

# DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

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## An ANC that's home to stay

By Paul Graham

The ANC national conference is over. Resolutions, reports and leadership have been analysed and reported everywhere.

From the crisp flags, the massive banners by renowned artist Andrew Verster, the luxury buses for visitors, the laminated identification cards for everyone from delegates to SAP liaison officers through to the final rally at which the new NEC was introduced to the

public, this was a display of an ANC that was home to stay.

The cool jazz song, "Spare a thought for Africa", which welcomed the new leadership into the King's Park Stadium and accompanied their 15-minute triumph past the crowded stands, provided a new counterpoise to the militant poems and the loud cheers from countries and movements of the revolutionary East and Middle East.

Observers who had hoped, even as Mandela himself hoped in his opening

address, that the ANC would talk with a single and clear voice, have found it difficult to distinguish that voice.

The opening ceremony was a symbol of what the ANC faces. In a crowded and banner festooned hall sat 2 354 delegates from 15 regions (including the delegates under the banner of "MK"); staff of all the commissions and offices which merged three different backgrounds – prison, mass action and exile; the world press – eager for stories and espe-

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### No skills, no jobs, no security.....

## What future SA youth?

By Sue Valentine

In spite of the urgent need to reach out to millions of young black South Africans who are living on the fringes of society, terms such as "the lost generation" and "marginalised youth" have slipped into the realm of clichés, masking the reality of a looming social crisis.

However, in June more than 50 organisations and political groupings, ranging from the Girl Guides, to Inkatha, the PAC and ANC, met for a weekend outside Johannesburg to look at the specifics of the situation.

As a working definition, the conference agreed that the young people to whom they were referring were typically neither in school nor in employment, no strangers to a culture of violence, and burdened with



Dr Mamphela Ramphele with the ANC's Walter Sisulu at the "marginalised youth" conference.

strong feelings of failure and of anger. They are not easily integrated in this society's educational, economic, social or political institutions – and they are all too likely to remain outside society's institutions even after the accession to power of a democratically elected government.

and long term measures could/should be adopted in the fields they explored, namely employment, education and the social environment.

Although the conference theme was

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# Home to Stay

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cially for the latest sanctions position; some 350 international guests, long committed in solidarity but many now with their own countries in transition as communism and militant Islam undergo sea changes. Rural demands, women with an affirmative action agenda, delegates from war-torn regions and those in which infor-

the conference and will be able to carry out the decisions of the ANC with a lot more deftness than prior to the elections. For many, the opportunity to elect leaders through monitored secret ballot elections was as important as the outcome.

The ANC is, as its "Conference '91 News" suggested, committed



Delegates at the ANC's 48th conference

mal repression and apartheid are the norm - all had to be accommodated.

**T**he conference, from its opening speech, a moving report-back of the exile by Oliver Tambo, to its closing ceremony, a 3 am announcement of the new national executive committee, was a turning point in defining not a platform, but an identity as an organisation with roots, history, constituency, destiny and a programme for a new context.

Nevertheless, it pored over position papers and resolutions on negotiations, violence, the role of MK, organisational development and its own constitution.

The top five leaders - Mandela, Sisulu, Ramaphosa, Zuma, Nkobi and Tambo in the new position of NEC chair - received a mandate for talks from the conference.

The NEC elections themselves returned a mixture of people. Analysts, according to their own needs, will have spotted SACP members, militants, MK leadership, moderates and whites. Whatever the composition of the NEC, it now has the confidence of

to the central question: "How do we ensure the transfer of power to the people so that we can achieve democracy?"



Bishop Trevor Huddleston opens the conference.

For them, the steps are removing the obstacles to negotiations; convening an all-party conference and defining the rules of transition including an interim government; and finally the election of a constituent assembly which will lead to a new constitution and democratic elections. □

Paul Graham is regional director of Idasa in Natal.

## YOUTH CRISIS

# What future SA youth?

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"Marginalised Youth", several speakers pointed out that this term was problematic because of its negative connotations. No positive purpose at all was served, they said, by constantly referring to many of South Africa's young people as "marginalised" - in need merely of welfare assistance.

A major coup for the organisers was in securing Dr Mamphela Ramphele to deliver the keynote address.

Dr Ramphele, a deputy vice-chancellor at the University of Cape Town, was a founder member of the Black Consciousness Movement together with Steve Biko in 1969. She spent 139 days in detention in 1976/77, was banned for five years in May 1977 and was restricted to Lenyenye township in Tzaneen where she lived until a second banning order was lifted in July 1983.

In Tzaneen she opened the Itusheng Health Centre, worked as superintendent of the clinic and established a number of self-help schemes including a brick factory, a creche, a housing project, bursary fund and irrigation scheme.

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**'When children are relieved from having to police the community, they will be free to take their part'**

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In a detailed and articulate examination of the causes and implications of the marginalisation of the country's youth, Dr Ramphele painted a stark picture, but one which resisted defeatist attitudes and invited creative action and change.

The problem of the so-called "marginalised youth", said Dr Ramphele, was one which contained the conditions of a rapid downward spiral which could lead to the disintegration of the black community as a whole.

These conditions included the breakdown of family structures, low job participation, high alcohol and drug abuse, low performance at all levels, high crime rates, widespread violence, widespread despair and a victim self-image. In addition, skilled people and positive role models were moving away from certain black communities exacerbating, the disintegration of those communities.

However, she added that the problem was not only a "black" problem. The rising numbers of family murders within the white community, along with the activities of hit squads and the Civil Co-operation Bureau were signs of a disenchanted and desperate people whose world was also disintegrating.

There were also many poor, black people who did not exhibit the features characteristic of a society under extreme pressure and this needed to be acknowledged - and celebrated.

Key questions needed to be raised and addressed in understanding the magnitude and nature of the crisis, said Dr Ramphele. These included the causes of social disintegration, why it had taken so long for them to emerge and why certain individuals succeeded despite overwhelming odds.

Over the years, separate development and apartheid had