmed this, marked as they were by rising frustration at the lack of political progress in the negotiations and, on the ground, by interfactional fights and a tirade of tit-for-tat strikes. These succeeded only in divesting the intifada of its mass appeal — turning it instead into the private property of rival bands of "masked men". This degeneration reached its nadir in July 1992 when street battles in Gaza between Fatah and Hamas sup-

porters left a toll of 55 injured and three dead.

Political wisdom has it that with the "July clashes" Hamas lost the street — that when it came to the crunch, Palestinians were still nationalist first and Islamic second.

Nevertheless, while Hamas may have lost the round, it had proved its point. For the first time in the occupied territories, the PLO was faced with an indigenous, authentic and mass opposition completely outside its control.

Severe blows

It is difficult to gauge Hamas' future given the sheer scale of Israeli repression since the military operations in December. It has lost a sizeable chunk of its political supporters through mass expulsions and detentions (see box) as well as numerous cells of its armed wing. Ongoing discussions are currently being held in Tunis and Khartoum between the PLO and Hamas leaderships "outside" about possible terms of Hamas admission to the PLO.

While tactically a rapprochement between Palestine's nationalist and Islamic wings may be deemed necessary to get the PLO through this "midnight hour", in the long run such a compromise would spell political suicide. As a movement and ideology, Hamas' brand of political Islam is anti-democratic, anti-secularist, anti-modernist and racist. If it commands support among Palestinians, this is not because of any "fundamentalist" turn on their part; it is rather the fruit of two inter-related crises:

- A political crisis of legitimacy, aggravated by the pursuit of an entirely unaccountable peace strategy that, since the expulsions, claims only minority support.

- An ideological crisis over the social agenda and content of Palestinian nationalism. It is not — as the ubiquitous graffiti covering the refugee camps, towns and villages of the occupied territories would have it — that "Islam is the solution". Rather, it is that such sentiments have appeal because they beg the hidden, unspoken yet central questions: What kind of peace? and If not an Islamic nation, then what kind of nation?

As long as Palestinian nationalism — left and right alike — ducks these issues, it prepares the ground for groups like Hamas to flourish. ■

The tale of the talks

■ **December 18 1992:** Israel expels 413 Palestinians to the northern border of its South Lebanon 'security zone'. The UN Security Council adopts Resolution 799 condemning the act and demanding their 'immediate repatriation'.

■ **January 28 1993:** The Israeli High Court rules the expulsions 'valid'.

■ **February 12:** The US and Israel strike a deal with the UN to end the debate over Resolution 799. The deal calls on Israel to repatriate 100 of the expellees immediately and the remainder by the end of the year. US ambassador Madeleine Albright says the deportation issue 'should be now set aside so the peace talks can get back on track'. Israeli premier Yitzhak Rabin calls the deal an endorsement of 'the principle of Israel's ability to remove inciters, leaders, organisers'. The PLO calls the deal 'completely meaningless' and 'another example of the US bailing out Israel'.

■ **February 19:** The UN Human Rights Commission passes four resolutions censuring Israel for human rights violations in the occupied territories and calling for the appointment of a 'special rapporteur' to investigate breaches of international law.

■ **February 20:** An opinion poll in the West Bank and Gaza shows 83% of Palestinians believe the Palestinian delegation should not return to negotiations until the issue of the deportees is resolved. 16% of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip say the Islamic movement represents them rather than the PLO.

■ **April 21:** Arab foreign ministers agree to resume negotiations with Israel. Hamas calls the decision 'treason'.

■ **April 27:** Middle East peace talks resume in the US after a four-month delay. A general strike is observed in the occupied territories in protest.

■ **May 8:** The ninth round of peace talks breaks up amid conflicting Palestinian claims. Faisal Hussein, newly appointed leader of the Palestinian delegation, says 'serious negotiations have finally started', while chief negotiator Haidar Abdel el-Shafi insists 'no progress has been made'.

The hills are alive with the sound of music

A long, sharp whistle, a bit like the sound you hear in war movies. Then, suddenly, Arthur Mkhwanazi realises why it sounds so familiar. It IS the same thing you hear in war movies — the sound of heavy artillery shelling the ground you're standing on.

"The sound of music", the Palestinians call it. It's a familiar sound to many of them, but particularly to the group of political leaders who are now commonly known as "the deportees". They've spent more than six months in a stretch of no-man's-land between Lebanon and Israel's northern border, courtesy of the Israeli government. And shelling — along with hunger, thirst and many other forms of discomfort — have become a way of life.

Mkhwanazi still battles to describe the misery he found when he crossed from Lebanon into the stretch of desert for two days of solidarity talks with the deportees.

The 402 — all men, and including 10 doctors, 14 engineers and four nurses — are the cream of Palestinian opposition to Israeli rule. They were rounded up last December and taken by truck to the Lebanese border. Each person was given \$50 — the standard "pay-out" to deportees — and dumped in a stretch of desert with no food, shelter or transport.

It was there, at a site called Um Alaharib (the name means Mountain of Scorpions) that Mkhwanazi found the Palestinians six months later. And he admits nothing could have prepared him for the squalor he found there. Not his years on Robben Island, nor his time as a development worker in South African dumping grounds like Winterveld.

Ragged tents are the Palestinians' home. Water has to be carried up from a nearby stream. Most food is smuggled in by neighbouring communities or supporters in southern Lebanon.

Palestine's own Robben Island

"And then there is the shelling. They try to get as close as possible, to intimidate people. It was close when we were there — some of the shrapnel actually went through the tents."

But, Mkhwanazi points out, it will take more than music to silence the Palestinians. Highly organised, they have managed to transform their ragamuffin camp into a tightly-run home from home. Within hours of being dumped there, they had set up committees dealing with health care, welfare, food and supplies, security, and media liaison.

"Morale is high," says Mkhwanazi. "I didn't sense any broken spirits there. I looked for cracks but I couldn't see any."

"The main source of frustration, just like on the Island, is the separation. They would be reading magazines and see pictures of children, and I could see them shudder. It would make them want to be with their own children."

"It reminded me of a time on the Island when Comrade (Walter) Sisulu was taken to the sick bay and a child ran through the room. He couldn't resist ... he actually reached out and touched that kid. The mother couldn't understand this 'terrorist'. But Comrade Sisulu hadn't seen a child in over 16 years and he needed that contact."

"I used to have similar feelings about my own family, and I saw it in the eyes of some of the deportees ... some of them left pregnant wives, their children were born in their absence." — **Chris Vick** ■

international



■ HANDS ACROSS THE WATER: Arthur

A South

A NEGOTIATIONS PROCESS IN CRISIS. Key political leaders rounded up by the security forces. Armed soldiers stalk the streets, rifles cocked. Outside the cities, people live in squalor — their lives controlled by dusk to dawn curfews.

For former Robben Islander Arthur Mkhwanazi, a South African in Palestine, it was just like being at home. Only worse.

"I felt I had finally landed up in a place where the suffering was worse than in South Africa. I have seen bad times — but nothing like what I saw in the Palestinian camps on the border of Israel," says Mkhwanazi, a former Robben Island prisoner who now does relief work in some of the most desolate parts of the northern Transvaal.

It is the Palestinian people's suffering, says Mkhwanazi — and their high hopes — which make the current Israeli-Palestinian negotiations so chal-



Mkhwanazi (left) in the camp set up by the 400 Palestinians deported by Israel

African in Palestine

A trip to Palestinian camps on the Israeli border brought back memories of 'the old days' for former Robben Islander Arthur Mkhwanazi.

He told **CHRIS VICK**
how it felt

lenging: "I don't think the talks will bring lasting solutions — particularly because the Israelis are not negotiating in good faith."

On the border

But how do Palestinians feed into the negotiations process?

"Like us, they have a communications problem. They need mechanisms for interaction between those who are negotiating and the people on the ground. Even though the leadership is

aware of this problem, they need to improve the process of taking information to the people and letting the people bring information back to them — so that whatever the leadership does, it is aware of how people feel."

In bondage forever

Mkhwanazi says he sees great similarities between what has happened in South Africa — particularly the government's attempts at balkanisation — and what is happening now in Israel.

"The changes in South Africa came about as a result of the pressures we exerted — the same pressures the Palestinians have been applying since the launch of the intifada. The Israelis will be forced to change, not because they have fallen in love with the Palestinians but because of the struggles of the people themselves."

He admits that a key element missing from this strategy — and one which

played a vital role in South Africa — is the question of solidarity.

"From the very time the ANC and PAC were banned in 1960, there was very little international support for our struggle. It took time, but again things accelerated after 1976. It took tremendous work by the exiles, who established international links. The Palestinians are going through a similar phase now, since the intifada."

The question of ANC solidarity with the PLO is still a controversial one, particularly since the ANC Youth League visit to Israel earlier this year. Mkhwanazi heard very little of the visit during his visit to Palestine — "I think that was out of courtesy more than anything else" — but concedes that "we are not doing them a favour by having contact with the Israelis".

"But what is also clear is that we are not doing the Palestinians a favour by supporting them. They ought to claim it as a right from us because of our identical situations. Our sense of justice does not let us allow others to oppress people."

Winning the media war

The issue of the Palestinian deportees (see box) is a prime example, he says, of how the Israelis are winning the media war and depriving the Palestinians of solidarity.

"When I see that the Israelis are able to get away with this, it makes me realise they enjoy great international support. A lot of work has to be done by the Palestinians to internationalise their struggle. The Israelis are succeeding in their campaign of repression, and they obviously have lots of friends."

Finally, as the Palestinians can learn from South Africa's oppressed, so the Israeli government is learning from one of its greatest allies — the South African government. As Mkhwanazi points out, both governments are using what he calls "the Argentinian model" — the simultaneous use of reform and repression to drive political opponents into a corner.

"The reforms have been slight — like offering limited control of sections of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. But so far this has not deterred the Palestinians. They are holding out on their demand for access to all of what is now called Israel." ■



Keep a safe distance!

Dr ALEJANDRO BENDANA, Director of Nicaragua's Centre for International Studies, questions the United Nations' role in Central America

EL SALVADOR IS NOW TERMED BY THE UN Secretary-General to be a model of "negotiated revolution". At the heart of the country's peace accord is this: change must be allowed to take place in the political system which will allow an end to the armed struggle. This will give way to a political process in which the armed forces which were forced to fight underground (the FMLN) become legal political parties.

What follows is a demobilisation of the FMLN as well as the reform of the Salvadorean army and the dismantling of the Salvadorean para-military forces. The possibility will also be created for the FMLN to form part of the new national civil police.

The FMLN has demobilised and is now working as a political party. The situation continues to be tense and I don't think anybody could describe the post-conflict period as a honeymoon. At times there is extreme tension and continuing outbreaks of violence. But they no longer have the dimensions — at least in organised form — of the period before the ceasefire. Another type of violence has surfaced, however — criminal violence. It is linked to the demobilisation of soldiers, as well as to social and economic issues and the relative weakening of the authoritarian apparatus.

War weary

The peace accords evolved out of a common realisation that neither side could prevail over the other militarily. It was also necessary to acknowledge an element of war-weariness in the population.

There was an internal war in El Salvador, the same as we saw in Nicaragua in the late '80s when the FSLN began suing for peace even though it had a military advantage. The social cost, the social discontent of war-weariness, was something that had to be taken into account politically in order to expedite the negotiations process and make the necessary compromises. These included compromises that led to an extremely open electoral contest — so open, indeed, that the FSLN lost the election.

El Salvador has been looking at the Nicaraguan experience where the FSLN now has the enormous advantage of not being an incumbent government. Since the 1990 election it is posed as the new opposition force. This gives it an advantage of being perceived as an alternative to an established situation of poverty, violence and commiseration.

But what does this mean for the El Salvadorean situa-

tion? If the FMLN come into power, will they have to go through the same difficulties that the FSLN encountered in Nicaragua?

Role of the UN

The UN played an important role in Nicaragua and El Salvador, in what it called "confidence-building" processes. It took on the role of verification of the peace agreement as well as estab-

lishing a substantial physical presence in the country, for monitoring ceasefire questions and human rights violations.

One problem that has emerged from the UN presence in El Salvador is that the question of human rights has been neglected by the monitors. This is because the UN has taken on a mediation role, and because it needs to be seen as being evenhanded it cannot be public and direct in its criticism.

It is worth remembering that the UN still has a presence in Nicaragua, three years after the elections. In the case of El Salvador, the Security Council has renewed the mandate for the UN.

One preoccupation in El Salvador is: How much UN involvement? One of the reasons for this is the fact that the UN has become more and more involved not only in military and security questions but also in political and electoral issues. This is much the same situation as in Cambodia.

I believe this is dangerous — not just because the USA clearly dominates the UN Security Council, but because the UN is seen as a branch of the State Department and its military units are perceived as a branch of the Pentagon.

But there is a deeper question of principle involved, because the notion of sovereignty is not an abstract one. Sovereignty is fundamental.

In this era of globalisation, some say sovereignty is meaningless. But take the case of Somalia. Even if there is no government, there is sovereignty, and many people in the Third World take offence at the idea of anyone simply going into their country on the pretext of humanitarian military intervention.

The extent to which El Salvador is able to attain sovereignty, the ongoing role of the UN in that country and the effectiveness of the peace accord, remain to be seen. The situation continues to be very volatile and El Salvadoreans require a great deal of support and solidarity from the peoples of the South. ■

● *This commentary was originally published in TEP Update, which is produced by the Theology Exchange Programme in Cape Town*





■ **RADICAL CHANGE:** Gay struggles are part of the struggle for socialism

Socialism goes off the beaten track

Shortly after the death of Chris Hani, *Work in Progress* invited renowned theorist **ERNESTO LACLAU** to join a wide range of South African socialists to discuss a simple question that defies a simple answer: Is there still a path towards socialism in South Africa?

Laclau firmly believes there is — but not for the reasons typically recited in the South African Left debate. He approaches the question from intriguing and enterprising angles and proposes a road towards socialism that looks feasible. Or does it?

WIP is proud to publish, in two parts, this edited transcript of the discussions that day. The conclusion of this discussion will appear in our next issue, *WIP91*.

ERNESTO LACLAU

What does socialism mean today?

Traditionally, the relationship between socialism and democracy is thought of in terms of stages. We are going to have a democratic revolution and, when it has achieved its objectives, a transformation in a socialist direction can take place. The opposite view says revolution starts under democratic banners and can only consolidate itself with socialist transformation. In both views, socialism is thought of as something *separate* from democracy.

I disagree with this way of posing the problem. I don't conceive of socialism as something separated from democracy. On the contrary, it is an internal moment, an internal element of the democratic revolution. The democratic revolution is more fundamental, it is a larger programme than socialism, which is simply one of its moments.

I see an arch of democratic revolutions that starts 200 years ago with the French Revolution and expands, pushing the principles of equality and democracy into wider and wider social relations. Socialism was the attempt to expand the principle of equality to the economic sphere — which is why I call it an internal moment of the wider democratic revolution. With the *new social movements* of our time, we see the principle of equality spread to other areas of society — to the relations between sexes, between races, between people with different sexual orientations and so on.

If socialism is a component of the democratic revolution and is actually an attempt to *radicalise* the democratic revolution, then it must mean an expansion of the democratic demands throughout the whole of the social order.

So the first task of socialists today is the radicalisation of the democratic revolution, which can differ in character from country to country.

In the US today the struggle of African-Americans to win recognition of their particular culture and not be subsumed simply under the official history of the Anglo-American minority is an example of how this struggle can be carried out. The struggle of homosexuals for the recognition of their rights, the struggle of feminism — all these struggles in their radicalisation are essential components of the struggle of socialism today.

But socialism is not only that. It should be some way of organising the economy, of managing the basic infrastructure of society. And it is here that a new conception of socialism is badly needed.

The classical conception was that, while capitalism was a mode of production totally governed by the logic of individual profit, socialism had to be a form of society in which society as a whole, through its planning, controlled and carried out the basic productive



PHOTO: H. CARTIER-BRESSON

■ **HAMMER AND SUKKEL: Socialist experiments have placed too much emphasis on icons, at the expense of identities**

process. But who or what is this social force, this social agent that is capable of representing the interests of the whole community?

Marxism had an answer — a wrong one, but an explanation nonetheless. It said that under capitalism, the social structure of society was steadily being simplified, so that in the end the basic social struggle would be a simple showdown between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. And once society reaches this total degree of homogeneity, of uniformity, then the question of which social actor represents the community as a whole simply disappears, because the community becomes homogeneous.

Against the predictions of Marx-

ism, society has not advanced to increasing uniformity. On the contrary, it has advanced to a profound heterogeneity in which there is an increasing process of social fragmentation. Society has become much more diversified, differentiated. Who will now represent the viewpoint of the community as a whole?

The answer of the regimes of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (which were called "socialist" for reasons that escape my understanding) was that representation of the community as a whole passes from the class to the bureaucracy. The result of this kind of authoritarian planning is there for all to see.

Who is Ernesto Laclau?

Ernesto Laclau sprung to prominence with his research on populism and the state in Argentina, the country of his birth, and his investigations into the ideological features of fascism.

His first book, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, confirmed the arrival of a Marxist thinker of note.

But it was *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (co-authored in 1985 with Chantal Mouffe) that Laclau broke with Marxist orthodoxy and sparked a vigorous debate within the Marxist and broader Left. Here he began developing a post-Marxist programme that focuses not on class contradictions but instead on identity and social antagonisms.

Laclau is currently professor of government at the University of Essex. His most recent book is a collection of essays titled *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*. ■

So how is social control established? This is where forms of democratic socialism presuppose *planning* which is constantly negotiated but in which a wide variety of organisations (and interests) take part. For instance, it's important that consumers have a say in what is produced and how it is distributed. Given that we don't have this simplified and unified society, at least increased control can go to those social fragments; to achieve that control they will have to enter into complicated processes of negotiations among themselves. There will not be an absolute purity in their decisions. But there is no other way in which a truly democratic and socialist society can be organised.

Is the market something that has to be eliminated or not? The solution is going to be some kind of pragmatic arrangement in which the principles of both planning and the market complement and interact with each other. Market mechanisms are allowed in some areas, while social control is exercised in others. Simply put, by socialism I understand a type of social arrangement in which the principle of social control predominates over market mechanisms without entirely eliminating the latter. This balance between the two has to achieve a society that is as *democratic* as possible.

The first dimension (the extension of democratic demands) and the second dimension (the pragmatic arrangement of a mixed economy) together are the only possible components today for some kind of socialist project.

A last point. We are not speaking about blueprints here. If we were we'd be entering into some kind of enjoyable but entirely sterile game. Social forces often have to take the responsibility of controlling a society when the conditions do not exist to impose what they consider to be the best possible arrangement. In Latin America popular and left-wing organisations learned that to push ahead with a radical set of demands at a moment when the threat of military dictatorship was present was simply suicidal. So they had to reach some kinds of compromises and agreements which certainly were not the best possible ones for them. But they were the best ones possible under the circumstances.

I think this describes some of the dilemmas which will confront the ANC

in power.

So a third dimension of the socialist project has to be that society has to be hegemonic. It's obviously very easy to say "I don't care about this question of taking care of the control of society as a whole because my only objective is to push ahead with radical demands". But this will probably lead to — as it does in most cases — a situation where the balance of forces shift drastically to the right. A hegemonic project will always live in tension between what is achievable and what its ultimate objectives are.

BEN TUROK

Director of the Institute for African Alternatives

The crucial thing about the socialist project historically is that it aimed to do three things that are related to democratisation, but go beyond that.

The first was the emancipation of the exploited, which doesn't feature in Ernesto's presentation as I heard it. The second was the transfer of power away from the capitalist class. The third was to eliminate the basis upon which a reversal could take place so that those two

projects could continue and remain in place.

If those elements of the socialist project are correct, where can socialism be installed by radicalisation, by the measures Ernesto proposes? I'm not sure his proposal is fundamental enough to achieve the kinds of changes that the founders of socialism were after.

In the case of SA, can the debates around the issues Ernesto has raised lead us to transformation of the kind that the liberation movement wants? I fear not. Something far more fundamental is required, and a far more fundamental analysis of the existing society and its inequalities and distortions are required before we can say socialism comes on the agenda. I fear the notion of radicalisation of democracy is not enough to take us there.

LANGA ZITA

Information officer of the National Union of Metalworkers of SA

My concern is the absence of class in Prof Laclau's definition of democracy, his supposition that a society can just move from one form of democracy to another form and extend it, without some resistance from those who are objectively undermined by this extension of democracy.

ERNESTO LACLAU

Is what I am proposing enough to achieve the socialism that the founders of socialism wanted? No. Simply because what they wanted to achieve was not only *unachievable* but essentially *wrong*.

Firstly, Marxism gave us a completely faulty theory about what the structural laws of capitalism were. Secondly, it developed a set of strategic principles based on that mistaken conception — a strategy based on the increasing homogenisation of society. It's something that does not belong to our world, although it did belong to the world of the Second International. Based on Marx's analysis of the logic of capitalism, they thought that by just concentrating on the defence of the worker, all the other sectors would necessarily disappear. Just by staying there, the workers would end up representing all the oppressed. For instance, (the Austrian Marxist, Karl) Kautsky used to

say “We don’t have to make a revolution, we have to take advantage of it”. And the quietism of the Second International was essentially based on that.

Now, I have to say something. The crisis of Marxism started in 1848. Ever since, Marxism has had to retreat from the original assertions about the simplification of social classes under capitalism.

In the end, Marxism reaches a point — with Antonio Gramsci — in which the fragmentation of the social is recognised. It recognises that the collective will has to be *politically* shaped, it is not automatic. With this comes a completely different image of history. What I see today with the *new social movements*, with this deepening of the democratic revolution, is that the process described by Gramsci is taking place in an even more radical way.

If socialism is to be historically viable, it has to start from the historical reality in which it operates. The agents of socialist change have to be shaped and constructed politically — they are not given to us as a gift from heaven or as a gift from the “laws of capitalism”. Having said that, we can pass to some other important aspects.

Concerning class: I think social classes are today dissolving everywhere. Class is no longer a unity out of which we can understand how politics operates. There are a variety of reasons for this.

Take the the case, firstly, of advanced industrial societies where we see an increasing overlap of subject positions that cut across class boundaries. The concept of class is neither right nor wrong: it is just totally insufficient to describe the kinds of social antagonisms and conflicts that are taking place. This does not mean that antagonism is lessened — on the contrary, in many respects it is increased. But these antagonisms do not come together in a social entity called class. The whole Marxist conception of class has to be thought through again.

Class is no longer a unity out of which we can understand how politics operates

In the Third World, the same process happens. In many Latin American countries, where social marginalisation reaches such levels that people have no chance of obtaining a stable position within the relations of production, you again have masses whose identity has to be *politically* shaped — it is not a class identity.

KARL VON HOLDT

Editor of the
SA Labour Bulletin

The key question (and classical Marxism alludes to this) is the concentration of power in the economy, which is also linked to concentrations of power in other areas of civil society and in the state. It’s this economic power that poses the key problem, the central blockage to the democratisation and transformation we want. The question we have to answer strategically is: If we’re talking about socialism, how do we democratise those centres, those concentrations of power? How do we build popular power, that can direct the economy and production, that can have

access to other arenas of civil society (culture, media, education and so on), as well as access to the state?

Shaping the identities of the actors or agents in that struggle might well be an ideological and political problem. But the prior problem is the question of power and how we contest that power.

The democratic

struggle we’re involved in here in SA is *not* the same as the struggle for socialism. There is not a necessary continuity. The democratic struggle may well be a precondition for socialism, but it’s not the same thing. It’s important to say that because a lot of us tend to see it as the same thing — that’s the prevailing rhetoric on the Left in SA. I have also written articles in the *Labour Bulletin* arguing that this struggle for democracy and change that we’re involved in is something that can go on and on and become socialism down the road.

What I’m pointing to here are a series of blockages. And a dispersed struggle for something that we might call socialism is not going to deal with those blockages or concentrations of power. What we need is a programme.

That programme cannot be articulated or implemented only through the state, but it does need the state and governing power. It also needs a political party or a government that is dedicated to a certain programme — with all the compromises and negotiations entailed — which it tries to implement. A programme to democratise those concentrations of power that are our opposition, our adversary, that limit the lives of the majority of people in this country.

A programme means having a macro-economic policy, a programme of institutional reform that gives people access to the state and breaks up institutions of the dominant power and empowers citizens in all of civil society. It means reorganising or democratising education, culture and so on. It entails a hegemonic project, which involves ideological questions, building alliances, organisations, an election programme, you name it.

So, firstly, the process we’re involved in does not automatically lead to something we can call socialism. And secondly, we have to address this question of a programme of reforms and changes, a process that unfolds over a long period of time.

Without that, not only is socialism not going to happen, but the programme of democratisation is going to be very limited, and run into reverses all the time. ■

Can Laclau help clear the blockage? Does class take a backseat? Is radical reform a contradiction in terms? Find out in the concluding part of this discussion, in the next issue of WIP.



■ ERNESTO LACLAU: Skips across hallowed Marxist ground



Beware the Shining Path!

SOCIALIST FORCES THROUGHOUT the world are in crisis. In recent years the Left has had to reconsider many of its most fundamental assumptions, and has had to try to define a new role.

Unlike many socialist groupings, the SACP has not responded to this crisis by merely changing its name, or by rejecting its relationship to the classical Marxist tradition. Instead, it has attempted to re-examine many of its long-held assumptions and to develop a model of socialism appropriate to conditions in contemporary South Africa.

The party's "new thinking" has, however, attracted vociferous criticism from opponents on both the right and the left.

Typical of this is the article by Colin Bundy ("The SACP: Theory of a Special Type", *WIP* 89). Although nowhere stated explicitly, the gist of Bundy's argument would appear to be that the SACP has reneged on the socialist project — and as a consequence, does not possess a strategy of its own, one distinctively "socialist" and distinguishable from that of other members of the alliance.

Bundy argues that this has to do with the emergence of a consensus "within the radical intelligentsia, especially elements close to the union movement and broadly Charterist in their political sympathies". This "radical intelligentsia", he argues, believe the current conjuncture does not favour the revolutionary seizure of power and the construction of communism as defined in the Marxist classics. Instead, its proponents argue for a strategy which seeks

There are no shortcuts to socialism, argue

PETER HUDSON and
STEPHEN LOUW in this
response to Colin Bundy's
article in *WIP* 89

to "deepen the process of democratisation".

For Bundy, this amounts to "defeatism" and "capitulation" — the acceptance of "bourgeois rule" and the view that socialists "are doomed to defeat, tilting dejectedly at the windmills driven for the rest of history by capitalist energies".

His argument hinges on his being able to show that conditions in SA — and in the international context — are propitious for the kind of revolutionary anti-capitalist strategy he implicitly counterposes to that currently being pursued by the alliance.

On the other hand, perhaps Bundy considers the conditions under which power is won and society transformed irrelevant. In fact his resounding silence on this issue could reasonably be interpreted to suggest this.

In this perspective all that really matters is that the proletariat captures state power and "socialises" production. That local and international opposi-



The South African Left must prepare itself for a long haul — with no guarantees of success

tion to this project will almost certainly be such as to make necessary the extensive militarisation of this “socialism of a special type” does not appear to concern Bundy. Neither, apparently, does the fact that although equality may be able to be imposed in this “barracks socialism”, it will be an equality of the extremely poor.

This sort of position is perhaps best understood as primarily animated by a fantasy — the fantasy that all is possible on the far side of capitalism; that once the threshold of “pre-history” is crossed, the social collectivity will enjoy limitless power and autonomy.

It is precisely because the SACP has in recent years shown itself to be intent on breaking with this millenarian and manichean logic that it deserves to be defended against attacks such as those lanced by Bundy.

Disregarding diversity

Underlying Bundy’s arguments is an almost complete disregard for the complexity and diversity of modern social formations. These societies have, however, not simplified themselves in any of the ways predicted by Marx. Because of this, their management requires formal, institutionalised mechanisms both to ascertain the majoritarian will — which is not given to us in advance — and to put this will into practice.

This point is acknowledged by the SACP in a document prepared by Jeremy Cronin for the SACP’s Strategy Conference held in May 1993 (reproduced in *African Communist*, first quarter 1993). As the SACP notes, the South African working class is highly divided. It is, for example, characterised by divisions between unionised and non-unionised workers, between rural/migrant and urban/settled labour, between young and old, between male and female, between those with different cultural backgrounds, and between the skilled, semi-skilled and unemployed.

These groupings often have very different long- and short-term objectives, and this presents particular problems for a socialist party claiming to speak on behalf of the working class.

By accepting that the historical process has no “guaranteed outcome”, the SACP is able to reject simple definitions of socialist transition as, for example, “the replacement of rule by one class by that of another” (Bundy, p.19),

and to develop instead a more open-ended and pluralist conception of socialism which attempts to accommodate this heterogeneity.

Institutionalised socialism

The differences between the SACP and Bundy are thus clear. Rather than rely on any assumptions about objective class interests and historical destiny, the SACP acknowledges that the complexity of social relations necessitates an institutionalised form of socialism which accepts divisions between and within social groupings, and which attempts to accommodate this pluralism.

For Bundy, this new thinking represents an unnecessarily reformist and pessimistic approach to socialism and results in the selling out of the interests of the working class. Socialist forces and relations of production will, it appears, simply sustain themselves. As such, Bundy’s analysis must necessarily exclude any definition of socialism as one which requires the negotiation of deals and “reconstruction pacts” between representatives of capital and of labour.

Rather than anticipate any mass-based insurrection from below which will lead to and sustain a socialist/communist society, the SACP wants to try and construct anti-capitalist alliances “within a broad based ANC-led liberation alliance, and within a still broader mass democratic movement”. The SACP, according to the strategy document, should maintain an independent identity but should not attempt to duplicate all the ANC’s functions “with a slightly more left inflection”. Instead, it should attempt to contest the “class bias and character of the ANC” and other alliance partners.

Although the Party continues to define this as a “vanguard role”, it is a

form of vanguard which bears little resemblance to that proposed by the Bolshevik theorists. Instead, the SACP is “more of a generaliser, a unifier and strategist,” than a Modern Prince.

But, importantly, the SACP does not see this as merely a rationalisation of resources. Instead, it insists that accommodating such diversity is central to the “pluralistic, multi-partite and participatory approach to national democracy and socialist transformation” which they now support. This will obviously entail the formation of cross-class alliances, and the linking together of organisations whose aims and objectives do not immediately coincide.

And strategy?

But what of the alliance’s strategy itself? Is it nothing more than a lifeline extended to an exhausted capitalism teetering on the brink of expiry?

Much depends here on how the concepts of capitalism and communism are understood. What is crucial, particularly in the light of what was once called “really existing socialism”, is that the struggle against capitalism be understood as a struggle for democracy.

What this implies is that “socialism is a stage in [the process of] deepening the national democratic revolution,” ie. that it is part of the democratic revolution and not what is to follow afterwards once the democratic struggle is (somehow) completed. It is in this light that the new strategy of the SACP should be understood.

In the terms of the “reconstruction pact” proposed by the SACP, “crucial areas of government (economic development, housing, education, etc) shall be subject to negotiations by the main, relevant players within civil society in the appropriate forum before being passed in the national parliament, or at the regional or local government level”. There negotiations will help to empower the working class as they will serve as a “critical factor in deepening the unity and mobilisation of that movement”. The reconstruction pact should not be exclusively state-centred, the SACP argues, as this disempowers and marginalises other actors in civil society. Neither is it limited to a redistribution of material benefits, as this would leave the powers of existing state structures intact.

The conception of socialism

presently proposed by the SACP is thus a very cautious and balanced approach to the need to institutionalise and structure the interaction between the major political and economic forces in society, on the one hand, with a desire to combine this process of socio-political restructuring with ongoing mass involvement.

The form of socialism envisaged here attempts to radicalise rather than simply replace democratic mechanisms developed under capitalism. The SACP does not limit the use of representative democracy to the narrow sphere of parliamentary democracy. Instead, it stresses the importance of elaborating “a whole range of institutions of participatory and direct democracy” which will “supplement” rather than “replace or displace the institutions of representative democracy”.

This is important not only because such quasi-corporatist processes can bolster the legitimacy of the national parliament but also because in themselves they reduce the margin of capital’s prerogative. Limiting the powers attached to the ownership of capital, and extending the orbit of popular influence over economic and social policy, modifies the nature of the relations of production in an anti-capitalist direction.

Of course, nothing guarantees that such an

inflexion will be continuous — and nothing except the construction of an anti-capitalist hegemonic bloc can prevent its reversal.

If, as one of the more trenchant critics of this strategy (see Lawrence Harris in *WIP* 89) argues, it is the case that the reactionary Zion Christian Church is the “largest and arguably most hegemonic organisation” in the country, then the alliance has much to accomplish if its strategy is to become effective. On the other hand, however, if such is the current balance of power in the country (not to talk of the international conjuncture) the South African Left has no option — excluding, for reasons already made plain, that of a Jacobinist seizure of power — but to prepare itself for a very long haul with no guarantees whatsoever of any success at all.

This is, perhaps, an uncertain Road to South African Freedom, but at least it isn’t the Shining Path to mayhem and economic collapse proposed by the SACP’s ultra-left critics. ■

The long haul to redistribution

The SACP seems to be unduly optimistic about the extent to which demands for redistribution can be combined with demands for employment and structural growth.

Fundamentally altering the structure of the economy will probably mean substantial limitations on short-term material gains for all but the most marginalised and powerless.

It may even require agreements on wage freezes in exchange for a greater say in the productive (and reconstruction) process.

The key issue here is time. Market forces are notoriously prone to emphasise short-term gains at the expense of long-term development. This ‘failure’ remains one of the strongest justifications for a form of socialist planning.

Any reconstruction pact must ensure that strong institutions of macro-economic regulation are set in place.

However, this will entail a fairly substantial centralisation of economic and political decision-making power, and institutionalised mechanisms will have to be found which ensure that this remains ultimately subject to democratic control. ■



■ THE LONG MARCH: The road to socialism is going to require determination — and stamina



culture



■ SO FEW GOOD MEN: Mzwakhe Mbuli feels the ire of Omar Badsha, Mike van Graan, and a long list of cultural commissars

Watch your back!

THE CULTURAL DEBATE IS A BIT OF A joke at the moment. The participants in the debate are all "honourable men", as Mark Anthony said. And their names all ring bells. Loud bells.

Ting-a-ling: Mike van Graan and a long row of feathers in his cap and a lot of potential for the future.

Ting-a-ling: Njabulo Ndebele, a man of integrity fallen among fools.

Boing-ting: Omar Badsha, a man who wants to do important things, who once did important things with the camera.

Bulleting-a-ling: Fitzroy Ngcu-

The knives are out ... South Africa's cultural commissars are at war, and they fight *dirty*. **SANDILE DIKENI** decides to join the fray. And he takes no prisoners ...

kana, a brave man who fights for the cultural boycott while acting in SABC films.

Goink: George Loopuyt, famous for his guilt complex, in white robes he sits astride a white elephant, an angel who declares himself innocent of

apartheid sins.

And a faint ting-a-ling for Mewa Ramgobin, a very loud man with empty words who has a bright future in sloganeering.

Then a string of ting-a-lings for the hacks, the soldiers and the suckers. And tuck me in the sucker section.

It is loathsome to pass off the technique of back-stabbing as cultural debate. In reality this debate is a myopic drama filled with political phrases all designed to deepen the ignorance of the masses. And guess where the fun part lies? In the great knowledge that the masses will never find out that it is all

about power.

This sucker speaks for himself. A while ago I was also an important man. Brave enough to put my poetic pen aside and don a cultural political gown. I am not sorry now, because I can at least tell the nation how it all happened that we abandoned the cultural weapon for a cultural holocaust.

It all began in the days of the *Groot Krokodil*. When the Johannesburg buses still bore signs declaring themselves *blankes* and *nie blankes*. When some of us landed in detention for hating those signs — and the Loop-uys sighed in sympathy. When northern suburbs socialites fantasised about assassinating Mzwakhe Mbuli for barring them from flower shows in Paris.

Others, like me, disagreed with putting the tag of “national cultural desk” on a structure that was not national at all. We disagreed with the Letsima arts trust’s definition of “distribution of funds”.

That’s how, on a May day in 1990, I landed at a quiet *happening* hotel in Johannesburg. I still do not know who funded my trip. I asked some of the conference delegates — they did not know. The only thing I knew was that I had been nominated by Cosaw (Congress of SA Writers) Western Cape, to attend as a delegate of the Cultural Workers Congress, Western Cape. The brief came from Cosaw national. Others who said “uh-huh” to the summons included the Natal and eastern Cape regions of Cosaw, the newly-founded Pawe (Performing Arts Workers Equity), Sama (SA Musicians Alliance), the 1820 Foundation and a host of others.

It was strange that not even Junaid Ahmed (former Cosaw general-secretary — ting-a-ling) said he knew little about why we were there. He was from the national office and did not seem to be a person who would attend anything in ignorance. We asked the organisers of the meeting; they didn’t know either.

The only people who knew how they came to be present was a delegation from the Grahamstown Arts Festival. They said they had come to tell us why we should attend their festival: they were doing upliftment-type things, they were offering English classes to poor blacks.

We quarrelled a bit, but then agreed that nobody knew how we came to be there and that there was nothing

Unlike Nelson Mandela, I am not in a rush to declare people ‘men of integrity’

wrong with making friends. Which we did. And as friends we did a demolition job on the national cultural desk while Mzwakhe was doing his poems in Germany. Oh, and we decided that maybe the 1820 settlers had changed their ways and we could have joint committees with them.

As friends we agreed that a new structure should be formed to coordinate art at a national level. We all agreed. If there was dissent, I didn’t hear it vocalised. We agreed that Fosaco (Federation of SA Cultural Organisations) was necessary. We formed the NICCC (National Interim Cultural Coordinating Committee). Acceptance of the structure was strong, even from Junaid Ahmed who asked me to replace Omar Badsha on the committee as Western Cape representative. I settled for deputy.

Imagine my amazement later when Junaid swore he knew nothing about the structure. Cosaw national distanced itself from Fosaco, claiming that it was an undemocratic structure. How could this happen when Cosaw’s treasurer (John Duarte) and general secretary had been involved? It

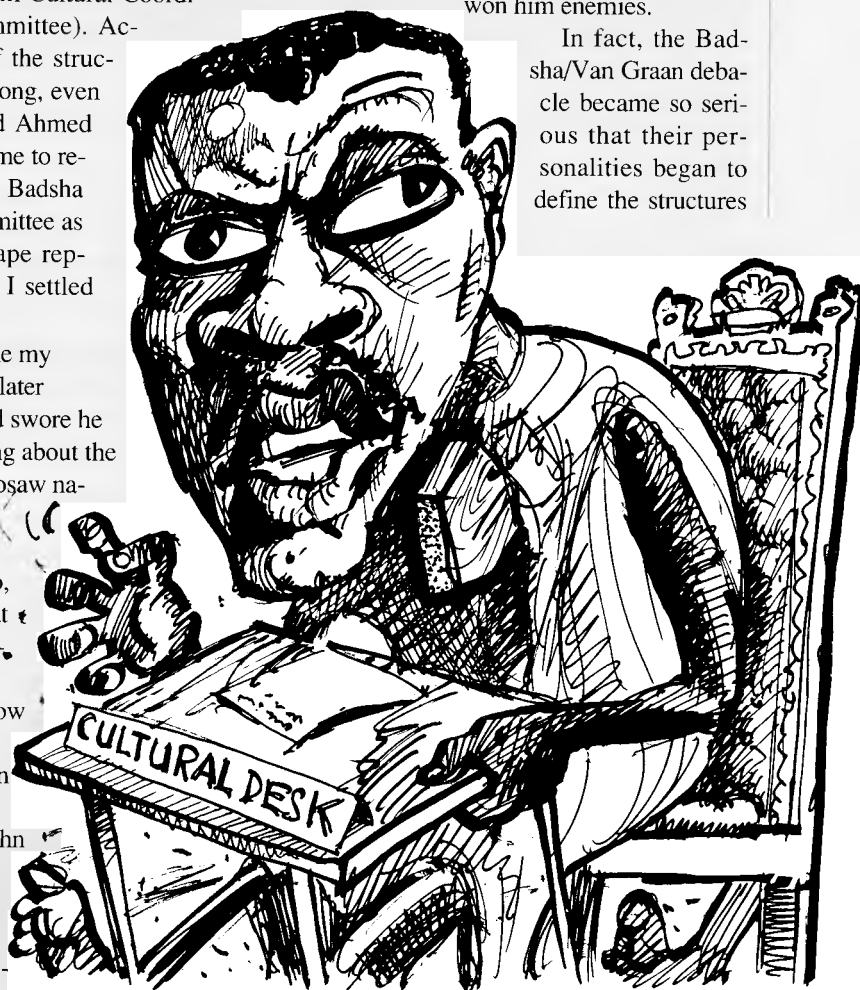
boggled the mind.

Then things turned more mysterious. I learned that the conference had been sponsored by the ANC from outside and that the funds had been channelled through Cosaw. And then the sucker punch: even the ANC distanced itself from Fosaco. Confusing times.

The politics of culture

Or were they? This sucker doesn’t think so any more. Let’s inspect the clues. Why was Ahmed careful to keep Badsha off that committee? Personal differences, I think. And that’s the point about cultural politics here. The conniving and back-stabbing that emanates from a syndrome I prefer to call “technicalities”, termed personalities in democratic cultural formations. The personalities of honourable men. Badsha (and this is common knowledge) has many enemies in this country. One of them is Mike van Graan, an outspoken critic of his way of operating, which he regards as undemocratic. It’s not only Van Graan — many of us know of people who have been alienated by Badsha. The same goes for Van Graan. His strong-willed style has won him enemies.

In fact, the Badsha/Van Graan debacle became so serious that their personalities began to define the structures



Personal differences have done more harm to the cultural process than meets the eye

they worked in. Some of us became involuntarily boxed into one or other of the camps. It didn't matter any more what merit clung to a point: if the camp was disliked, the proposal was kicked out the door.

Both Van Graan and Badsha suffered this. Personal differences have done more harm to the cultural process than meets the eye.

It is in view of this that I ask what the chances are that Fosaco was shunned because Badsha was central to it? Maybe there is some truth in the allegation that Fosaco is undemocratic and unrepresentative. But show me who is democratic and truly representative in the cultural space.

At root, I believe, are personality wars. The thing is that it is not ethically attractive to raise personality as the issue, nor is it likely to bring victory.

In truth, *some people* knew why we were all gathered there at that Johannesburg hotel. It was to dethrone Mzwakhe, who was regarded as authoritarian. This was to be done in his absence because they were also afraid of facing him square-on. And when he returned, they scattered to various corners of the city. Which makes me wonder how much weight was really attached to the need for a national structure that could make some serious inroads into cultural life that was being mutilated as apartheid heaved its last groans.

Did the people who are now in the National Arts Initiative (NAI) think seriously about this vacuum in culture back then? Then why were they silent?

Could it be that important players like Pawe and Cosaw did not object to the formation of Fosaco back then because they were more intent on seeing the demise of the cultural desk and the fall of Mzwakhe? Perhaps. Later, when another national formation was on the cards with Badsha somewhere at the helm, they fled like a chicken before a hawk. Honourable men running for cover. Honourable men killed Caesar.

As things are, Caesar is dead or should be dead. Fosaco is like the ghost of Caesar haunting the cultural sphere. How can it survive with a lack of funds and an inundation of artists with nothing but good intentions? How can it survive amid the suspicions just about every dyed-in-the-wool liberal holds against it? Amid cultural arrogance that's devoid of any proper planning, too busy

figuring out the next move of Wally Serote or Mike van Graan? Fosaco should perhaps die.

I am no fan of any Caesar, but the question is: "Is Brutus a good replacement?" NAI seems to have all the good intentions needed, more or less like Fosaco had, only they are properly plotted out and some good names (ting-a-ling, ting-a-ling) are on side to bring a flood of funds. They are also non-sectarian — they invited George Loopuyt, a government-appointed non-sectarian, and gave the ANC observer status. But I still want to know whether NAI is not also a Van Graan punch at Badsha. Some people might be forgiven for thinking so.

The ANC was *once* in bed with the NAI crew because of its embarrassment over the unwanted Fosaco baby. But at last December's NAI conference, the ANC was snubbed with observer status by a NAI that now desires uncontaminated lovers.

Is Capab non-sectarian?

Now I can see why the NAI encourages non-sectarianism by giving political parties observer status. But how is it that the performing arts councils suddenly become "non-sectarian"? Today they come out opposing state intervention in culture — a position I agree with. But where were these government appointed councils when we were fighting such interventions by the apartheid state — and being detained and banned for our troubles? It is all too convenient to disagree with government while you enforce its will at the pleasure of a nice salary.

NAI should know that parastatals are acting on the basis of their insecurities about a future dispensation. Commitment to a process and insecurities are two very different motives for participation.

Unlike Nelson Mandela, I am not in a rush to declare people "men of integrity".

If people are so quick to criticise the motives of the ANC and Fosaco, why they are they so obviously silent about the motives of these parastatals? I'm waiting for the day Van Graan writes an open letter to the performing arts councils questioning their treatment of workers at these institutions. Or reminding readers that these structures became enthusiastic about democracy only when their budgets were being slashed by government.

If you detect bitterness, you hear right. I cannot look at the past and pretend to have escaped or overcome hurt. Too many mistakes are made on the basis of ignoring the past. Yes, I admire people like Njabulo Ndebele for urging us to look ahead. But I find it difficult, though not impossible, to do so in the midst of all the deceit and hypocrisy that clouds our attempts to make our cultural future tick.

The political movements are not exempt from these blunders, and the ANC is equally guilty of pettiness. Its recent conference on culture seemed like politicking that had as its base resentment for the treatment the organisation received at the NAI conference. The politicking once more took the form of a personality: Ramgobin shouting rhetoric at Ndebele. *Skande*. Now you understand why I am talking.

What else can be said on the few obvious issues in culture? Surely logic tells us that our future lies in a non-aligned process of cultural upliftment for all our people? We agree on the role and relationship the state should have to culture, however under-developed our understanding of the word culture is in a country as scarred as ours.

But then if this issue is so obvious why the debate? The issue is not so obvious. It is very difficult to stand up in a meeting and say, "Aaag, you are playing out your differences". And it is even more difficult to announce why the personality clashes are happening.

A faint voice tells me of a middle-class war that denies an embarrassing working class of the new SA access to the culture of privilege. Or an intellectual masquerade of the middle strata, something called "Nero grunting while Rome burns". ■



Argument? What argument?

I was surprised to read Aziz Pahad's remarks in *WIP88* on the visit to Israel by members of the ANC Youth League.

Pahad states that there is no "substantial political argument" against the visit. Surely the strongest argument against such a visit is an expression of solidarity with the Palestinian people at this critical phase in their struggle, and the fact that the ANC should be seen to be opposing the policies of Israel and the expulsion of large numbers of Palestinians to a no-man's-land.

I still recall the ANC's opposition to any visits from overseas groups on the basis that it would grant legitimacy to the government.

It appears that we in the democratic movement — who have always received support and solidarity from movements in Palestine, Ireland, South America and Asia — are reluctant to reciprocate support to those movements when they need it most.

I do not think that at a time when we appear to be moving towards a democratic society we should be failing in our duty to support peoples still struggling to be liberated from oppression.
— *Mohamed Bham, Warmbaths*

All this talk about elections

What is this talk about elections in *WIP88*? Surely we on the left can appreciate that elections will benefit only the bourgeoisie and their hangers-on, at the expense of the radical workers?

Democracy must be interpreted as the dictatorship of the proletariat under the guidance of all parties of a Marxist hue. Our people will expect nothing less than this kind of democracy.

— *Xoliswa Motau, Hillbrow*

That Renamo photo

I refer to the Left Behind column in *WIP86*, where reference is made to a photograph used to illustrate an article on MK camps.

From the ANC's explanation (*that the photograph was taken in Uganda by the ANC's photograph unit — ed*) it appears that not only does Renamo president Alfonso Dhlakama look like the

ANC's Comrade Kofifi, but also that Renamo's Commandante Bomba and his brother have lookalikes in MK (they are standing to the left of Dhlakama in the picture).

This issue is not an important one to us. Anyone can pick up a photo of Dhlakama and compare it. It is clear — there is no mistake on our part.

But the ANC may have a spot of trouble. And I will tell you why: the picture in question was not taken in Uganda — it was taken in the Eastern Transvaal in 1982. It was taken by SADF Military Intelligence personnel at a Renamo camp. And the negatives were kept by the SADF!

Now it pops up in the ANC? Something smells very fishy here...

I would also like to respond to the statement in Left Behind that Renamo's "distinction between friend and foe remain as arbitrary as ever". This is a cheap shot and poor journalism. Renamo has never perceived the ANC to be the enemy.

To be truthful, we have never perceived the ANC as anything other than a neighbouring country's liberation movement which had nothing to do with us (not a particularly successful liberation movement at that — second only to Swapo in its inability to achieve any form of military success).

Renamo took on the power of the Soviets, Lonhro, Mugabe and a handful of other mercenary interest groups and we chased them out of our country. We

liberated ourselves from our oppressors — something you have still not managed to do, with all the money and foreign resources that you squander.

I suggest you take a look at your own SA statistics: your supporters, your real enemy and your so-called war of liberation are far more brutal. Your PACs and MKs — not to mention your Boer choms — make us look like children.

We do not perceive you as anything other than neighbours and possibly a future government in the future. And we will even lend you our own propaganda pictures so you can pretend you have an army!

— *M Souza, Renamo Information Office, Johannesburg*

Back to the Black Republic

South Africa has a new baby, and people want to give it a name. The names include "power-sharing" and "interim government of national unity".

Socialists and communists must revisit the 1928 Black Republic Theses. The current situation in South Africa demands a revolution whose social character must be the working class and the peasantry under the leadership of the working class and intellectual revolutionaries.

Socialists and communists must subject Marxist theory to the concrete material conditions of South Africa. They must make sure the new baby does not lead to a farce — or form the basis of a fascist state.

— *Pilani Bishop, Umtata*



■ **COMRADE KOFIFI:** The ANC and Renamo both claim this photo is theirs



THINGS YOU'LL NEVER SEE ON AGENDA ...



■ **JUST FRIENDS:** Roelf Meyer (that's him on the right) with amateur city-planner Johnson Ngxobongwana

FX cue: The pitter-patter of feet, followed by a whisper — “Daddy, who *were* your friends before Uncle Cyril came to visit?”

“Well, my liddle *spinnepok*, thassa long time ago ... Mmmm”

FX cue: Wistful murmuring modulates expertly into first four bars of Nkosi S'kelele — [slow burn-in of photo image]

Voice-over (Lester Venter pressing chin downwards, causing tone of voice to drop one octave into “authoritative” range):

“Contrary to pub-talk, government schmoozer Roelf Meyer has long been one of the *manne*. As deputy minister of law and order during the bone-crunching 1987 crackdown, he was close enough to the action to assure reporters that youths in detention were not innocent children. But it was his keen observation that mass detentions helped achieve “stability” that alerted colleagues to the presence of a lucid mind in their midst.

“And so this *plaasjapie* made good. Roelof Petrus Meyer became national chair of the high-level committee of inter-departmental heads within the National Security Management System (NSMS).

“No more dreary desk job beneath framed totems of reptilian finger-waggers. Now he visited exotic places. Like the scorched earth of Crossroads, where this photo was taken in August 1987. Soil that welcomed 70 000 squatters until *witdoek* viligantes aided by the police and SADF burnt, hacked and shot them away in 1986. And he met fascinating people. Like amateur city-planner and *witdoek* leader Johnson Ngxobongwana, seen here discussing the real estate market with Meyer who told a reporter shortly afterwards that ‘good control’ was being exercised over the area by his buddy.”

[Slow fade of photo to black]

Voice-over continues (Venter disengages chin from chest and becomes gleeful):

“Well, that’s far enough down memory lane for one week, don’t you think? Next time, on *Nostalgia Just Isn’t What It Used To Be*, we pay Mzwai Piliso a visit ...”

FX cue: Theme music

[Black screen]

X MARKS THE SPOT

The scene is Lenasia. An animated young activist is pasting up posters for a benefit screening of Spike Lee’s *Malcolm X*. Up saunters an older, grizzled version of our youngster.

And he announces: “OK. If Denzel Washington’s *Malcolm X*, and Nelson Mandela’s *Nelson X*, then who’s *Winnie?*”

Give up? OK, turn the page upside down.

PLAN B

Where we come from, strategy is what you use to cross the street without being run over. So we’re not going to lecture the wiseheads in Shell House about this plan of theirs to take a chunk of the Afrikaner vote by unleashing revisionist *boerseuns* on the *volk*.

But we do hear things, y’know.

Like when aberrant Verwoerdian offspring Hendrik sat mopping tears from his eyes during the ANC’s Parow rally the other day while Sandile Dikeni recited an Afrikaans version of Nkosi S’kelele iAfrika. And this fellow, looking both *volk-ish* and *verlig* sighed, “God, tog nie nog ‘n melankoliese boer nie.” (God, not another melancholy *boer*) No, it wasn’t Max du Preez ...

Or dashing to Jan Smuts in a taxi piloted by a pale, bearded grump who made Genghis Khan sound like a DP patron: “An’ thet Niehaus *knaap* — Jeesis, kan hy dar’m vir jou kakpraat.”

“Bu’ you know,” he continued, “this uffer one, you know, the lady with thoes dressis, naow she I can lissen to, *she tawks* sense.”

Time for Plan B, guys?

NOVEL ETHICS

Too bad that the boneheads who voted in favour of the death penalty in “parliament” last month did not learn their ethics in detective novels — which is where this quote comes from:

If to deter murder the state must instruct by example, then there is no deterrence more instructive than a public execution — and not just some run-of-the-mill public hanging either, but a kind of old-fashioned drawing and quartering with those great big Clydesdale horses pulling the guy apart on prime-time TV around eight in the evening just before the kiddies are tucked in bed.

The idea comes from Albert Camus, the phrasing is Ross Thomas’.

A: *Madame X*, silly. The 1966 tear jerker movie about a “cold, cruel charge”. It’s OK, you can stop clearing your throat now. believing she’s dead ... and then gets to defend her on a murder husband ... forcing wife ... onto the streets. Their son comes of age

And the winner is...

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