



VOOING THEM...a taste of things to come at the Goodwood showgrounds in the Cape where the NP recently hosted a family day for voters.

Campaign battles begin

Every trick in book awaits confused voters

By BARRY STREEK

RAZZMATAZ, mass rallies, slogans, posters and banners, 'sweeties' and plain lies will dominate South Africa's first real elections. On the surface.

Undue pressure, whether in the form of straight intimidation, 'mass' mobilisation or breaking up meetings, is also a likely feature of these elections, unless by some miracle the various parties can agree on the rules and monitoring...and then get their supporters to abide by them.

The ANC and the NP will build their campaigns around their most marketable assets; their leaders. Every opinion poll and all the evidence shows that Nelson Mandela and F W de Klerk are far more popular than their organisations.

This will result in highly personalised campaign strategies by two of the major parties. South

Africans can expect a heavy dose of Mandela and De Klerk photographs on posters, advertisements and pamphlets.

The other political parties will also use their leadership figures. Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party, Clarence Makwetu of the PAC, Zach de Beer of the Democratic Party and Andries Treurnicht of the Conservative Party all have their assets as political leaders, but they do not have the same charismatic appeal as a Mandela or a De Klerk.

The IFP will undoubtedly attempt to use Buthelezi in the same way, particularly because the KwaZulu Chief Minister so dominates his organisation, but his poor television image and confusing statements will not make him a vote-

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DEMOCRACY in ACTION



Idasa's goals are:

To promote the development of a democratic culture in South Africa

To address fear, prejudice, anger and other obstacles in the transition to a non-racial democracy in South Africa

To engage influential groups and individuals who may be outsiders to the transition process

To provide, wherever possible, information on critical issues and to explore ways of addressing these

To facilitate discussion of constitutional and developmental issues relevant to Southern Africa

To assist and encourage others to contribute to the attainment of these goals

EDITORIAL STAFF: Ronel Scheffer, Sue Valentine, Moira Levy, Shireen Badat.

Letters and contributions to be addressed to Democracy in Action, 1 Penzance Road, Mowbray, 7700

NATIONAL OFFICE: Hill House, 1 Penzance Road, Mowbray, Cape Town, 7700
(Tel 021- 473127; Fax 477458)

WESTERN CAPE: 5th Floor, Nerina Centre 64 Buitenkant Street, Cape Town, 8001
(Tel 021- 4623635; Fax 4614635)

JOHANNESBURG: Kevron House, 39 Honey Street, Berea, Johannesburg, 2195
(Tel 011- 4843694/7; Fax 4842610)

PRETORIA: 299 Duncan Street, Hatfield, Pretoria, 0083
(Tel 012- 3421476/7/8/9; Fax 433387)

DURBAN: 1219 Sangro House, 417 Smith Street, Durban, 4001
(Tel 031- 3048893; Fax 3048891)

PORT ELIZABETH: Fourth Floor, Standard House, 344 Main Street, Port Elizabeth, 6001
(Tel 041- 553301/3; Fax 522587)

EAST LONDON: Second Floor, Gladstone House, Gladstone Street, East London, 5201
(Tel 0431- 430047; Fax 438682)

BLOEMFONTEIN: PO Box 8098, Bloemfontein, 9300
(Tel 051- 484821/2; Fax 481580)

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Buy now, budget later

The beleaguered accountant of a fairly upmarket NGO battled to get a project budget out of a rising star who, incidentally, was also nominated for a top post in the organisation recently. Came the reply eventually: he would forward the budget the moment he had received all the expenses!

- The petty cash in that office has been known to go into overdraft too.

More NGO innovations

People were wondering how an organisation that knows a few things about distance education held a meaningful telephone conference - for between two and three hours - with 29 staff linked up?

- Someone suggested that they might have broken into buzz groups.

No bribes please

A person who has some influence in admissions to UCT's medical school counts among her many chores declining bribes from parents and family members eager that their proteges should succeed. Her

Ja-Nee

most painful experience came recently when she had to say no to the offer of a new car which 'would be waiting downstairs' should she be able to manage something.

- At last a small blow for clean administration.

Grammar for the people

A reputable publishing company phoned up to ask whether Azapo (Azanian People's Organisation) had an apostrophe in it. A little later they wanted to know whether it came before or after the 's'.

- People are really trying, you know.

Shouldn't heads roll?

On a recent 10pm TV1 bulletin we were told that movies were being screened in Alexandra township at night so that residents could have some entertainment other than violence.

Many thanks to those who responded to our appeal for ideas to improve Democracy in Action. We look forward to hearing from more readers.

White lives tip the balance once again



Violence in all its brutal manifestations continues to remain the greatest single threat to the derailment of renewed negotiations. The reaction in official quarters to the recent tragic attack on whites highlights a fundamental problem in the long road towards reconciliation and peace in South Africa.

Violence, wherever and whenever it occurs, must be condemned without qualification. No effort should be spared in bringing criminals to book who are responsible for the ongoing massacres. No political party can be allowed to be ambiguous in its reaction. There should be no room for double-talk on the question of violence. This is in particular something which the Pan Africanist Congress will have to resolve if it is to participate meaningfully in the current negotiations.

But the major problem is not the outcry over the recent attacks, nor the demand that swift action must be taken by the police. The problem lies in the different reaction by the white establishment to the thousands of equally tragic deaths in black townships. There too, little children have died and women have not been spared.

The response by the rightwing and the AWB in particular, comes as no surprise. They are apparently oblivious to the killing of blacks, but the killing of whites demands, in their terms, revenge. The usual sterile outbursts by spokesmen on behalf of the Conservative Party also come as no surprise. It is a matter of deep concern, however, when the State President calls a special session of parliament to debate the violence.

His decision to mobilise the army and his call for a debate on capital punishment clearly expresses his concern about the ever-increasing spiral of violence. This in itself is not necessarily wrong. But it is more than a coincidence that his most urgent action to date regarding killings has been immediately after whites have been added to the long list of deaths.

It is this strong reaction - in itself is commendable - which highlights a serious problem in South Africa and which could lead to considerable trauma in the future. It suggests to black South Africans that white lives are more sacred than black lives.

Understandably this will be strenuously denied. It will be argued that the State President has, on numerous occasions, made it clear that his concern is for the safety and security of all South Africans. It will also be argued that the South African Police and the South African Defence Force are there to protect the security of all South Africans. But all these protestations fly in the face of the different reaction to the slaughter of thousands of blacks, including women and children, to that of the killing of three whites. He has yet to make it clear that every single human life is sacred.

This contradiction points to a much greater problem and that

is the need for healing in our nation. Reconciliation is necessary, but it is very costly. A place to begin would be for white South Africans to begin to recognise that their fellow black South Africans have borne the brunt of the violence, not merely over the last few years, but over many decades. It is urgent for all political parties as well as the media to show the same compassion and anguish and anger over the death of one black person as they do concerning the death of one white person. It is indisputable that that is not the case now.

It will be argued further that the State President had to take tough action because he has a very precarious hold on his immediate constituency, namely future white voters. Further, that whites are alarmed, concerned and fearful of the future and he had to demonstrate that he would do everything in his power to ensure their protection. This, in cynical political terms, makes sense. But in terms of the healing of a nation it makes no sense at all.

In the first place, it suggests that Mr De Klerk is particularly concerned about the white constituency and yet he is after all the State President of South Africa, which includes all South Africans.

In the second place, it establishes a very dangerous precedent. Is it suggested for a moment that Mr Mandela, for example, should be concerned only about the deaths of black South Africans on the assumption that this is his immediate constituency? In particular, what does this say about the future?

In a new South African government, there is no doubt that blacks will be in the majority. If violence were to continue, is it assumed that a black majority government will be much more concerned to take decisive action against the killings of blacks and be less concerned about the killing of whites? Even the suggestion is horrifying and unacceptable. Yet, it is assumed that this is acceptable now.

South Africa is in transition. The attitudes and actions of the present authorities will set precedents for the future. The response to violence is a moral issue, but it is also a question of strategy.

There are many problems which have to be resolved through negotiation. But the problem of the reaction to violence is one which is not going to be solved by a handful of political leaders. It has to do with the attitude and the reaction of all South Africans. But it would help if those in charge today would lead by example so that those in charge tomorrow will be even-handed in their concern for peace, safety and security for all South Africans - be they black or white.

*Alex Boraine
Executive Director*

JOHANNESBURG

What democracy really means...

The Training Centre for Democracy continues to run a variety of training courses for companies. Each course is based on the specific needs of the company and its workforce. The centre also focuses on relationship building courses within companies.

Similar programmes are run for principals, teachers and schools as a means of broadening the education for democracy campaign. For further information contact Paul Maseko or Alison Curry at (011) 484-3694.

The rural vote

The Training Centre for Democracy is involved in the production of a voter education package designed specifically for use in rural and peri-urban areas. The package will comprise posters and a training manual and will be available for use with illiterate and semi-literate groups from early in June.

WESTERN CAPE

Democracy for youth

A youth workshop on 'Education for Democracy' will be held on April 17 in conjunction with the Western Cape Youth Forum. For details telephone Idasa at (021) 462-3635.

On May 7, there will be an introductory 'Schools in Transition' workshop for the staff of Nompumelelo School in Guguletu.

Metro moves

The process of 'levelling the playing fields' in the metropolitan transition will be under discussion at a meeting to be held on April 28 at the Woodstock Holiday Inn from 7.30-9.30 pm. Telephone the Western Cape office for reservations and details.

PORT ELIZABETH

Pondering the unknown

'Transitional Uncertainties', is the title of a public debate to

be held at the Port Elizabeth City Hall on April 15. Speakers include Jeremy Seekings, Ian Philips and Kader Asmal.

Also on April 15, the same speakers will address a business luncheon in the city.

Local government, local needs

On April 23 a seminar will be held in Port Alfred to examine regional development needs.

The question of an interim local government in the Eastern Cape is the theme of a conference to be held at the end of April. For details please contact Idasa's PE office at (041) 55-3301.

Community courts

Two further meetings on the subject of community courts will be held in the next few weeks.

On April 17 & 18 there will be a workshop in Humewood, with a follow-up workshop on April 24 or 25 (date to be confirmed). For further details contact Max Mamase at (041) 55-3301.

EAST LONDON

Schools in transition

Idasa's East London and Western Cape offices will combine their resources to run two workshops for schools in the Border region in April.

On April 14 there will be a workshop for the staff and governing body of Dale Junior College, King William's Town and on April 15, a similar workshop in East London.

Economic development

Following the 'Finance for Development' seminar on April 3, the next seminar topic will be local economic development, on May 8. Speakers are still to be confirmed.

A regional workshop on transition in local government will be held on April 17. For details telephone Glenn Bownes on (0431) 43-0047.

NATAL

Union views on economic policy

The next Future Forum seminar will focus on the National Economic Forum's role in moulding economic policy. The speaker will be Alec Erwin, education officer of the National Union of Metal Workers of SA. Contact Louella at (031) 304-8893.

TRANSVAAL

Processes in progress

Idasa's Pretoria office continues its facilitation work with a meeting of the Eastern Transvaal Economic Development Forum in Nelspruit on April 24.

In May a closed workshop will be held to discuss a code of conduct with teachers, parents and students at J Kekana High School in Mamelodi.

BAROMETER ON NEGOTIATION

POLITICAL CHANGE (Volume 5 Number 2)

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE (Volume 5 Number

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INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS CONFERENCE

SA begins the climb back into the world economy

By WARREN KRAFCHIK

SOUTH Africa's re-integration into the world economy must rate as one of the most pressing priorities facing this country as it moves towards reconstruction. Yet South Africa's emergence from decades of isolation comes at a time not only of worldwide recession and turbulence, but also of dramatic global economic shifts and realignments.

All of which makes the need to fully understand international economic trends, and how they will affect this country and this region, essential for future policy-makers. It is in this context that Idasa will be holding an international conference at the end of April, to focus the spotlight on South Africa's international economic relations in the 1990s. Organised jointly by Idasa and the Washington-based Aspen Institute, the four-day gathering will bring together some of South Africa's leading economic policy-makers and top international advisors and practitioners. The conference will draw on the experience of countries at similar stages of development or that face similar challenges, like Mexico, Korea, Malaysia and Argentina.

Among the international guests will be Duckwoon Nam, the former Prime Minister of Korea; Dominic Mulaisho, the governor of the Bank of Zambia; Daim Zainuddin, the former Malaysian Minister of Finance and Thorvald Stoltenberg, the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who will also deliver the keynote address.

The aim of the conference is to inform and stimulate discussion, across South African party lines, about the critical issues facing the economy in the years ahead. The focus will be mainly on global trends in trade, capital flows and international finance institutions.

The conference aims to highlight the significant role that economic growth will have to play in facilitating internal development and redistribution. It will start from the premise that growth is linked to export capacity, foreign investment, loans and aid –

all important external factors that need to be analysed and assessed, particularly in the light of previous balance of payment constraints on economic growth.

The foreign participants will focus on their areas of expertise – international economic trends, the comparative experience of other countries and the nature of the post-Cold War economic environment.

The agenda for the conference is the product of a process of regional meetings and consultations with all the major economic actors in the country over the past 12 months. Expected at the conference will be a

range of top officials and opinion-makers who are concerned with shaping future economic policy in South Africa.

These will include ANC president Nelson Mandela, who will open the conference, and ANC economics head Trevor Manuel. Among government representatives will be Gerhard Croeser, the director-general of the Department of Finance and JP Botha, chief

economist of the Central Economic Advisory Services. SA Reserve Bank governor Chris Stals will also attend.

The PAC delegation includes Gora Ebrahim and Sipho Shabalala. Gavin Woods will represent the Inkatha Institute. Trade unionists will include Jayendra Naidoo (Cosatu), James Mdlalose (Nactu) and Marcel Golding (Num). Academics from universities and research institutes across the country will also attend, along with prominent financial leaders such as Anglo American's Michael Spicer.

Morning plenary sessions will be devoted to broad analysis, and the afternoons will be for intensive small-group discussion and examination. Beyond this two-tier approach, attempts will be made to reach a wider audience through the release of a post-conference book summarising keynote addresses and conference findings.

Warren Krafchik, Idasa's economics consultant, is co-ordinating the conference. Alex Boraine of Idasa and Pauline Baker of the Aspen Institute are co-directors of the project.

'South Africa's re-integration into the world economy must rate as one of the most pressing priorities facing this country'

Kadalie on board

Idasa welcomes University of the Western Cape academic, Ms Rhoda Kadalie, to its board of trustees. A graduate of The Institute for Social Studies at The Hague in the Netherlands, Kadalie specialises in women and development. As UWC's Gender Equity officer she is responsible for addressing issues of university affirmative action policy with regard to women.



Rhoda Kadalie

She recently presented a paper on violence against women in South Africa at a seminar in Stockholm, and last year delivered a paper at a conference in Japan on 'Women's Organisations in South Africa: Models for Peaceful Co-existence in the New South Africa'. These are the latest in a long line of papers and publications Kadalie has to her name.

Kadalie has visited West Germany and the Netherlands on sabbatical and, in 1990, participated in a staff exchange programme with the University of Missouri in Michigan.

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Campaign battle

From Page 1

winning personality except among IFP loyalists.

And votes cast in the ballot box, not the glamour or profile, are what count in elections, as indeed Idasa's executive director, Alex Boraine, and its policy director, Van Zyl Slabbert, learnt very quickly when they entered active politics in the 1974 elections and the subsequent Pinelands by-election.

The voters, election workers throughout the world soon discover, are ordinary people who do not in general go to public meetings or join parties or attend committee meetings. To win them over, parties need the unsung heroes and heroines of any successful campaign: the canvasser. The person who night after night goes and knocks on doors to canvass support and win votes.

The National Party used to be very good at this, developing in many constituencies a virtual cell system to keep constant tabs on voters. In a constituency like Piketberg on the West Coast, more than half the voters were actually signed up members of the party.

This machine created an impenetrable wall in most white areas, until the Conservative Party split

divided it and its arrogance of power alienated it from its support base. The DP were also good at canvassing in their strongholds.

But those committed DP supporters who actually walked the streets in safe Nationalist seats trying to persuade ordinary (white) people to accept what the NP now takes to be self-evident know what elections

What the polls foretell

Most polls predict an ANC victory in a democratic election. The organisation itself claims that independent surveys and its own research give it at least 53 percent of the vote. A range of pollsters, including the HSRC, predict the following:

- National Party 20-21%
- IFP 4,5-5% (HSRC says 10%)
- PAC 5%
- DP 3-5%
- Azapo 1%

are all about. It takes real commitment to knock on doors on a cold, wet night and face apathy, antagonism and abuse.

That, however, is how elections are won, whatever the media and the experts might say. Campaign strategies, charismatic leaders, image, money and resources all count, but in the end the voters do the voting.



THE PROTEST...mass rallies will dominate on the surface.

In South Africa's first democratic elections, the credibility and image of political parties may count more than in later elections because this time the majority of the people will be voting for the first time and the issues will be more important than day-to-day concerns, but even then the voters will still ultimately count.

So, the party that can best combine its political message and campaign strategies with effective grassroots structures throughout the country should win.

And at this early stage, the ANC has, on paper, a head start. It has announced plans to transform its 1 400 branches and 900 000 members into an election team of 14 regions, 94 sub-regions and 180 000 election workers and canvassers, roughly one worker for 100 voters. It also has an election budget of R180 million.

It is estimated that South Africans will have 6 000 to 9 000 polling stations with between 2 000 and 4 500 voters each. If, as has been proposed, voting is held over five days, the nationally-based parties will have to organise party support operations at every one of those polling stations.

That operation would stretch the resources of any political party and the ANC is the only party to have revealed national cam-



THE REAL THING...votes cast are what count in elections.

campaign plans. The NP and the DP have also developed national plans and more modest fundraising targets – the DP, for instance, has set a target of R25/R30 million – but their campaign plans are not as (publicly) developed as the ANC's.

The IFP, PAC and CP have yet to reveal much about their election strategies, but unless the Cosag grouping can be transformed into an election alliance, the CP cannot hope for anything but a miniscule role if it is only going to campaign among rightwing whites.

Any party, however, that is serious about the election will have to campaign nationally if it wants to feature in the new democratic parliament, particularly if a minimum 5 percent threshold is laid down for representation in an interim multi-party cabinet.

With some 55 percent of the estimated 21 million voters located in three predominantly rural regions – Border/Ciskei/Transkei, Natal/KwaZulu and Northern Tansvaal – those grassroots structures throughout the country are going to be vital for any serious political party.

'On paper, the ANC has a head start at this stage'

Another logistical nightmare for the somewhat staid party structures and their relatively old leadership is that, according to Development Bank figures, half the voters will be under the age of 30 and half the African voters will be between 18 and 25.

Within those realities, the ANC will market its role as the leader of the liberation struggle and the people's party, the NP will stress its ability to give people security and stability, the PAC will emphasise black solidarity against white economic power, the DP will promote its commitment to human rights and democracy as well as its clean image, the IFP will sell itself as a moderate and national grouping and the CP will tell whites that they have been sold-out and should fight for their rights.

The ordinary voter may well be confused by all this and the effective canvassing machines will try to resolve their confusion by promoting their parties.

Don't be surprised however, if the NP does not yet resort to 'sweeties', its time honoured practice of announcing good news, like tax cuts and civil service salary increases, shortly before the polling date – unless the interim government can eliminate the use of this shameful tactic to win votes...

Barry Streek is on the political staff of the Cape Times.

From excitement to optimism... to gloom

Democracy in Action asked a few 'ordinary people' how they felt about the forthcoming general election. Here's what they had to say...

KHAYELITSHA

MR XX is a trader in Khayelitsha who is not sure exactly what the elections might bring, but is nevertheless keen for the day when he can cast his vote.

'Most people are not scared of what election day might bring, they are excited and they will vote. I can't be sure what will happen after elections, we don't really know what those people (whites who currently hold power) will do.'

What does he think must change?

'We want apartheid to go, they say it's been scrapped already, but it continues. Then we want to have the same amount of wealth as the whites – without money you can do nothing.'

'Sometimes when you go to court and listen to the cases, you see how apartheid is still there. The white guys get a chance, they're let out on small bail amounts, but the black guys get given large amounts which they know we can't pay or they're held in custody.'

'If a white wants to buy a firearm, then even if he is a young guy, he will get it. Even if I apply for a licence then I won't get one.'

Mr XX is not particularly optimistic about what will happen after the elections.

'I doubt that things can be normal; we are too mixed. There are some white people who don't hate us, they like us, but others hate too much. I don't trust them.'

'Only God can change things, I don't know what we can do.'

'If I come from East London I can't get a job in Cape Town, but a white guy who comes from overseas gets a job and a house. They won't trust me and I'm from just around the corner, but they will give jobs to white guys.'

RONDEBOSCH

A determined optimist is how Joan Smith describes herself in the run-up to the elections. She hopes the imminent poll will bring about a government of national unity, and anticipates that it will be dominated by the

ANC – 'by sheer force of numbers'.

Firmly positive about the future, she says: 'I am the eternal optimist. I think it will work, we will have to make it work. You have to believe that. And I think the world wants it to work as much as we do.'

Smith – not her real name, she was not keen to be identified – recently spent an afternoon observing parliament, an experience that left her sobered, even her optimism tempered.

'I was disgusted watching these rude, uncouth people at work.' She suggests future voters should all be given the opportunity to visit parliament. 'They should see how parliament really works, and where the people they are voting for will be going and what they will be doing.'

She also thinks prospective candidates should undertake extensive training programmes, including visits to countries 'where parliaments and democracy are established and really work'.

She cautioned that there exists a danger that the demands and expectations of the impoverished majority cannot be met. 'People may become disillusioned if their daily lives don't improve. There could be problems in that sphere.'

Also worrying to her is the escalating violence in the country, which she attributes to groups who don't want to see a negotiated settlement succeed. She believes there is a 'sinister element of some kind' at work.

For elections to succeed, she believes there is a need for voter education and training, and welcomes initiatives to establish a national election monitoring organisation.

'It is inevitable that there will be malpractices of some kind. We don't have a history of democracy in this country. It gives me hope to think there could be a group of eminent South Africans monitoring the process.'

WALMER ESTATE

This is how a forty-something 'coloured' receptionist feels about the forthcoming poll:

'I'm not sure that I will vote in the coming

From excitement

From Page 7

elections. I never had the vote all these years and I'm not sure what difference my voting now will make.

I will still have to be convinced to vote and so far none of the political parties have convinced me that I should vote for them. None of the parties currently in parliament or those outside of it have shown that they are going to be changing anything in the country significantly.

I feel very scared and sad when I think of the future of this country. When I look at my two sons I wonder what the future holds for them. Everything just seems to get worse all the time. I wonder whether my sons will be able to find decent employment. The unemployment situation is so bad and the crime figures just seem to be rising all the time. People are starting to get very desperate.

Most of my friends feel the same way I do about the situation in this country. None of them have made up their minds about which party they will vote for, let alone whether they will be voting in the first place.'

KTC

For Funeka, who lives in KTC and chars in the southern suburbs of Cape Town, the times have changed. Greed and criminal behaviour is rife and she misses the community spiritedness of the townships. There is no reason to believe that things will be any different after a democratic election, she says.

She has 'bought' an ANC membership



THE VOTERS: divergent hopes, fears.

GISELE WULFSOHN, Southlight

card and occasionally attends community meetings in KTC. But deep down she doesn't think life in the new South Africa will be any different to that in her home territory of Transkei after independence.

'Whoever comes to power may make it even worse. It could be the same as in the Transkei where all Matanzima's family got the best jobs and earned more than anyone else.'

Why so pessimistic? She explains that it was the struggle politics of the mid-80s which, in introducing the element of force, first disillusioned her.

'It don't want to be forced to do anything against my will. We were forced to go to funerals, buy from the expensive township shops, join stayways...

'It is easy for the political parties to go around now and say that we won't be forced

to vote, but I'm sure they will ask why one didn't vote.'

A major problem, says Funeka, is the fact that ordinary people do not understand the negotiation process. Explanations in the mother tongue don't help much either because the concepts are new. 'It doesn't make sense...there are too many things that's got to happen, if you miss one thing, you're lost.'

She would not complain if things stayed as they are at the moment - but it would help if VAT were abolished, and the cost of food, clothing and transport were kept down.

Real change will only come, says Funeka, if people again practised their traditional communal values.

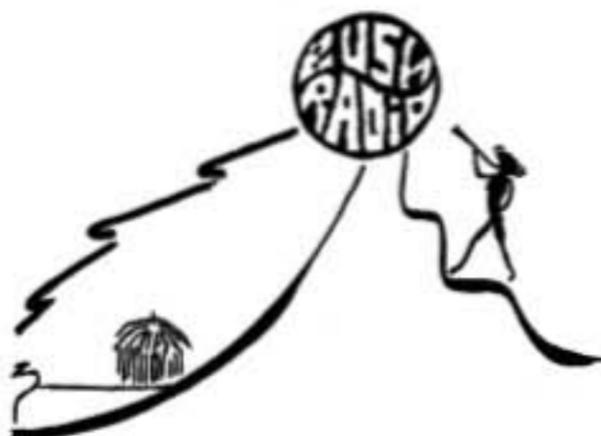
'My people were kind, we used to have feeling for each other, we used to greet each other...but not these days.

Bush Radio says, let's do it!

FOR a couple of hours on Sunday April 25, the Cape Town-based community radio initiative, Bush Radio, will go on air for the first time.

The concept of community radio has long been debated and discussed among service organisations, students and individuals around the country, and the volunteer-based Bush Radio project has been in progress for the past two years.

Bush Radio aims to serve as a community access radio station by offering service



organisations, community and mass-based organisations the chance to speak for themselves.

Based in Salt River in Cape Town, the fledgeling radio station will reach only a limited audience, but it will rely heavily on broad public support to survive, not only financially, but in terms of running

the gauntlet of broadcasting without official sanction.

Applications for a licence from the Department of Home Affairs have been turned down on the grounds that the broadcasting environment is in state of flux and all applicants should wait.

However, those involved in the interim national network of community radio broadcasters believe that community radio warrants special attention - it is not of a scale to threaten the powers-that-be and should be allowed on air as soon as possible.

Community radio operates on a non-profit basis. Its motivation is the exchange of information and ideas among ordinary people in an informal (radio-facilitated) environment. It is a 'voice from below' - music, dramas, talk-shows, stories and documentaries - from a perspective different to

'If you greet someone he or she can easily ask why you do that because she doesn't know you. It is very, very strange to us.'

KALK BAY

Freelance journalist Michelle Saffer holds out little hope for much change resulting from an election. 'I am not optimistic or pessimistic, it could go either way. I have no faith in politicians.'

She has never voted before – on principle. Having refused to take part in whites-only elections, she is nevertheless not convinced she will vote this time around. 'Voting will not be an automatic thing for me. It depends on the person, not the party.'

She adds that she cannot see herself voting for the National Party or the Democratic Party. 'Possibly I would vote for a candidate from the South African Communist Party, partly because I am attracted to what it stands for and partly because communism is collapsing all over the world and I would like to vote for it if I could.'

What she will be looking for in a candidate is a sincere commitment to economic development – and that means 'both growth and redistribution, not just one or the other'.

Her only real fear for South Africa's future is the possibility of continuing and escalating violence. 'I don't expect a civil war but I do worry that the anger and the expectations of people won't be able to be controlled. I worry that people won't be prepared to go through the democratic process, that people won't be prepared to wait, that it's too late to appeal to reason. Then what we will get will be outbreaks of violent anarchy and continuing and intensifying violence.'

those held by people in positions of power and prominence.

When Bush Radio ventures out onto the airwaves on April 25, its best defence will be a groundswell of public support, not so much for itself, but for the concept and principle of community radio.

The project is appealing for a simple letter or fax of support which will be greatly appreciated. It will serve both as a word of encouragement for those who will be broadcasting, and as an indication to those in power of the extent of public support for the right of small-scale, not-for-gain community stations to go on air.

Letters may be addressed to:

The Bush Radio Co-ordinating Committee, Bush Radio, PO Box 13290, Mowbray, 7705 (Fax 021-4485451 or telephone 021-4485450).

A healthy approach to radio

By SUE VALENTINE

IT'S 9.25am inside the converted trucking container which houses Zibonele Clinic in Khayelitsha and there's an atmosphere of anxious activity, excitement and anticipation.

Underneath the hospital bed at the end of the narrow corridor someone is fiddling with what appears to be nothing more than a compact hi-fi set.

There are five minutes to go before Radio Zibonele, a primary health care radio station, takes to the airwaves of Town 2 in Khayelitsha. The community health workers, with no knowledge of transmitters, signal frequencies or radio journalism interviewing techniques, fill the roles of reporters, presenters and role-play actors in the morning broadcast. In an environment where many people are illiterate and information by word of mouth is the norm, radio is the perfect medium for mass communication.

A sheet of newsprint stuck on the wall gives a breakdown of the broadcast sequence. The health workers who will be doing today's programme shuffle their notes nervously and wait in the corridor for their turn to squeeze into the tiny obstetrics examination room that serves as the studio. The air is indeed pregnant with anticipation!

Until just a few minutes ago the studio guest was nowhere to be found, but to everyone's relief he saunters in just before the signature tune starts up. A former TB sufferer, he will be the central focus of today's programme which will discuss the symptoms and effects of TB and how to treat and avoid the disease.

Just three broadcasts old, Radio Zibonele is the result of the efforts of Gabriel Urgoiti, an Argentinian doctor with experience of

community radio in the deep south of his own country. Urgoiti has been working in the South African health sector for 12 years.

The aim of the tiny radio station is to enhance and reinforce the services provided by the community health workers who offer primary health care treatment and advice during daily home visits in the area.

Through its tiny transmitter and antennae fastened to the roof of the container, Radio Zibonele can be heard up to 50km away. And in the crowded conditions of Khayelitsha, this means that potentially 20 000 people can tune in to the weekly, hour-long programme on health care.

The broadcast is entirely in Xhosa. Urgoiti

serves as the producer and sound engineer, monitoring the 30cm square mixing desk, popping in cassettes and the odd compact disc, while health workers take the seat next to the hospital



bed and pick up the microphone.

It's all very rough and ready, but the health care advice transmitted by Radio Zibonele every Tuesday morning comes through loud and clear to anyone in the 5-km radius with an FM radio.

'The only complaint is that the broadcasts are too short'

The response so far has been enthusiastic. The only complaint is that the broadcasts are too short. The only danger is that because it is illegal to broadcast without a licence, Radio Zibonele may not survive.

Zibonele means 'we did it together'. Here's hoping these words hold true for many more broadcasts!

Sue Valentine is Media Director with Idasa.



Wider community: civil awareness is an important ingredient of capacity building.

GISELE WULFSOHN, Southlight

A team of US visitors are impressed with what they found in South Africa's non-governmental sector, but they caution that more needs to be done on development issues.

NGOs get tentative thumbs-up

REPRESENTATIVES of several United States foundations who conducted a fact-finding tour of a range of South African non-governmental organisations (NGOs) late in 1992 have released a report which describes the sector as 'strong and vibrant'.

However, they caution that due to the country's still tentative political future, and given the legacy of apartheid, there is a dearth of comprehensive development planning and expertise.

The decades of isolation from the international community have left South Africans lacking confidence in the merits of their own development efforts and experience.'

Although the group brought an outsiders' perspective, we could do well to heed some of their observations and recommendations about the culture and practice of NGOs in South Africa.

The delegation was impressed by the self-help ethos among the historically dispossessed and the symbiosis between NGOs and communities, adding that these were areas where the world could learn from South Africa.

The keen awareness of the concept of accountability among South African NGOs was also noteworthy, but there were 'some questions as to how much of the talk reflects good intentions and how much can be translated into practice'.

The NGO sector in South Africa tended to be strongest in the area of 'welfare' – often providing services which should be the responsibility of the local authority. This raised questions about whether NGOs should continue such work or become devel-

opment agencies. A further option was to develop the concept of 'advocacy' – pressurising government and local authorities into providing services and development programmes.

The concept of 'advocacy' was largely absent from South African NGOs. Although there was a long tradition of political activism in South Africa, the absence of any tradition of democratic government meant that there was little appreciation of 'public policy advocacy'.

The visitors suggested that given the extensive American experience in this field, South Africans could benefit from discussion on the potential 'advocacy role' of the philanthropic and NGO sectors.

'By delaying focusing on the nuts and bolts of development planning NGOs run the risk of losing the initiative'

Advocacy was of particular importance when trying to influence government development policies. However, the group noted that while South Africans seemed very comfortable debating definitions of 'development' and 'empowerment', discussion around the characteristics of a national development policy remained tentative.

They warned that 'by delaying focusing on the nuts and bolts of development planning in South Africa', NGOs ran the risk of losing the initiative.

'South Africa's isolation from the interna-

tional development community has created a level of unrealistic idealism among South African development leaders about the extent to which indigenous NGOs can compete with and/or shape the operating procedures of major international development organisations.

'There is little insight among South Africans into the experience of other developing countries at the hands of international agencies and very little understanding of the workings of the international development industry.'

According to the US delegates, the major impetus for South African economic development will undoubtedly be government-driven. This raises questions, already being considered in certain circles, about the role a new democratic government will allow existing NGOs.

Such a new government will be under pressure to deliver substantial results quickly, whereas the existing NGO sector in South Africa is currently best equipped to tackle small, localised projects. International donors will also be impatient for rapid results, but, say the US delegates, an initial 'gush' of international development funding which might materialise at the appropriate political moment may not be sustained beyond a few years.

A bigger question was how the advent of bilateral donor arrangements (ie government-to-government aid) would affect the local NGO development sector. Some scenarios suggest that NGOs could collectively constitute themselves as fiscal intermediaries

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Academics and activists meet over debated terrain

As the debate on definitions and semantics developed, however, mutual respect grew between the theoreticians and the activists and the combination of theory and practice resulted in a dynamic workshop. The activists related their hands-on experience of organisations functioning in civil society, while at the same time acknowledged the importance of analysis to develop a perspective of how and where they were operating in society.

The notion of civil society is attracting world-wide attention and theories currently being expounded are diverse and confusing. There is some consensus on a shift in the identification of the driving force for change from primarily the labour movement to broader sections of society, but beyond that the workshop reached no final conclusions and new concepts were proposed and developed.

Larry Diamond and Naomi Chazan put forward fairly restricted definitions of civil society, based largely on which organisations form part of civil society. Diamond defined civil society 'as that realm of organised social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting and autonomous from the state'. It is distinct from broader society in that it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests and ideas, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state and hold

state officials accountable. Voluntary collective action within the public sphere takes place in socio-political and ideological as well as economic markets; civil society thus implies notions of partiality, pluralism and competition. Organisations that seek to monopolise a sphere of collective life or to totally envelop the lives of their members are therefore not part of civil society.

Civil society also excludes activities of parochial groups that seek to win a formal place in the state or to displace the state. Actors in civil society recognise the principle of state authority and the rule of law and need the protection of these to prosper and be secure. Civil society therefore not only contains state power but legitimises state authority when that authority is based on the rule of law.

Prof Chazan proposed a provocative definition that led to heated but constructive debate. She proposed that 'civil society includes those institutions and individuals that are simultaneously independent from the state whilst also reinforcing state legitimacy'.

Debates about the meaning and role of civil society continue to preoccupy intellectuals and activists alike. At a workshop held in Senegal recently debates gave way to a general recognition of the urgent need to protect and develop civil society in Africa as a means of encouraging the continent's fledgeling democracies. **SHELAGH GASTROW** of Idasa's Africa Programme was there.

A MEETING place for African intellectuals and grassroots activists and a place to match academic theory with reality and practice on the ground was the vision behind a workshop on democracy and civil society, held in Senegal in March.

The function of the workshop, organised by the Gorée Institute, was to contribute towards democratisation in Africa by helping to strengthen the analytical, theoretical and practical capacities of civil society.

The workshop brought together prominent theorists on civil society, such as Prof Naomi Chazan of the Truman Institute in Israel and Dr Larry Diamond of the Hoover Institution, Stanford, and pro-democracy activists from various African countries including Togo, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Kenya, Ivory Coast, South Africa, Morocco, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Cameroon and Egypt.

Comparisons were made with developments in the Philippines and China, as well as between rural and urban conditions by Ethiopian political economist Prof Fantu Cheru and Dr Mohammed Halfani of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam.

Other participants included the governance co-ordinator of the Ford Foundation, Dr Kwesi Aidoo from Ghana; the co-ordinator of the African Leadership Forum/Global Coalition for Africa's Study on Transitions, Prof Boubabcar Baary, and representatives from institutions like Unesco as well as Dakar intellectuals.

Debate focused on the definition of civil society, with different schools of thought emerging. The concept was pushed to its limit by the contributions from 'civil society practitioners' – or grassroots activists – who were less concerned with definitions and more concerned with the job that had to be done and the need to find ways to do it.



TOP: André Zaïman of the Gorée Institute with Dr Mohammed Halfani (Tanzania) and Prof Fantu Cheru (Ethiopia). ABOVE: Adigun Agbaje (Nigeria), Edu Raven (Togo), Naomi Chazan (Israel), Francis Wodie (Ivory Coast) and Gehad Auda (Egypt).

Academics, activists meet

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She suggested that a distinction be drawn between the state and the regime. Civil society organisations could simultaneously confront a particular (undemocratic) regime occupying the state, while reinforcing the legitimacy of the state as an institution.

Diamond's definition was challenged by Mahmoud Mamdani of the Centre for Basic Research in Uganda who warned that the exclusion of certain sectors from the definition could result in their marginalisation. He emphasised the incomplete nature of the concept of civil society and pointed out that an uncritical application of it to Africa could lead to the exclusion of large and important segments of societies, such as the peasantry.

It became clear that while it is relatively easy to define the state, with its constitution, institutions, bill of rights, etc and to determine its character (democratic or undemocratic), civil society is more flexible, informal, unstable and diffuse (or may not exist at all).

At the same time, various processes clearly take place in civil society, such as mobilisation, protest, engagement, negotiation, communication, opposition, partnership, division, education, culture, development, movement, co-operation, advocacy, research and religion.

Although activists tended to put forward an organisational definition of civil society, it became clear in debate that they perceived it more as a terrain of struggle and an understanding began to develop, picked up by the



Workshop participants with the Imam of Gorée Island and village head, Bocar Dia.

GISELE WULFSOHN, Southlight

academics, of a more inclusive concept that recognised that civil society was not always democratic and that organisations could exist within it which could be anti-democratic.

In this respect civil society could be seen as the terrain in which people strive to protect and represent their interests, whether or not this is democratic.

Participants also considered the growing dependency of civil society organisations on foreign donors and governments and the need for self-reliance where possible; the relationship between civil society institutions and the state or regime, and how that affects democracy; accountability, ethics and corruption in both civil society and the state; the need to draw South Africa into the debate about civil society on the continent and, arising out of the above, the need for greater pan-African networking among civil society organisations.

The networking which has already been done on the continent by Idasa was cemented by reinforcing existing contacts and developing new acquaintances. Given the marginalisation of Africa, and how this will affect South Africa, it is crucial that the network develops self-reliance among civil society organisations in Africa.

A booklet to be released from the workshop will form the basis for a training programme for civil society practitioners. The first training workshop will be held in June when the training modules will be designed.

The workshop on civil society and democracy was part of a three-part series exploring civil society, the economy and the state and their relationship to democracy and development in Africa. The economy workshop, entitled Democracy, Development and Growth in Africa, will be held from May 24-26 on Gorée Island.

NGOs get tentative thumbs-up

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between government and the NGO sector. Another option was for the NGO sector to organise itself into a collective voice in government development planning.

The new buzz word in South African NGOs, noted the visitors, was 'capacity building'. They said it was also a favourite among funders because training courses were 'neatly packaged' activities which were easily quantifiable and which donors felt comfortable funding.

However, the group asked whether capacity building was only a matter of providing more skilled personnel for NGOs or whether it was primarily a question of vision. For example, an organisation could have excellent administrative capacity but lack the

capacity to envisage the necessary steps to become a player in the national development arena.

A further question was whether capacity building referred only to NGOs or whether it extended to the communities within which NGOs worked. The delegates noted that 'community mobilisation and education - so-called civil awareness - around development seemed to be an equally important ingredient.

'Perhaps the more fundamental question is whether South African NGOs still have the time to develop the necessary capacity or whether they may be sidetracked by an over-hasty government and the domineering ethos of international aid agencies.'

Yet another consideration was whether current NGO leaders would be absorbed into

the civil service with the advent of a new democratic government, which was not necessarily seen as problematic by the visitors.

They repeatedly remarked on the number of 'incredibly impressive' women who were playing key roles within NGOs yet who seldom headed the organisations. The group noted that private US foundations could be influential in this regard by looking beyond first-tier NGO leadership in order to advance new leaders and, particularly, women.

Traditionally 'indigenous philanthropy' has come from a handful of major South African corporations. But, the report notes, 'despite the pockets of extraordinary wealth in South Africa, there is no established tradition of individual philanthropy, principally because the South African tax codes have never favoured this type of activity'.

By **KOBUS VAN LOGGERENBERG**

It is not enough simply to have people on board – even though they cannot participate effectively because of a lack of skills and experience, or they are deliberately frustrating the process because of fear or lack of understanding about the need for a new dispensation.

If one takes a brief look at existing regional forums a very encouraging picture emerges.

In the Cape Province at least three major regional initiatives are in progress. The Western Cape Economic and Development Forum seeks to reach consensus on strategies for economic development and on actions

In Natal a regional economic forum is in the process of being launched. A convening committee was set up by the Consultative Business Movement (CBM) to carry the initiative forward. In addition good progress has been made with the Durban Functional region (DFR) in setting up the DFR Metropolitan Development Forum.

The forum represents an attempt (jointly facilitated by Idasa and Operation Jumpstart) to ensure an inclusive process of development which is acceptable to the greater Durban community.

In the Transvaal there are several regional development processes. In January 1993, the PWV Economic and Development Forum was launched after eight months of plenary sessions and steering and drafting committee meetings which formulated agreement on the need for a forum, its objectives, who should participate, a modus operandi and a broad work programme.

This programme comprises three elements: a rapid review programme focusing on key elements and looking

at trends and consequences; a parallel specific projects programme looking to address actionable policy or operational matters; and a longer term comprehensive policy review programme. This process has been facilitated by CBM which now serves as the interim secretariat for the forum's agreed plenary programme.

In the Eastern Transvaal, Idasa is involved with the facilitation of two simultaneous processes. The Eastern Transvaal Political Discussion Forum is concerned with current political and constitutional issues such as demarcation, elections and future systems for regional and local government, while the Eastern Transvaal Development Forum focuses on the economic and development issues of the region.

Idasa is also involved in setting up a Northern Transvaal Political Discussion Forum. Apart from the various national political parties, the political movements of Venda, Lebowa and Gazankulu are also participating in this process.

In the Free State good progress has also been made in setting up an OFS Negotiating Forum. This process was the initiative of the OFS Municipal Association and the ANC/SANCO alliance in the southern and northern Free State who came together in a steering committee which Idasa was approached to chair.

Kobus van Loggerenberg is a regional co-ordinator in Idasa's Bloemfontein office.

Forums build vision of democratic future

An encouraging picture is emerging from regional development forums

which its members should take to achieve these within appropriate time frames.

While the main focus is on the metropolitan area, the forum is also concerned with the development of the Western Cape hinterland. There are several commissions within the forum, each dealing with issues such as job creation, economic growth and restructuring, urban development, as well as rural and agricultural development. Idasa's Western Cape office plays a pivotal role in facilitating and managing this process.

The Eastern Cape Regional Economic and Development Forum is set to address the economic growth and viability of that region, but focusing first on the Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and Despatch areas before moving into the more rural districts.

Its objectives and structure resemble those of the Western Cape forum with the added objectives to promote stability, fairness and justice for all in the workplace and to work with local communities in order to create a better quality of life and greater harmony, pride and stability in all communities.

The Border/Kei Development Forum is just over a year old. The principle objective is to prepare an integrated development strategy for the Border/Kei region (provisionally defined as encompassing the Ciskei, Transkei, Border and north eastern Cape) focusing specifically on economic development and the needs of deprived communities.

While the headline writers focus on the re-establishment of a forum for national negotiations, at regional and local level numerous initiatives are under way to promote meaningful participation and development in all aspects of our society.

In a quiet and often clumsy manner, democracy is finding and defining itself through the committed efforts of people who seldom enjoy the limelight that falls on their national leaders.

In most cases, these regional forums address issues of an economic and developmental nature, and some are also concerned with local and regional government restructuring. What is clear from the composition and objectives of these forums is that the legacy of apartheid planning has at least taught us harsh lessons about planning initiatives.

Perhaps the most important lesson is that unless there is a legitimate, representative and participative process, no outcome or product, no matter how technically correct, will be acceptable.

Many of the participants have accepted this principle very reluctantly, coerced by the need to acquire funding for development. However, it is hoped that this will eventually become the norm.

It would seem that already there is growing support for the idea that broader public and institutional participation in planning and decision-making should become entrenched in the way in which we conduct our (regional) political affairs.

Besides allowing for a wide range of opinions to be heard, this process also ensures broader accountability from the political players in the interim and post interim periods.

Although facilitators agree that it is sometimes difficult to move from a participative process to the delivery of development action, these forums have some very important immediate 'deliverables'.

One of these is the creation of a better climate for co-operation between regional role players, based on more information, exposure and understanding of the issues as they relate to the various interest groups. Besides serving as a clearing house for identifying immediate needs and resources, these forums can also design long-term regional development strategies.

However, in order for the clearing house not to become a bottle neck, it is crucial that these processes also address the issue of capacity building.

By **MOIRA LEVY**

A mirror on the world or the market?

Does the media have a responsibility to forge a new society, by presenting an ideology of a future non-racial, non-sexist and equal social order in its programmes?

YOU'VE witnessed the scene many times. A group of young guys gathered in a pub. The setting is not recognisably South African, but by stretching the imagination slightly it could well be. They are colleagues...more than that, good pals, and they are there to celebrate – a return, an imminent departure, a career highpoint, or just life itself and how good it's been to them.

They are happy, healthy, well-dressed and well-fed. As they raise their glasses, you know they share an impeccable taste in beer. In fact, they appear to share the same impeccable taste in dress, style, humour – they have everything in common, except of course their race. For these young men embody the principle of non-racialism, and they make it look as easy as downing a Lion or an Ohlssons.

And where is it that we encounter these New South Africans? Ironically, of all places, on the SABC. Where once we were faced nightly with images of the apartheid status quo, we now see them, or variations of them, on our TV screens every night. South African viewers, new and old, observe them eagerly – we too would prefer to live in a beer advert, rather than in today's messy, painful transition and turmoil.

And it doesn't stop with the ads. Nowadays, between the American soap operas, SABC-TV is giving a daily dose of New South Africanisms. Platforms of – largely – reasonable people holding reasonable and rational debates, without as much as a mention of the years of racial hatred and hostility of the past – not to mention the years of it still to come.

CCV leads the way in all of this. What started off as a thinly disguised black channel, the amalgamation of apartheid's TV2 and 3, has now come into its own as a messenger of the future.

Speaking at an Idasa media seminar in February, CCV general manager, Madala Mphahlele, said he sees his TV station playing a central role in forging a new national identity.

At the seminar – entitled *Media in Transition: New Markets, Same Message?* – debate crystallised around the essential question: Should the media lead or follow?

The crux of the debate can be summarised as follows: Does the media have a responsibility to forge a new society, by presenting an ideology of a future non-racial, non-sexist and equal social order in its news broadcasts, adverts, quizzes, panel discussions and soap operas?

Or is its responsibility to faithfully and accurately reflect, and thereby possibly repro-

duce, the existing inequality, prejudice, disaster and darkness of our society?

Mphahlele declared that CCV has taken as its starting point the dictum that the media have a responsibility to society to pave the way.

He talked of the media's task to stay one step ahead. To stay in business, he said, the successful media should not be pitched at the point at which society finds itself at present, but at the point it aims to reach in the future.

In the '90s, since the demise of the *Rand Daily Mail*, few blacks read 'white' newspapers; significantly fewer whites read *Sowetan*, *City Press* or any of the 'black' newspapers. Newspapers reinforce and reproduce the parochialism of apartheid society, Mphahlele said, instead of the universalism and diversity of what our society could and should be.

Here is where TV has a role to play. 'We want to make diversity a positive thing that can enhance the quality of all South Africa's communities. It is this diversity that makes this country unique, and TV can play a role in developing the frame of mind that recognises this.'

TV has the power to break down barriers, he said. 'That is why Hertzog always said no to it.' It has the capacity to introduce other worlds into our own living rooms, and when the worlds of our neighbours are sometimes as foreign as far-off

countries, TV can play a powerful role in informing and educating.

'Because TV can reach people in their homes, it has the capacity to act as a powerful catalyst.'

The beer adverts, just like CCV's *Newsline* panel debates and, indeed, for example, the recent David Frost interviews, bring the issues and images of the New South Africa into many South African living rooms.

Mphahlele cautioned that this raises question about language. He has encountered the criticism that the advent of CCV 'robbed' blacks of their own-culture, own-language TV channel. He argued that if TV succeeds in reaching a broader public and, in so doing,



Madala Mphahlele: media must stay one step ahead.



The world of the beer advert...some believe the media could pave the way to it.

bridges age-old gaps and divisions, then it is achieving something that few others can.

He gave sport as an example: in the past whites scorned soccer as a 'black game'. Today, said Mphahlele, South Africans of all races want to watch South Africa compete internationally and to have English commentary. 'TV can address some of these dichotomies'.

The seminar debate centred around whether it is possible to produce media for markets that cross racial and class lines and embody world views that are based on, as yet unrealised, future possibilities.

Some seminar participants rejected this idea, arguing strongly that media management policy needs to be based clearly on the needs and demands of specific markets which, in turn, must be identified by thorough and extensive market research.

General manager of the *Sowetan*, Rory Wilson, argued that this is the route to media viability. And its starting point, he said, must be editorial independence. This is what brings in the readers, which in turn secures the advertising. 'An editor has a bounden obligation not only to write what he likes, but to write what services the marketplace.'

He cautioned that the media, like any other business, needs to identify its market and target it carefully. Or run the risk of losing consumers, and with them, advertisers, to another, more acceptable and potentially less threatening, products.

He cited the Johannesburg-based daily, *Business Day*, as a newspaper success story, with its clearly identified and narrowly defined market guaranteeing advertisers' interest and support.

'A possible solution is to identify markets not as race groups or even classes but as interest groups'

Wilson went on to say that while the legacy of apartheid lives on – and it shows no sign of disappearing in the immediate future – black and white news consumers occupy such different worlds, and therefore constitute such different markets, that their media, if it is to be viable, must necessarily be different and separate.

The danger that this creates is of backward-looking media that assumes a white, middle-class market – because that is the market it has always catered for – and, in so doing, perpetuates an old order, oblivious to the dramatic changes that are taking place daily.

A possible solution, posed by Mphahlele, was to identify markets not as race groups or even classes but as interest groups, with specific concerns and needs. In this way, parochialism gives way to regionalism and local media becomes a way of serving the community and not simply addressing it.

That means fostering the kind of journalism that tells the story not of whites or blacks, but of South Africans. It means giving a rape in Botshabelo the same coverage as a rape in Sandton. It means putting a picture to the name of a township murder victim, and names and life stories behind the statistics of daily police crime reports.

The real challenge facing the media in South Africa is not only to report on, but to reflect, the transition process. It is not to simply wait for conditions to change, but to facilitate that change. It is to have the courage to step out in front, reporting the story of South Africa-in-the-making, and not only the South Africa of then and now.

Moira Levy is a journalist based in Idasa's media department.

Election trail – and obstacle course

There are many obstacles still to be negotiated on the road to South Africa's first democratic general election. Exactly what we will be voting for still needs to be decided: a legitimate parliament to draft the constitution, or a new government to rule in terms of the new constitution. **PAUL GRAHAM** looks at some of the criteria to ensure free and fair elections.

IF WE assume that the purpose of the election has been resolved, at least five areas need to be managed to ensure that it is free and fair and will assist a successful transition to democracy.

The first is to deal with the violence in such a way that it can no longer play a decisively advantageous role for any party contesting the elections or seeking to stop the elections. While elections have taken place in situations of violence, the necessity for developing a climate of peace for its own sake remains.

Within an election context, managing the security of the citizens in a politically neutral way will be our first priority. Talk of a multi-party peace keeping force remains just that. At present we will have to work with what we have.

The second is the necessity of, in the words of the Commonwealth Mission to Kenya, 'the delinking of the institutions of state and government from the ruling party' in order to ensure no undue advantage to any of the contestants. In large measure, this is the role of the Transitional Executive Council.

Thirdly, there must be agreement on the constitutional framework within which the country will operate. In particular, there must be a set of rules for the here and now, an understanding of how authority will be transferred to a new government and under what conditions that will operate, and a method for getting to the final constitution under which democracy will be consolidated.

Then the election must be managed. The electoral process must be defined through the writing of an electoral act and the establishment of an independent authority which can carry out the election on behalf of the citizens rather than the parties. An independent electoral commission seems appropriate. Voters need to be identified and

the thorny questions of citizenship answered.

Following this, the official campaign will begin. For this a code of conduct for political parties – including aspects of the present Code of Conduct, but going beyond it – must be prepared. The present code states (among other things) that parties should actively contribute to the creation of a climate of political tolerance by:

- publicly and repeatedly condemning political violence and encouraging among their followers an understanding of the importance of political pluralism and a culture of political tolerance; and
- acting positively to support the right of all political parties and organisations to have reasonable freedom of access to their members, supporters and other persons in rural and urban areas, whether they be housed on public or private property.

This code was signed in September 1991. The difficulties of implementation already experienced will no doubt continue into the campaign period.

The election itself will require a large number of temporary officials – estimated variously between 70 000 and 100 000 – to administer the ballot and conduct the count.

Finally, the election must be verified and the results adopted by all competing parties.

This, in turn, will place a number of demands upon the country.

Until March, it seemed that the major difficulty facing the negotiating partners would be to sort out the questions around regionalism. Everything pointed to the creation of an assembly comprising national and regional representatives – which means that there have to be decisions, even if interim ones, on the boundaries of regions.

This in itself is a large problem, particularly in South Africa where interim solutions have the propensity to become calcified rather rapidly, and the drafters of a new con-

stitution might find themselves with a country in which electoral regions have become constitutional regions.

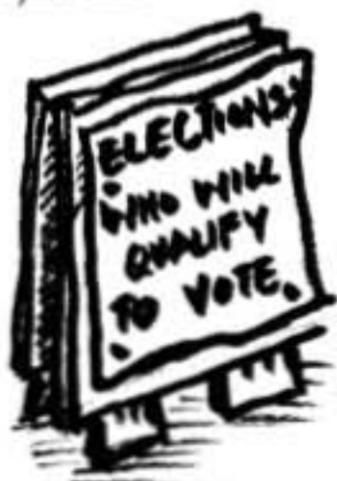
There also appear to be very sharp differences between parties as to the type of electoral system. No longer are we merely confronting the technical task of choosing the best system of proportional representation (PR). Now it appears that we must make political decisions about whether to adopt a PR system or a constituency based system. There are options for compromise but they will require new degrees of flexibility and could extend the negotiations period.

Then there must be decisions on the method of selection and the degree of power which the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) will have. Suggestions have been made that the appointment of the SABC board will give some pointers to a public selection process. As a model of timing, it leaves a lot to be desired. Indeed the composition and power of the IEC is a central matter in the election process.

The official campaign follows. Our track record in creating a culture of tolerance, allowing freedom of movement and association, educating citizens as to their rights and protecting these, and reducing violence and intimidation suggest that our labours, like those of Sisyphus, are not yet over. Already there are groups and individuals working hard in this area. A combined and much more massive approach will be required.

As parties will be seeking every possible advantage to ensure they win the elections, it is to be expected that they will attempt to make use of educational opportunities, structures and institutions, including those established through the negotiation process, to assist them in this. It is in every party's interest to allow independent and impartial programmes which ensure that potential voters come to the polls informed and of their own free will.

Despite the insinuations of some, electoral education is essential and should be made available to all potential voters – some 21





million of them. Education should deal not only with the mechanics of elections but with the context for elections, their purpose, how to assess party positions, and the necessity for political tolerance and maintaining the Electoral Code of Conduct.

The administration of the elections could be done, as has been done before, by the Department of Home Affairs. This does not fulfil the principle of impartiality and independence. So it will fall onto the Electoral Commission to find the many thousands of officials to staff the 9 000 to 10 000 polling stations and to site these stations.

In addition to the many who will treat the elections as a spectator sport similar to the Comrades Marathon, there will be those who have the specific tasks of verifying the elections by observing a representative section of the electoral process.

The number of local and international monitors required for this task still has to be established. At a ratio similar to that used in the Angolan elections, we would need 3 000 such monitors. At the ratio established in Namibia we would need 123 000.

This number does not include those playing the important conciliation roles necessary to reduce violence and those ensuring that the security forces act in accordance with agreements on the electoral process.

Finally, parties will want to establish agents to observe the conduct of the elections on their own behalf.

All in all, a massive undertaking in which

South Africans will have to play the leading roles.

After experiences with elections in Angola, Kenya and Zambia, it is clear that it is the development of a culture of democracy, the solving of the peace issues – in particular the demobilisation of soldiers and the reduction of arms – and the establishment of a climate within which elections are not merely another strategy of battle which will ensure that we move into the next stage of our struggle for democracy rather than simply the holding of elections.

The Commonwealth report on the Kenyan elections describes some of the things which could go wrong if we do not attend to them here in South Africa. It reminds us that whatever happens, it is the commitment and political power of the voter which could carry us through.

Given all the serious and numerous shortcomings in the Kenyan elections – the disorganisation and confusion that reigned in most polling stations which marred the opening of the polls, the poor communication between the Electoral Commission and Returning Officers and between Returning Officers and Presiding Officers, the lack of co-ordination and inconsistencies in dealing with clear-cut problems – we can only conclude that neither the polling day arrangements nor the polling and counting processes were ade-

quately designed or executed to meet the specific needs of the Kenyan electoral environment.

This, coupled with a serious lack of comprehensive training and civic education, led inevitably to delays and confusion at the polls.

If it were not for the laudable commitment, dedication and patience of some poll officials, party agents and, in particular, the voters, the whole process could easily have become a fiasco.

Special mention must be made of the thousands of local monitors who tirelessly and vigilantly kept watch at all polling stations and counting centres. As it was, polling day and the many hours afterwards, were probably the most positive aspect of the whole electoral process.

This serves as a sober reminder of all the issues with which we will have to contend between now and polling day. But, as in Angola, and to a lesser extent in Kenya and Zambia, we should not delude ourselves that running a slick election will put us on the road to democracy.

In fact, the election could distract us from the more pressing tasks.

It is up to all South Africans whether we will be able to conduct our electoral process in such a way that it also ensures progress in our transition to democracy.

Paul Graham is Idasa's National Programme Director



Clearing a path through voter confusion

‘When I think of the need for voter education in my area, I think of MamLulu, a typical rural woman who cannot read and write. She works for a white farmer and knows very little about the changes that are taking place in the country today. She hopes that things will get better, in the way that most people do, but she has never seen anybody important come to our area. She has never really seen anything change’

‘The person I know who needs voter education is my ideal woman. She grew up in Mozambique and she lives in Gazankulu now. She doesn’t read or write, but she is powerful and confident. She knows how to motivate people to organise themselves. But she is still angry inside’

‘In my mind’s eye I see a very old man who came to the advice office the other day. He just said: “I want to vote before I die, but I don’t know when it will happen and I don’t know what I will do”’

‘There is nobody in Magopa who has had the privilege of being exposed to voter education. The women are just starting to get back together again. As victims of forced removals, we have just returned to our homes and are starting to rebuild our lives. We have a weaving project and we grow vegetables, not for an income, but just to survive. We all need to know about the vote’

By **MARIE-LOUISE STRÖM**

AND SO the portraits of would-be voters began to evolve as participants in a research workshop introduced themselves and the work they do.

Representatives of rural organisations from all over the country – literacy workers, para-legals, trainers and development officers – gathered to discuss the specific needs of voters in the rural areas.

While some basic information on voting was provided for participants themselves, the chief purpose of the workshop, hosted by Idasa’s Training Centre for Democracy, was to clarify what rural people in general know, think and fear about elections. In particular, the workshop aimed to clarify the needs of women voters and of voters who cannot read.

For people in rural areas, voting by the raising of hand is a familiar experience, although it is not always common for women to be involved in important decision-making that affect their lives. On a political level, the majority of rural people have had no experience of voting at all. However, a significant number of people have in fact participated in homeland elections.

Rather than needing to learn how to vote for the first time, these people will need to ‘unlearn’ certain procedures and separate past experiences of voting – often very nega-

tive – from the opportunity of voting in the forthcoming election in South Africa.

Among those rural people who have never voted before, there is a tremendous fear of the unknown. Even basic terminology used in connection with voting becomes a source of confusion and concern.

People need to be reassured that a polling station is not the same as a police station, and that a ballot is not the same as a bullet. They need to know that the indelible ink

‘Many people who have some experience of school associate a cross with something that is wrong’

used to mark voters’ hands is not some kind of muti, a term used by some trainers as they themselves struggle to imagine this particular step in the voting process.

Indeed, literate trainers have had to struggle with the meaning of many new English words before being able to translate or transfer these into their mother tongue.

Many people who have had some experience of school associate a cross with something that is wrong. They are puzzled that voters are generally required to place a cross next to the correct name on the ballot form, next to the party of which they approve.

And for those who cannot read or write, it is difficult to contemplate handling a pencil and marking a ballot paper on their own.

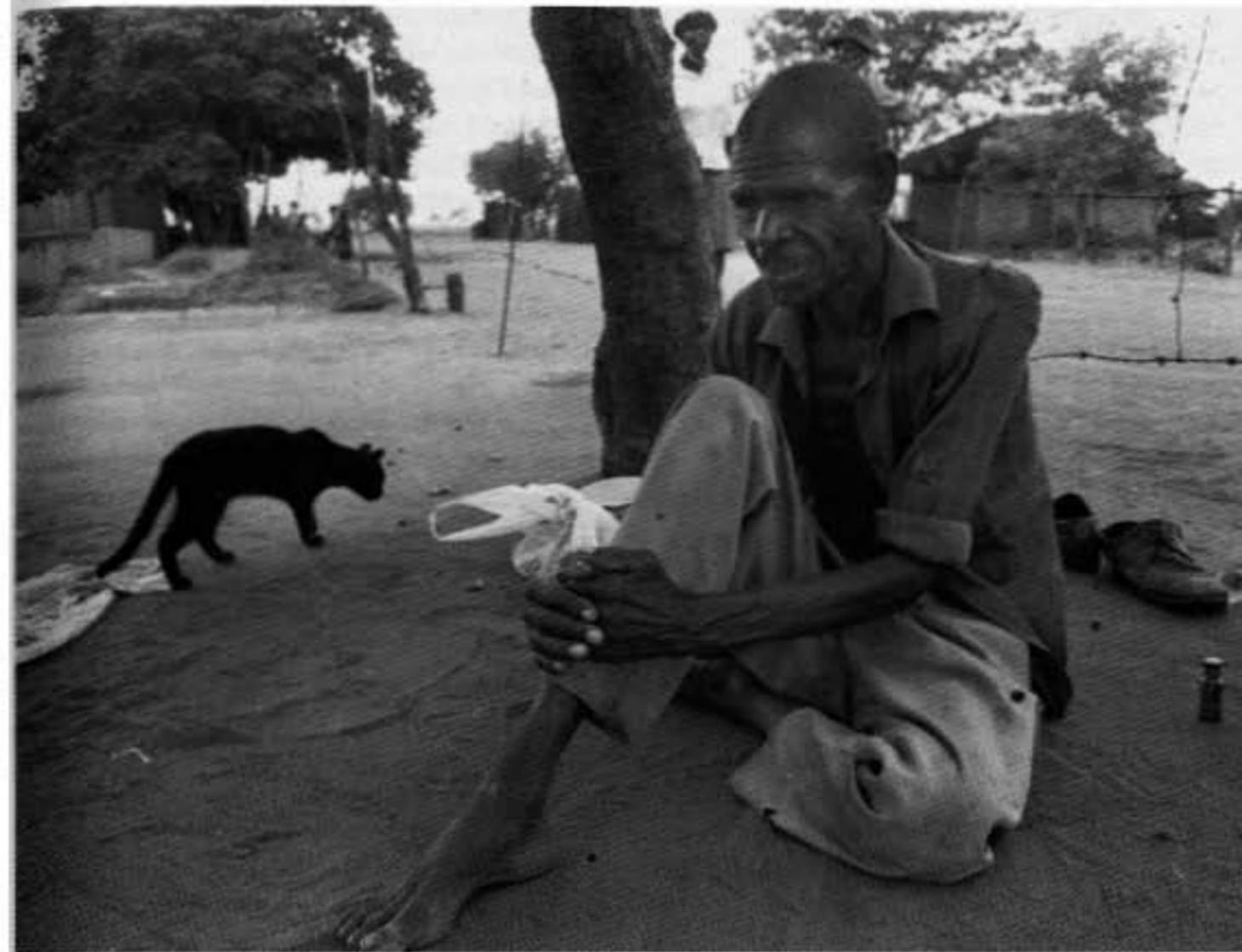
No adequate materials are available at this stage for the training of illiterate voters. On the positive side, most literacy workers believe that few people are totally illiterate. A certain degree of functional literacy allows people to read a stop sign, for instance, or the names of shops.

Illiterate voters will need to learn to recognise the colours and symbols of the parties of their choice, notwithstanding the attempts that will be made to confuse them on this score. It is not yet clear what sort of assistance will be given to people who are unable to vote on their own. However, it will undoubtedly be an empowering experience for any first-time rural voter to feel confident in handling a ballot form and to understand the meaning of the vote they cast.

In homeland elections, illiterate voters generally named the candidate of their choice and officials then marked their ballots, often without being monitored in any way. Ballots included photographs of individual candidates, a feature that will fall away when the system of proportional representation applies.

In the rural areas at present, people are still inclined to talk about political leaders rather than about parties, and voters will need to be trained to link the two.

Indeed, in 1990 people were generally



Rural areas: voters will need to be trained to link political leaders and political parties.

ERIC MILLER

Marie-Louise Ström is a tutor at Idasa's Training Centre for Democracy.

aware of the release of Mandela and the unbanning of organisations, and many homeland inhabitants thought that there would be elections soon afterwards. Since then, very little has been seen to change in homeland areas.

For the coming elections to be perceived as different, and as taking place on a national scale, trainers are convinced that the homelands will need to be reincorporated into South Africa in good time.

Many fears of intimidation spring from people's experience of having been forced to vote in the past. Candidates in homeland elections often campaigned by threatening people with eviction from their homes, or with the discontinuance of pensions, schooling and cattle dipping.

Voters were loaded on to open lorries and taken to polling stations where police monitors were seen as stern and menacing. Some people voted more than once as lorries took them to more than one station. Chiefs and headmen also organised groups of voters and threatened that individual choices would always be known. Once elections were over, candidates were never seen in villages again.

It is feared that in the forthcoming election, many white farmers may intimidate

their workers in the same way. Chilling examples of intolerance towards farm workers who are members of the ANC were cited at the workshop. Other farmers, it is suspected, will use attractive bribes to mislead their workers.

Whatever the situation, it will be difficult for trainers to assure voters that none of these irregularities will recur. Above all, in order to cope with intimidation, people need to know that their vote is secret, and to feel confident that they are able to mark the ballot correctly.

Finally, the fear of violence is likely to deter many rural people from casting their vote. Police and farmers are perceived as

being trigger-happy, and much political intolerance is blamed on the youth. Older voters fear that youths will behave provocatively on election day by toyi-toyi-

ing and wearing party clothes. They say that this will cause trouble for everyone, and the election may end up having a negative impact on people's lives.

It is clear that participation in the election – not only in the rural areas – will be influenced by stability. Hopefully, voter education will contribute in some way to preparing a stable voting environment by creating an atmosphere of realistic anticipation and tolerance.

'The fear of violence is likely to deter many rural people from casting their vote'

If only people could 'eat' democracy

By LEFUNO NEVHUTALU

THE way in which human rights and democracy relate to development, cultural diversity and tolerance formed a central thread running through a major conference held in Canada recently.

More than 300 participants from 70 countries around the globe took part in the 'International Congress on Education for Human Rights and Democracy' in Montreal in March.

During the opening discussion the importance of sharing information, ideas and resources was agreed upon by all delegates, and non-governmental organisations in particular were seen as playing a vital role in teaching, defending and helping the creation of democratic societies.

It was felt that democracy needs to be rooted at local level in all countries and those involved in teaching democracy and human rights should continue to redefine their educational tools.

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'Eat' democracy

From Page 19

While acknowledging that democracy cannot be uniform throughout the world, delegates cautioned against poverty being used as an excuse by totalitarian regimes that did not uphold human rights.

A participant from India said democracy would be better understood in that country if people could 'eat' it. There was a need for the poorest and powerless to understand that voting could make a difference and that democracy could deliver tangible benefits.

It was seen as important for those working in African countries to understand that certain traditions were, in fact, intrinsically democratic.

There was also a need to create conceptual links between cultural rights, human rights and democracy. The articulation of democracy should take place at all levels of society, but more so in the workplace, schools, families and institutions where ordinary people interacted.

If people were not reached at these levels, democracy would not succeed. It was suggested that the concept of tolerance would

be better understood if replaced by the word 'acceptance'. Tolerance in some cultures had negative connotations.

Three commissions that ran throughout the conference looked at formal and non-formal education for human rights and democracy, as well as how this education could take place in specific contexts and difficult situations.

It was noted that in most African countries and in some countries of the south, human rights and democracy remained a debate among academics whereas the poor, the powerless and the illiterate needed to be drawn into the debate and process of realising democracy.

It was suggested that specific attention be given to training judges, police and those holding political power in the principles of human rights and democracy.

In many countries women were the first teachers of human rights to children, yet these women were often the victims of human rights abuses themselves and they too needed support.

It was felt that funds should be made available through Unesco and governments for developing human rights and democracy teaching materials.

The commission dealing with education in situations where human rights were endangered recommended that particular attention be paid to vulnerable groups as well as potential and actual violators to prevent abuses and protect the vulnerable. Specific groups which should be assisted included women, children, indigenous peoples, refugees and 'internally disabled' persons (political prisoners, minorities, migrant workers and people with HIV or Aids).

For me the congress confirmed that those in South Africa who are involved in education for democracy and human rights are in step with world trends. The teaching of tolerance or acceptance, democratic behaviour and attitude change, election and voter education are their priorities.

Those of us who participated in the congress were able to introduce South African issues in the discussions. It is far too easy for the world to forget about this country and it is crucial to maintain international links at various levels. One important lesson from the congress is that society is not simply going to become democratic - human rights and democracy will have to be taught.

Lufuno Nevhutalu is a tutor at Idasa's Training Centre for Democracy.

Throughout the country voter education is underway. In some areas materials are already being circulated, elsewhere electoral education campaigns are still being planned. Overarching most efforts is the Independent Forum for Electoral Education (IFEE) to which a range of organisations are affiliated. Here follows a list of some of those organisations.

NATIONAL

IFEE - Pumla Gqirana (011)484-2984, fax (011) 484-2610; **Idasa** - Paul Graham (011)484-3694, Fax 484-2610; **Black Sash** - Sheena Duncan (011)834-8361, Fax 412-1177; **Matla Trust** - Barry Gilder (011)834-5301, Fax 838-1910; **IMPD** - Richard Mkholo (011)837-1393, Fax 339-4832; **Foundation for Democratic Advancement** - Gary Cooney (011)883-3527, Fax 883-3527; **SACC** - Eddie Makue (011)492-1380; Fax 492-1448) **Methodist Church** - Demetris Palos (011)403-4293, Fax 339-3526; **SACBC** - Sean O'Leary (012) 323-6458, Fax 326-6218.

TRANSVAAL

HSRC - Jabu Sindane (011)202-9111, Fax 202-2510; **Imssa** - Vincent Mntambo (011)482-2390, Fax 726-7411; **National**

Development Co-ordinating Committee - Sheila Sisulu (011)834-6865, Fax 834-4955; **Catholic Institute of Education** - Bernie Mullen (011)433-1888, Fax 680-1680; **YWCA** - Joyce Seroke (011) 838-1097, Fax 833-1978; **Foundation for Democratic Advancement** - Wayne Mitchell (011)883-3527, 883-3527; **HAP** - Ntombi Mekgwe (011)337-8716 337-8716; **Idasa Training Centre for Democracy** - Marie-Louise Ström (011)484-3694, Fax 484-2610.

NORTHERN TRANSVAAL
Ecumenical Confessing Fellowship - Zwo Nevhutalu (0159)22804, Fax 23139; **Idasa** - Alice Coetzee (012)342-1476, Fax 433-387; **Centre for Constitutional Analysis** - Bertus de Villiers & Rina du Toit (012)202-9111, Fax 202-2510.

NATAL

Black Sash - Aan Colvin (031)301-9215, Fax 21-0639; **Diakonia** - Ntombifuthi Zondo (031)305-6001; **ICT Resource Centre** - Jane Argall (031)301-8614; **Idasa** - Steven Collins (031)304-8893; **IMPD** - Eric Appelgren (031)304-3863; **Lawyers for Human Rights** - Bess Pillemer (031)307-7022; **Lutheran Church** - Rev Fred von Sintel (031)843-390; **Roman Catholic Church** - Rosemary Cook (031)465-8833; **Roman Catholic Justice & Peace** - Jenny Boyce (031)309-6620; **Sached** - Tshidi Mhlanbo (031)305-6748; **Imssa** - Jerome Ngwenya (031)309-4315; **Community Law Centre** - Jeya Wilson (031)202-7190.

EASTERN TRANSVAAL
Lebombo Catholic Church,

KaNgwane - Sean O'Leary (012)323-6458.

EASTERN CAPE

Eastern Cape Council of Churches - Gift Zokufa (041)57-3029.

WESTERN CAPE

CDS/Cape Town EDF - Michael Weeder (021)959-2151, Fax 959-2317; **Theological Exchange Programme** - Ivan Lloyd (021)696-8347, Fax 696-8349; **Matla Trust** - Ralton Praah (021) 237-857; **Catholic Justice & Peace** - Mike Pothier (021)462-2428.

BORDER

Lawyers for Human Rights - Ntombazana Botha (0431)439168, Fax 439-166.

FREE STATE:

Idasa - Henning Myburgh (051)484-821/2; **Matla Trust** - Thabo Manyone (051)482-483.

Who's who in voter education

By SUE VALENTINE

THE next few months in South Africa's constitutional development could be the most critical for securing representation of women at the highest political level.

This is the view of visiting US political scientist Professor Robert Darcy who has done extensive research on why women are largely excluded from political life in the world's oldest democratic nations such as the US, Canada, Australia and the UK.

According to Darcy, the point at which a country draws up its constitution or redefines its electoral laws is the point at which women, if well organised and clear in their demands, could secure meaningful political gains.

He said the traditional explanation (defined by Maurice Duverger and published by Unesco in the mid-1950s) for why women were not incorporated into the political life of most democracies centred around three issues:

- Voter hostility (a reluctance to vote for women candidates);

- Male conspiracy (male-dominated political elites which do things in a 'male' and exclusive way);

- Lack of skills or disinterest among women themselves (a 'blame the victim' theory).

Darcy disputed Duverger's arguments, saying candidates in the traditional Western democracies evoked the same, if

not better, responses from the electorate, demonstrating that voters were not responsible for keeping women out of office.

Similarly, while acknowledging the power of male-dominated party elites, all parties since the 1960s had been anxious to put forward female candidates. Women candidates had also demonstrated that they were able to raise as much money, if not more, than male candidates.

He then proposed that the reason why women are largely absent from political office in democratic countries lay in the political context in which women gained the franchise.

Women came into political life roughly at the turn of the century, at a time when party politics in countries such as the US was 'cor-

rupt, violent and rotten', said Darcy. Rather than involve themselves in it, women avoided party politics, preferring to work in other organisations. 'They thought that if they had the vote, the elected officials would listen to their presentations.'

However, this did not happen. Other means of influencing politicians and legislators, such as forming a women's party or utilising existing political mechanisms like referenda and petitions, also failed.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, said Darcy, the consensus among women writing about women's issues was that women had successfully marginalised themselves. 'Where power is, women are not.' It was

Reichstag comprised women representatives – the US House of Representatives has only now reached this level! In Finland in 1993, 38.5 percent of the national assembly is made up of women representatives.

Explaining why the democratic process in the Anglo-American countries still has not incorporated women, Darcy suggested that it was due to the political stagnation of the '70s and '80s.

Darcy said in mid-1992 the US House of Representatives comprised 6.8 percent women. In New Zealand women made up 16 percent and in Canada 12 percent of their members of parliament were women. The election cycle in New Zealand and Canada

was three years, producing a more rapid change in government. In the USA it was four years.

'Electoral volatility and turnover are the programmes by which to bring women into power. We need to level the playing field and find ways of taking away incumbents' privileges.'

Darcy said that the point at which it was easiest to ensure turnover and to 'shake up the system' was the point at which a country drew up its constitution or its election laws.

All the countries in which women tended to be most strongly represented were those which drew up their constitutions at roughly the same time as women received the vote.

Asked about the need for supportive infrastructures to allow women to participate meaningfully in politics, Darcy said women should examine the most strategic way of lobbying for their demands.

He said if political parties were *obliged* to field a certain number of women candidates, the necessary infrastructure – creches and child care – to enable women to make themselves available could easily be provided.

'All the parties of the left in Europe are talking about quotas for women, all parties of the right abhor quotas.'

In South Africa, said Darcy, women were likely to make 'more progress in the next five months than in the next 10 years' in their efforts to gain political representation.

Sue Valentine is Media Director with Idasa.

Women: it's now or never (well almost)



Voters are not responsible for keeping women out of political office, according to a US expert. PAUL WEINBERG, Southlight

only in the early 1970s that women began to be appointed to positions of political power and the situation began to change.

By contrast, far more women were represented in politics in the European democracies, Darcy said. Explaining the disparity, he said that when women received the franchise in Europe early this century, party political democracy was a new system, emerging from the monarchies and autocracies that had dominated Europe.

It was not tainted by the violent, corrupt legacy of party politics in the English-speaking democracies. Instead political parties were viewed as instruments of democracy and women immediately demanded representation in them.

In 1918, 10 percent of the German

'Linguicism alive and thriving'

By THEO DU PLESSIS

Shift away from bilingual approach

A RECENT Unisa linguistics department conference, on teaching translators and interpreters, signalled a shift away from the current bilingual (Afrikaans/English) practice to a more multilingual practice where African languages are more prominent.

One of the important conclusions of the conference was that this requires a major shift in training programmes and that existing training agencies cannot accommodate these new needs.

To address these new demands the progressive language workers, practitioners and academics at the conference established a preliminary trainers' forum. Its first objective is to organise a national training convention, to be held during June and July, to work out a future training strategy.

International experts who presented papers on training included Prof Albrecht Nuebert (Leipzig University), Prof Peter Newmark (University of Surrey) and Mr Robin Trew (University of Westminster). Also present was Mr Albie Sachs of the ANC's constitutional committee who presented a brief orientation talk.

Translator/interpreter experts from southern Africa attended, as well as academics from all the major tertiary institutions in South Africa that offer training, language practitioners and language workers from various backgrounds. This combination of participants created an interesting blend of practice and theory.

The two most important and immediate needs identified were training for community translators and interpreters and court interpreters.

An appeal was made for more tertiary institutions to become involved in such training programmes. It became clear that non-governmental organisations do not have the same status as tertiary institutions and should not carry the burden of training. It was felt that tertiary institutions should accommodate community training needs. The court interpreter training programme jointly implemented by the Natal Technical College, Natal Technikon and the University of Natal offers a worthwhile training model.

Participants emphasised the need for an overall shift in focus from training Afrikaans/English translators and interpreters to African language translators and interpreters.

The most notable aspect of the conference was the widening gap between the actual language needs of marginalised communities and attempts to address the perceived needs of such communities by the current translator/interpreter fraternity. Some delegates, apparently for the first time, were confronted with the idea that Afrikaans and/or English are no longer regarded as the only languages of the nation and some more conservative participants struggled with the prospect of a more multilingual future where African languages will feature prominently.

If one cannot speak 'proper' English in South Africa one cannot opt for quality education, find good employment, participate in decision-making, negotiate one's future, be kept posted on latest developments and so on. In fact, without English one's hopes for a bright future are dim. Perhaps these are just the perceptions of the many South Africans that continually demand 'access to English', but they do in fact reflect the reality in terms of our language situation.

The quest for English has resulted in the fast growing English language industry in South Africa: there are literally hundreds of English language programmes, English literacy programmes (apparently literacy in one's own language does not count), English enrichment programmes and English cultural programmes. They all seem to have one common goal, namely to teach English to as many South Africans in the quickest time possible. The two architects of anglicisation, Lord Somerset and Milner, would not have been able to improve on these efforts. In fact, it has now become politically kosher to support such programmes rather than anything that doesn't smell or look English.

A new form of 'linguicism' is thus replacing that of the apartheid regime which involved Afrikaans.

'Linguicism' has contributed significantly to the failure of democracy throughout our continent. As it always results in the unequal distribution of power and resources (favouring only those that know the dominant language - English or French), it becomes the very basis for non-democratic rule.

It has therefore become vital for language workers dedicated to democracy to consider strategies that will counter the effects of English 'linguicism'. It is unrealistic to believe that English will succeed in South Africa where it has failed elsewhere in Africa together with French.

The Language Facilitation Programme (LFP) was initiated during 1992 by Idasa and the University of the Orange Free State to develop programmes that will enhance democratisation. Idasa raised funds to finance the establishment of such a project in the university's linguistics department and Dr Theo du Plessis was contracted as consultant for the project. He now coordinates the programme.

One of the first priorities of the LFP is to establish a mobile language facilitation unit that involves simultaneous interpreting apparatus and a network of trained interpreters.

This unit will be available to facilitate multilingual meetings in the region. Negotiations regarding the establishment of such a unit are still under way but will hopefully succeed.

During the past year, the LFP assisted Idasa on four occasions in organising language facilitation services and the results on these occasions were encouraging.

The results of a LFP survey on the need for language facilitation in the region, involving the major actors in the region, confirm that it is not in the interest of either the outgoing or incoming ruling elite to erode the hegemony of English (and, in the Vrystaat, Afrikaans). Respondents were thus relatively ambivalent in their attitudes regarding the need for language facilitation. However, the survey does indicate an awareness of the complexity of our language situation, a sensitivity towards language rights and an underlying willingness to address language problems in a meaningful way.

Overall, the findings underline the need for the envisaged training programme at the UOFS.

'Somerset and Milner would not have been able to improve on these efforts'



'Ultimate folly' to go it alone

THE thorny issue of secession for Natal seemed finally to be laid to rest when prominent businessman Tony Ardington addressed an Idasa Future Forum luncheon in Durban on 'The economic implications of secession for Natal'.

His conclusion was that unless Natal negotiated fiscal policy through a federation, it would never be able to generate enough of its own revenue to provide the quality of services that good government should be providing to all its citizens. An estimated R1,1 billion in revenue from the central government would be cut off making a unilateral declaration of independence, in his words, the 'ultimate folly'.

He asked if it was wise that the second poorest region (with 25 percent of the population and responsible for only 15 percent of GNP) should be contemplating independence before monetary policy had been negotiated. How could Natal then guarantee equal access to revenue, if it relinquished its right to participate in that decision making process?

Ardington's view was that Natal had suffered from the racial policies of apartheid rather than from a regional bias. This could only be remedied by a new non-racial democratic government or federal constitution which would guarantee a common market and the distribution of resources according to need.

Ardington was the chairman of the economic development committee of the KwaZulu Natal Indaba and is currently chairperson of the SA Sugar Association.

Shelley Gielink, Natal Office

Mont Fleur aanbieding: Vincent Maphai, Alex Boraine, Trevor Manuel en (agter) Idasa koördineerders Kobus van Loggerenberg en Teboho Loate.

Metamorfose van 'n afvlerk-eend

GAAN Suid-Afrika dit regkry om by 'n onderhandelde skikking uit te kom of gaan die huidige regime soos 'n volstruis kop in die sand druk?

Indien ons wel by 'n onderhandelde skikking uitkom, wat gaan die terme daarvan wees? Gaan 'n oorgangsregering daarin slaag om 'n ekonomiese rekonstruksie-program te begin wat genoeg vertroue gaan imboesem om van die (met reg) ongeduldige massa te verwag om nog 'n rukkie uit te hou?

Bloemfonteiners het onlangs die geleentheid gehad om na aanleiding van die Mont Fleur Scenarios verskillende opsies vir die toekoms te oorweeg. Die scenarios is waarskynlik die mees toeganklike oefening van sy soort en probeer om opsies vir die toekoms deur middel van vier verskillende stories oor voëls te verduidelik. Heel gepas (in sy eie woorde) dat hierdie voëlstories by dié geleentheid deur 'n 'oud-tronkvoël', Trevor Manuel, die hoof van die ANC se ekonomiese departement, aangebied is.

Trevor is bygestaan deur prof Vincent Maphai, hoof van die departement politieke wetenskap aan die UWK.

Alhoewel die meeste seminaargangers sekerlik die Vlug-van-die-Flaminke opsie verkies het, het die onsekerheid oor die toekoms, die stand van die huidige onderhandelingsproses en die implisiete gebrek aan vertroue in politici die scenario van die afvlerk-eend na die groter waarskynlikheid laat lyk.

Die openlikheid waarmee die bespreking gevoer is, was waarskynlik belangriker as om finale konsensus te verkry oor water storie die toekoms die beste beskryf. Genoeg wonderwerke het al die in die onlangse tyd gebeur in ons soeke na 'n nuwe demokratiese orde om miskien selfs 'n vyfde sprokie by te voeg: die van die afvlerk-eend wat verander in 'n flamink wat sy maats vind en stadig, maar seker, hoog en ver begin vlieg.

Kobus van Loggerenberg
Streekskoördineerder

Peace grows among KwaNdebele groups

ON March 21 the ANC and Intando Yesizwe Party of KwaNdebele honoured fallen comrades, symbolically joined hands in peace, and engaged grassroots membership in a plan of action to prepare for South Africa's first democratic elections.

The joint rally commemorating the 1960 Sharpeville massacre was held at Ekangala and was tangible evidence of what happens when respect for the views of others is the victor. In

January an accord was drawn up and endorsed at a joint political tolerance conference - the ANC and the IYP committed themselves to work together for sustainable peace in the area, to hold joint report back meetings, and to support each other in monitoring the nitty gritty of the implementation of the agreement.

At the rally the morale was high, and enthusiasm for the promotion of peace and unity among the various political

organisations within KwaNdebele openly manifested.

The secretary general of the ANC Youth League, Rapu Molekane, spoke of how encouraging the prevailing peace within structures at grassroots level in KwaNdebele is. He noted that the youth in particular were involved in supporting this - a very real contrast to other areas in our violence-torn country.

Steve Mabona, KwaNdebele Deputy Minister for Internal

Affairs, said voter education needed to reach all sections of the community who also needed to be alerted to the dirty tricks used by organisations 'who only want to use our people to remain in power'.

It was acknowledged that the wounds caused by historical injustice would take a long time to heal. Some organisations continue to grapple with allowing parties supported by apartheid machinery to establish themselves in the area.

'Government intensified drought crisis'

IMBALANCED investment by the government was the single most destructive factor which allowed the drought in the Border-Kei region to take on its current disastrous proportions.

This was the message from the director of the Southern African Disaster Relief Agency, Ms Janet Love, at an Idasa seminar on Drought Relief held recently in East London.

Poor planning and unequal allocation of relief aid will result in the areas hardest hit

suffering long after normal rainfall resumes, she warned.

Quoting Development Bank of Southern Africa figures, she said the bulk of the government's drought relief efforts was aimed at white farmers. 'There are 10 million rural South Africans without formal water supply, 93% of whom are black. The government, in drought relief allocation, is spending R703 per white person and R13 per black person.'

The chairman of the Ciskei

drought relief committee, Mr Mgcini Maki, said there was no denying that both government and non-governmental organisations had the physical and financial resources to bring relief.

In a statement delivered for him by Mrs Nomatamba Makabale of the Ciskei Department of Agriculture he said: 'Those bodies possess the manpower and the resources that could greatly benefit our people if they were to be

applied efficiently and effectively'.

Mr Shepherd Mayatula, chairperson of the Border Rural Development Forum, also blamed lack of infrastructure rather than the drought itself for the magnitude of the problem. The critical lack of water in many rural villages was 'not due to the drought but to the lack of capital investment and maintenance,' he said.

Glen Bownes
Regional Co-ordinator

Principals study democracy lessons

A SECOND workshop for school principals, held by the Training Centre for Democracy, took place against a backdrop of instability in schools, with Soweto students on a go-slow and teachers threatening to strike.

The workshop opened with a address by Mr John Mabandla of the ANC's education desk on recent development in education policy-making, with specific reference to the National Education Policy Investigation.

Participants examined the meaning of democracy and the way schools function, through both the formal and hidden

curriculum.

The workshop also aimed to equip principals with skills to manage schools more democratically, covering conflict resolution, democratic meeting and leadership skills and the management of school organisations.

At least two more principals' workshops are planned for the PWV area this year and similar workshops may be run in other regions. Contact the Training Centre for Democracy for further information.

Marie-Louise Ström
Tutor, Training Centre for Democracy

Community backs anti-crime groups

THE first of two workshops on community courts, held in Port Elizabeth in March, ended with a commitment to expand community involvement in the dispensing of justice and a call for state recognition of local Anti-Crime Committees (ACCs).

There was a strong feeling that ACCs could play an essential role in crime prevention and crime intervention.

ACCs could also develop community awareness programmes and work closely with social workers, street committees, community courts, police and magistrates.

Communities should have

the right to protect residents, participants said, and not all violations need to be taken to the police.

Nicro official Chris Ferndale ran a session on community co-operation with the police in crime prevention. He argued that crime is not simply about criminals but about socio-economic causes.

The SA Police gave a two-hour presentation on the changes that are taking place within the SAP, including in-house retraining workshops on community/police relations.

Sandy Wren
Regional Co-ordinator

Durban transport meetings map out road ahead

MONTHS of dialogue between representatives of Durban's Metropolitan Transport Advisory Board (MTAB) and a broad range of extra-parliamentary and community-based organisations resulted in the first of a series of public transportation workshops, held in the Durban City Hall in March.

Over the last 18 months MTAB officials have been meeting representatives of the ANC, the Inkatha Freedom Party, the SA Communist Party, Cosatu, the SA National Civics Organisation and the SA Hostel Dwellers Association.

Participants at these meetings examined the MTAB's proposed participation programme, questioning whether it could create a new decision-making culture or be just another advisory body aimed at legitimising decisions.

It was felt that transportation planning could not be seen in isolation, but had to be examined in conjunction with land use planning, which fell outside the powers of the MTAB.

A threatened deadlock on this was broken with the December launch of the Interim Development Committee (IDC)

of the Durban Functional Region (DFR) which created a framework for decision-making in all development sectors.

As one of the first items on the agenda, the extra-parliamentary and community-based organisations argued for a programme to build community capacity for effective participation. The first workshop, held on March 6, was the first step in this programme. It examined the relationship between transport and existing decision-making and financing structures. A second workshop on March 27 examined transport

policy and change.

It is hoped these workshops will provide a framework for future workshops on local transport issues.

Also at the workshops were representatives of the government, the Natal provincial department, local authorities, Port Natal-Ebhodwe Joint Services Board, the chamber of business and public transport operators.

The workshops were jointly facilitated by Idasa and Stanway, Edwards & Associates.

Charles Talbot
Regional Co-ordinator

ANC, IFP committed to success of talks

BOTH the ANC and the IFP were committed to ensuring that the current process of multiparty negotiations was a success and that violence was brought to an end.

This was the assurance given by both Mr Mohammed Valli Moosa of the ANC and Dr Frank Mdlalose from the IFP who were addressing an Idasa public meeting in East London focusing on negotiations.

However there was some disagreement around some of the solutions to the violence. Dr Mdlalose reiterated the IFP demand that Umkhonto we Sizwe be disbanded. He said that IFP leaders and members had been 'hounded and killed' in large numbers, and that many of these attacks could be attributed to MK.

Mr Moosa argued that calling for the disbandment of MK would not stop the violence. He said that while Dr Mdlalose's experience might be different, people that he himself had spoken to in Natal pointed to the KwaZulu Police as the culprits.

Rather than calling for the disbandment of one 'private army', all armed forces should be brought under some sort of multiparty control, he said. Arguing that 'what is good for the goose is good for the gander', Mr Moosa said that the SADF and the KwaZulu Police could also be seen as private armies of the National Party and the IFP.

Dr Mdlalose said a meeting between Dr Nelson Mandela and Dr Mangosuthu

Buthelezi should be encouraged as soon as possible so as to set an example to their followers. He also highlighted some of the local and regional peace initiatives that were beginning to work, but warned that 'the slippery road to peace is full of thorns'.

Mr Moosa agreed that a meeting between the two leaders could have positive results, but emphasised that peace initiatives at grassroots levels were of even more importance.

'The ANC is doing all in its powers to address violence,' he said and referred to the reduction in tension following Dr Mandela's recent visit to the strife-torn Natal Midlands region.

Mr Moosa outlined four possible stumbling blocks which may arise at multiparty negotiations:

- The question of who will draft the constitution
- Time frames for elections and constitutional drafts
- Joint control of all the armed forces
- Guaranteed free political activity in all parts of the country.

He argued that procedural issues like agendas, chairpersons and delegations should not be allowed to become stumbling blocks to 'grappling with the substantive issues'.

Glenn Bownes
Regional Co-ordinator

Snoek to be the Cape's symbol?

'SYMBOLS should make it possible for people, or as many people as possible, to act together,' suggested Kader Asmal of the ANC at a seminar on symbols for a democratic Cape Town.

'I'm not sure whether I can think of any common unifying symbol for Cape Town,' replied poet Sandile Dikeni, 'but if anything I would choose the snoek. People acting together by eating together.'

The seminar, held at Mayibuye Centre at the University of the Western Cape in March, drew together representatives from 25 cultural and political organisations — ranging from the National Monuments' Council to the PAC — to explore the complex issue of symbols. What are the current official symbols of our society and what values do they represent? What criteria should underpin new symbols? How should new symbols be chosen?

It was apparent that there are no easy answers. Symbols engender strong emotion. 'Symbols are things that people have always been willing to die for,' said Willem Steenkamp of the President's Council.

Symbols of reconciliation, unity and democracy are critical but they should not be so neutral and bland that they lack meaning. A debate was begun at this seminar and it now needs to be taken further.

David Schmidt
Regional Director

Good response to questionnaire on local options

IDASA convened a series of six seminars during 1993 on the future of local government in the Cape metropolitan area which was attended by most major stakeholders in the area. Many important areas of consensus and disagreement were identified.

At the concluding seminar Idasa was requested by the delegates to convene a small, but not necessarily representative working group to take forward the process in consultation with all the groups represented.

A facilitating group was sub-

sequently convened to explore how the process can be taken forward. Members of the group are Mr Kam Chetty (director of the Foundation for Contemporary Research), Dr Stan Evans (former town clerk of Cape Town), Mr Danile Landingwe (an independent facilitator), Mr John Marshall (former town clerk of Bellville), Ms Nomaindia Mfeketo (Development Action Group project worker), Mr Job Mokgoro (senior lecturer in public administration at UWC), Dr Richard van der Ross (for-

mer rector of UWC) and Ms Helen Zille (public affairs consultant).

Particular areas of concern for the group are questions of capacity building, communication with the broad public, methods of deepening the discussion, study tours and the feasibility of a metropolitan convention or forum.

The first major project of the group was to compile a questionnaire on local government options for the metropolitan area that focused on process, what a new system should look

like and critical areas where considerable disagreement exists such as affirmative action and the boundaries of a new system.

There has been a very encouraging response to the questionnaire and a draft summary has already been prepared. Workshops are being held with organisations lacking the technical capacity to complete the questionnaire to ensure that participation is as broad and fair as possible.

David Schmidt
Regional Director

By MAUREEN ROBERTSON

A boost for cause of policy making in education

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY INVESTIGATION: The Framework Report and Final Report Summaries, Oxford University Press/NECC, Cape Town, 1993.

Between December 1990 and August 1992 the National Education Policy Investigation (Nepi), a project of the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC), undertook an extensive study of short to medium-term policy options in all areas of education in South Africa. Twelve research reports were produced, each covering a major educational sector, as well as The Framework Report, which includes summaries of these 12 reports, a conceptual introduction to the issue of policy investigation, and a history of the Nepi process.

Part A of The Framework Report introduces the key concepts and debates which emerged during the investigation and

explains the structures and procedures of Nepi. The authors stress that the purpose of the investigation was to investigate options rather than to provide blueprints or models for a future educational dispensation in South Africa. Readers who are looking for easy answers to the education crisis may therefore be disappointed, but as the Framework states: 'The first step needed [is] to bring more views, interests and forces to bear upon the policy-making process and to encourage debate and discussion.' (p 8)

In South Africa, the report argues, state educationists have tended to limit themselves to policy implementation with little analysis or critique, while the democratic movement has been directed towards policy

analysis and advocacy, with little experience in the hard world of policy implementation. This report provides both sides with a valuable stepping stone for understanding the process of policy formation as one in which the analysis of options is accompanied by proposals, advocacy and planning. For a 'policy-illiterate' society this understanding is likely to provide an important tool for increasing grassroots participation in choices about education.

The Nepi investigation from the start acknowledges its frame of values, arguing that values and politics permeate the entire domain of policy consideration. The guiding principles of the Nepi enterprise were non-

racism, non-sexism, democracy, a unitary system and redress.

The explicit incorporation of a social framework in the analysis of educational options is a valuable contribution to the policy debate, since it serves as a reminder that politics will have to play a key role in seeking a way of this country's educational crisis.

The twelve research reports are available in greater detail in separate volumes, but the summaries in Part B of The Framework Report provide an opportunity for readers to glance at the key issues emerging from each research group. These research groups included: adult education; adult basic education; curriculum; early childhood education; education planning, systems and structure; governance and administration; human resource development; language; library and information services; post-secondary education; support services (incorporating guidance and counselling, special education and health); and teacher education.

The authors of the report admit, in retrospect, that there should have been a specific emphasis on primary schooling. Since most of the Nepi proposals see seven years of formal schooling as a likely compulsory qualification in a future education system, a focus on primary education would have been of value.

Each report (and in lesser detail each summary) has been structured according to the following questions:

- What are the key issues or features of this sector of the education system?
- What is the current state of policy and provision in the sector?
- What are the emerging alternatives being put forward by significant players in South Africa and how do they measure against the Nepi principles?
- How does all this relate to various alternative options?

The report explains in an accessible way the various key questions which run through all policy choices: Who pays? Who decides? How much difference should there be? How do the components fit together? In explaining the tensions which arise as choices are operationalised, the report provides a sober reminder that the implementing of educational demands will take place against a backdrop of social and economic realities, and will need to accommodate trade-offs, where a gain for one goal may mean a loss for another.

The summaries give a clear, if brief, account of the key issues emerging from the

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WORK IN PROGRESS

Fraai klanke uit Valsbaai

Deur **RONEL SCHEFFER**

DIE REUK VAN APPELS deur Mark Behr, Queillerie, 1993. R39,95.

Die dood bring sy eie vryheid. En dis oor dié wat bly lewe wat die dooies moet treur, want in die lewe is daar geen ontvlugting uit die geskiedenis nie.

'n Beskeie verhaal oor onbeskeie mense kom as 'n aangename verrassing van iemand van wie 'n mens dalk heavy en selfbewuste politiek kon verwag. Mark Behr het naam gemaak as Nusas-leier op Stellenbosch en studeer die afgelope twee jaar al in die buiteland.

Die eerste helfte van die boek, waarin Behr die selfvoldane werklikheid van die boonste echelons van Afrikaner establishment pynlik akkuraat en heel onkrities skets, is om die waarheid te sê amper vervelig. Generaal Pa, gewese operasanger Ma, voortvarende tiener suster en wysneus boetie woon in Muizenberg in die mooiste Kaap. Hulle is nog meer wintie en vasberade as gewone Afrikaners om hul *erfenis* te behou want Pa en Oupa het Oos-Afrika oorleef en weer hul pad boontoe gewerk hier in Valsbaai.

Maar die gebeure self – soos gesien deur die oë van die elf-jarige Marnus en ook deur 'n ouer weergawe van die karakter tydens die weermag se opmars na Luanda – vorm geleidelik, en baie natuurlik, 'n wye stroom sosiale kommentaar. Die web van mites is so dig om die karakters dat 'n mens – in hierdie tye van toleransie – teen jou beterswete half jammer begin voel vir hulle.

Die ouer Marnus, klaarblyklik homoseks-

sueel, is 'n luitenant in die staandemag wat saam met sy troepe in Angola in ernstige gevaar verkeer. Die verhaal flits nou en dan na Angola maar die storie draai hoofsaaklik om klein Marnus, die intrige van sy verhoudings en die besoek wat 'n geheimsinnige generaal uit Chile (Mr Smith!) aan sy pa bring.

Marnus is 'n tipiese bedorwe Afrikanerkind maar hy is nie 'n mislike mens of macho monster nie. Hy is ook nie 'n hero nie – hy maak 'n plan en gaan sy gang. Sy lewe draai om sy beste maat Frikkie, visvang, rugby en sy wonderlike familie – veral sy aantreklike Pa en dié se prestasies. Die vertelling, vol humoristiese nuanse en sensueel, ontbloot die teenstrydighede in sy gemeenskap en familie: onderdrukking en wreedheid teenoor anderskleuriges, die dubbel standarde van sy voortreflike ouers, seksualiteit, die mooiheid van meisiekinders, die swaarkry van werkersklas witmense, die seksuele misbruik van kinders en so meer.

Die klimaks van die verhaal kom as klein Marnus moet besluit of hy teen sy pa gaan (of kan) draai. Hy, en later die ouer Marnus, bly egter deel van die mainstream ten spyte van die leuen(s) in hul midde. Die geskiedenis het soos ons weet ongelukkig 'n manier om mense en nasies in te haal.

In hierdie dae van slim en opspraakwekkend skryf in Afrikaans, is Behr se verhaal nogal verfrissend – *charming* sou seker die gepaste beskrywing wees. Kom ons hoop ons sien meer van Behr, en dat die boek gelees sal word deur die mense wat dit beskryf.

Ronel Scheffer is Produksie Redakteur in Idasa se media-department.

Policy making in education

From Page 26

investigation within each research group, and provide a guide to the more extensive individual reports. The condensed style of a summary by definition leads to issues coming across as simpler than they really are; for encompassed in each summary is a bottomless pit of challenges for reconstructing education in South Africa. One is struck by the extent of the work which will need to be done in this country, not only at the level of formulating policy, but also with regard to developing the skills of educationists already in the system.

Authors and co-ordinators are not accredited in the summaries of the research groups.

While this may be consistent with the collective image of the NECC, it means that an opportunity is lost to network and engage directly with those who have been deeply involved in the debates and processes, and this is a pity.

The Framework Report and Final Report summaries provide an essential reference for all those involved in education, although it is likely to be of greater appeal to policy-makers and academics than to teachers or students. Its interests would be well served by popularising the debates within the individual sectors, so that discussion on policy can indeed become part of the daily reality of everyone connected with education.

Maureen Robinson works in the faculty of education at the University of the Western Cape.

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Mending the inner landscape of all South Africans

I THINK South Africans need therapy...all of us. Wherever we work, whether it's with students, teachers or community organisers, there are constant requests for skills and more skills... leadership, organisational, communication, mediation or negotiation. So much so that I'm beginning to wonder whether we shouldn't be hearing a more fundamental request... 'please help ME'.

'Please help me to feel better about myself, to feel as if I am worthwhile, that I can hold my own. Help me to stop feeling scared and angry and hopeless...as though nothing will work out no matter what we do.'

People may not be saying that, but it's what I sense when a friend goes on a six-month 'rage' against whites and women, when people arm themselves, when teachers come to school drunk and students fail another year, when people say we must listen and then shout down an opposing point of view.

It's easy to identify the problems and come up with the cause: apartheid. We can name the policies, structures and attitudes that have been entrenched by apartheid. But have we done an internal audit and looked at the psychological cost, the crippling mental and spiritual disabilities caused by apartheid and the years of equally racist English and Dutch colonial rule?

What are the psychological effects of years of being treated as non-persons, of being beaten up because you are black, of having half an hour to pack up your home, of the frustration of wanting to learn but knowing that the schooling is second-rate, of suppressing or living with your guilt if you are white, of fearing for your life because you 'have' and somebody else 'has not', of feeling a stranger in your own country. The list goes on.

Unless we open up and deal with the inner landscape, addressing the economic and political topography won't be enough. What's the point of designing wonderful bodywork, developing a new chassis, if the engine continues to leak oil?

If we don't know how to deal with our anger, our inherent racism and sexism and our fears and experiences of rejection, and change the destructive messages that we continually send ourselves, it is going to be so much harder to be good leaders, good mediators, good negotiators and good organisers. How can we talk about tolerance or peace or working together when inside we are all such a mess?

This country needs deep inner healing of the spirit. The

churches talk about it but how much are they are doing about it, in a pastoral sense? In white suburbs, group therapy life-skills courses are bursting at the seams with people in search of 'meaningful relationships' and comfort from the horror of car hijackings. The price of these courses, however, makes them the preserve of the rich (or relatively well-off).

If basic life-skills courses were made available to communities without the financial means, wouldn't that also be a form of redistribution of wealth, an investment in personal empowerment which is where all empowerment starts?

Imagine the impact of self-esteem courses on residents of informal housing settlements, demotivated teachers, frustrated students, retrenched workers and victims of violence.

In his book *The Road Less Travelled*, M. Scott Peck refers to the dynamic interplay between the individual and society when he says that a healthy person creates a healthy society and a healthy society creates a healthy person. Health, or wholeness, doesn't happen overnight, but in the journey towards it we have to wrestle with our sense of victimhood with honesty and with responsibility, for ourselves and others.

Empowerment is both a personal and political issue. An active democracy depends on a strong civil society, which depends on participation, which depends on people taking their own and other people's rights seriously. A strong sense of self is vital if we are to move from the positions of either apathy or resistance into a pro-active mode that is required for restructuring at every level.

Maybe the many life-skills trainers out there could seriously start looking at how they can offer their services to a far broader community. Where they don't have access to, or credibility with, communities they could team up with organisations or structures who do. This could take the form of training of trainers, making their resources available at affordable fees,

considering a volunteer component to their work or subsidising their community work by charging higher fees to those who can afford it. There are probably other options.

The emphasis of almost every life-skills course is to make the connection between the individual and the community, with the aim of building a healthy society. It would be sad – and ironic – if money was the factor that kept this 'health service' out of the reach of most South Africans.

Alice Coetzee is a regional co-ordinator in Idasa's Pretoria office.



By ALICE COETZEE

'How can we talk about tolerance or peace or working together when inside we are all such a mess?'