DEMOCRACY in ACTION

Journal of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa

Vol 8 No 2
15 April 1994

DATE WITH DESTINY

PRAYER FOR THE FUTURE: Prominent South Africans bow their heads at an Easter service in Moria, Northern Transvaal. SATV

By SHAUNA WESTCOTT

SOUTH Africans are days away from the most significant event in centuries of our history. We have snatched from the ashes of apartheid a chance that was unimaginable only five years ago. We must not lose sight of this fact, whatever the difficulties that lie ahead.

This means that everybody must make an effort to vote on 27 April – or exercise their right not to vote, peacefully. But it means more than that. It means taking a stand against intolerance wherever we may find it. It means refusing to participate in panic. Every person who stays calm, every person who is non-violent, every person who refuses to be stampeded into doomsday stockpiling of groceries, will make a contribution to ensuring a free and fair election.

Idasa Training Centre for Democracy Director Paul Graham put it like this: "This election will work only if everyone realises that they must play a part. We must all co-operate. We must look after one another, deal fairly with one another. We all need to understand that this a great moment in our history and it is one that we might not have again."

Ultimate responsibility for managing this "great moment in our history" rests with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). It is a responsibility no one can envy – the scale alone has been daunting. Arrangements had to be made for about 25 million voters to cast their votes in about 80 000 voting booths in almost 10 000 polling stations spread across a vast territory.

Nearly a quarter of a million people will staff polling stations on election day, in addition to more than 10 000 monitors. Not only did this vast army of workers have to be employed, trained and deployed, it all had to happen in less than two months.

Western Cape Chief Electoral Officer Mary Burton, for instance, attended her first IEC meeting on 23 February. Yet she is upbeat and imperturbable. "The timeframe looks

To Page10

Idasa encounters 'Q'

By BEA ROBERTS

WE LIVE on the edge at Idasa, but we did not know how close to the edge until "Q" – who subsequently became the Goldstone Commission's "Deep Throat" – approached staff running a community policing project with allegations that plunged us into a shadowy and chilling world of covert operations, gun-running, enormous financial pay-outs, shady deals and murder.

Most people learned about the allegations of "Q" on 18 March, when Justice Richard Goldstone released his by now well-known report. The broad thrust of those allegations is that senior police generals were among those involved in an orchestrated effort to sow violence and mayhem in the country, with the East Rand and KwaZulu/Natal particularly targeted.

Activities alleged to be part of this conspiracy include the manufacture and purchase of weapons; the delivery of weapons to the Inkatha Freedom Party; orchestrated attacks on trains; and other terrorist attacks – in short, the "third force" operation whose

To Page 8

New SA, new director

Wilmot James explains how he plans to lead Idasa into the future — **See Page 16**

DEMOCRACY in ACTION

IDASA
WORKING FOR DEMOCRACY

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

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ISSN 1017-0243

Ja-Nee

Just Johann

Some people wish they could vote for the Independent Electoral Commission in the election. IEC chairperson Justice Johann Kriegler might be one. He told the BBC World Service he would not be casting a vote because there was no political party which had won his loyalty, support or admiration.

– Speaking in very cross vein, perhaps.

Pooling resources

A consumer joining the queue to stockpile goods in anticipation of election chaos declared herself well prepared for a possible siege. She told SATV that she had a generator lined up to provide electricity. And water? "No problem," she said, "I've got a pool."

– Anyone for a scotch and chlorine?

Bucking the trend

Journalists on Upington's *Die Gemsbok*, enthusing about the opening of the local IEC offices, said there was "just one problem": a deputy provincial election officer had not yet been appointed.

– If only there was just one problem.

Someone who nose?

Speaking at Idasa's recent "Justice in Transition" conference, Father Michael Lapsley joked about the medical expert he consulted after he was maimed by a letter-bomb explosion. After much consideration, the expert concluded that either Lapsley's sense of smell would return, or it wouldn't.

– He was quite right, of course.

Liberty, equality, insanity

At the same conference, American journalist Lawrence Weschler, describing the totalitarian military regime in Uruguay, told of a prison system in which citizens were arrested, brutally tortured and eventually remanded for long periods. The name of the main prison? *Libertad*.

– It was run by behavioural psychologists with the express intention of driving its inmates insane, Weschler said.

Sign of the times

A sign in Lakeside, Cape Town, exhorts passers-by to browse and buy at a forthcoming "flee market".

– To equip themselves when grocery stockpiling fails, perhaps.

Handle with care

Pressure on the ground is obviously mounting, as a petty cash voucher recently received from an Idasa regional office suggests. The voucher requested payment for transport for "delicates" who had attended an Idasa workshop.

– So who said politics is "not for sissies"?

Cause for celebration as era of shame ends

SOUTH AFRICA stands on the threshold of a momentous election, an event that inspires both trepidation and hope.

The killing fields of Natal/KwaZulu inevitably have brought about a mood that most South Africans find sombre, even fearful. It would be foolhardy to dismiss the massive problems facing not only the security forces but also the many international observers and thousands of volunteers who will be staffing polling stations in the two days of elections. It would be equally foolish to try to persuade all South Africans that there is no cause for fear or even alarm. The mood is serious and there is a great deal of concern.

But an examination of the situation will show, I think, that in the midst of apprehension there is cause for celebration.

In the first place, the celebration of the country's first democratic election marks our progression to a totally new era. This is not a time of abnormality. We are actually returning to a normal situation, as the concept is understood in the international community, in which individual rights and fairness prevail. This shift towards a normal society is marked by the knowledge that all South Africans will be able to participate in this election; that there is no place for spectators (unless they themselves choose this); and that each vote holds equal value.

The election will not solve the many serious problems facing South Africa, but it is a start and is therefore cause for celebration.

In the second place, this election points to inclusivity rather than the pattern of exclusivity which has dominated South Africa for more than 300 years. In the past the majority of the people were neither considered nor consulted. Now, for the very first time, all South Africans assume full citizenship with equal rights and responsibilities.

This inclusivity holds the promise of creating the links that establish one nation. We no longer have to endure the divisions that have haunted us for so long. There now exists an opportunity for people to come together on the basis of equality and a genuine sharing in privileges and opportunities. As important, we come together on the basis of the shared responsibility which is what citizenship is all about.

Thirdly, this election marks the end of the dark years of apartheid, a time of denial and damage, a shameful past marked by heartache, mass removals, homelessness, discrimination and death. We turn the page and start afresh.

Of course we will still experience the legacy of the apartheid years. It will take at least a generation before the damage is repaired. It will not be easy to deal with the backlog of housing. It will not be a simple matter to provide decent health care for all South Africans. Above all, it will not be possible to put in place – with ease and in the short term – a system of education offering maximum opportunity for all South Africa's children. Nevertheless, this election marks the end of a shameful period in South Africa's history – and this is cause for celebration.

In the fourth place, this election marks the start of a new era in which the total human resources of our country can be harvested to build a common society. For the first time, every South African counts.

We have depended on the resources of a small minority for a terribly long time. We have deliberately refused to take account of the masses of people who could have been brought into the economy, assisted in vital economic growth and built a nation capable of competing on even terms with most of the world. This has now changed. It is only the beginning, but it *is* a beginning, and this is cause for celebration.

IN THE fifth place, this election marks the beginning of the construction of a decent society, one governed under the rule of law and a bill of rights, with core democratic values as the measure of acceptability. The repression and oppression of the *ancien regime* gives way to the beginning of justice – and this is cause for celebration.

In the sixth place, the election signals the occasion for finally abandoning the addiction to a purely anti-apartheid stance. Instead there is an opportunity to be *for* something – to be *for* the building of a new society. This is the time to stop being negative and start being positive.

It is not a time to stockpile goods. It is not a time to succumb to paralysis. It is not a time to throw up your hands in supposed helplessness and then blame circumstances. It is not the time to look with longing at Europe, Australia or some other distant shore. It is a time to focus on the new possibilities and new opportunities opening up in South Africa. It is a time to be creative and even joyful. It is time for hope and for celebration.

If this election is not a time for dancing in the streets, it is at least a time of thankfulness that the long night of shame is over and the new dawn of decency and justice is beginning.

Alex Boraine
Executive Director

Highlights of forthcoming events organised by Idasa offices

BLOEMFONTEIN

Voter education

Idasa's Bloemfontein office will be conducting a voter education programme for the entire Orange Free State command of the South African Defence Force. The programme will run from 11 to 24 April.

The Bloemfontein office will also be fielding a team of 50 Idasa-trained monitors in the Orange Free State. These monitors will be co-ordinated centrally from Idasa's offices and will link up with monitors from other organisations.

WESTERN CAPE

Local government

The Western Cape office of Idasa will continue its work on the local government front. A civic dialogue programme at metropolitan level will be held in May. This will be aimed at civics and ratepayer organisations.

Another civic dialogue programme on local government, this time in the Southern Suburbs, will be held in May. Civics and ratepayers from this area will meet in an attempt to get to know one another and discuss the role of their civic organisations.

For further details contact Michelle Booth (021) 47-1280.

DURBAN

Zulu monarchy

A Future Forum will be held at the Edward Hotel in Durban on 20 April. Professor SME Bhengu, vice-chancellor and rector of the University of Fort Hare, will address the issue of the Zulu monarchy in the new constitution.

The forum starts at 12:15 and costs R35 a person. For further details and bookings contact Louella Tifflin at (031) 304-8893.

PORT ELIZABETH

Prejudice

Idasa's Port Elizabeth office is organising a Prejudice Reduction workshop from 23 to 25 May. The workshop will be facilitated by Julian Sonn. It aims to confront the issue of racism at an organisational level and to improve communication and productivity.

The workshop, which will be held at the Walmer Gardens Hotel, would be useful for people working in non-governmental and community-based organisations. It will cost R75 a person.

For further information contact Sandy Wren at Idasa's Port Elizabeth office (041) 55-3301.

Observer update

IDASA was among the first organisations to be accredited by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) as an observer organisation. Idasa will train observers to monitor the elections as promulgated under the Electoral and the IEC Act.

- A non-partisan organisation in Natal is calling for election observers.

The Kwazulu Natal Electoral Observer Network (Kneon) is an independent organisation working with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to ensure a fair and free election.

Kneon intends to recruit, train and deploy 6 000 observers in the region, who will work closely with IEC monitors.

For more information and/or application forms, contact the following Kneon subregional offices: Durban (031) 305-8665; Newcastle (03431) 52536/7/8; Pietermaritzburg (0331) 451324/5; Port Shepstone (0391) 825087, 825217; Empangeni (0351) 921048.

Taming the tiger

There is an urgent need for a new understanding of the right wing. Superficial political ridicule or moral indignation serve no purpose. So argues BRAAM VILJOEN, negotiator, concerned South African and twin brother to Freedom Front leader Constand Viljoen. It would be sheer folly to fail to accommodate the right in some way; the alternative could be disaster, he writes.

AFTER the ringing defeat of the right wing in the March 1992 referendum, strategists thought they could comfortably ignore the leaderless, divided and spent force they took it to be. The negotiation process therefore went ahead without much effort to accommodate the right, which was too afflicted or too stubborn to participate of its own accord.

However, by May 1993 it was clear the right wing had regrouped around the four generals who formed the nucleus of the Afrikaner Volksfront (AV). To a large extent it was the advent of this calibre of leadership which transformed the mood of the right wing from doom to militant activism, and made it possible for the most diverse groups of Afrikaner dissidents to unite under the AV umbrella – something that was unthinkable a year earlier.

The subsequent formation of the Freedom Alliance, while not entirely without political dangers for the white right, introduced it to a much wider political context than it had been used to, including negotiation politics and alliance strategy.

It is important to give due weight to the fact that the right wing has had little time to adjust to an enormous change: from the isolation of the laager to active participation in the fast lane of contemporary South African politics. It is also important to remember that it is mainly the leadership that has been exposed to this new experience and that it will take some time for new insights to filter through to constituency level.

Be that as it may, it is clear that right-wing policy has shifted, in response to this new experience, from rigid adherence to the concept of partition to a more nuanced attempt to offer solutions for current problems that are perceived as marketable to stake holders. The best example has been a more serious and articulated presentation of the *volkstaat* idea, but community councils on the Brussels model and a version of the Swiss canton system recently made it to the official right-wing agenda.

While this kind of exploration may seem to many to be belated and far-fetched, it nevertheless represents serious movement within right-wing thinking, which should be accorded recognition at least.

Equally in need of recognition has been a strong recent emphasis in certain right-wing quarters on the strategy of negotiation, as opposed to the idea of violent protest. I want to suggest that this willingness to negotiate should be taken seriously. It is a real willingness, despite the fact that the right felt it necessary to withdraw from the generally accepted structures of multi-party negotiations.

The right acknowledges the existence of shades of opinion in its ranks, but claims that most of its constituents are concerned first and foremost about the increase in violence, lawlessness and insecurity in South Africa over the last few years. This is understood on the right to constitute a revolutionary situation that will not facilitate a free and fair election and may continue to escalate in the future with disastrous effects on what is left of the economy and on personal and community security.

The right wing is not confident that any new government will be able to contain the situation that the present regime has allowed to develop. Hence the demand for a *volkstaat* – an enclave where the right can enjoy self-determination.

Dangerously brief though it is, this is the background I hope will afford an understanding of where the right wing is coming from – and of the crisis unfolding on this front.

What is the situation? It is this: the right wing, with considerable built-in conflict potential, is willing to negotiate (together with its allies in the Freedom Alliance) about conditions and concessions which would enable it to participate in the transition process. At the same time it must be conceded that the right wing constitutes a minority and that it has arrived somewhat late at the negotiating table where other powerful parties have set the tone and determined the schedule.

The inevitable result is that the majority group in the transition process perceives the "obstinate" minority as spoilers. The tendency is to brush the "spoilers" aside and to rush on to meet deadlines. The "spoilers", in the usage that is becoming standard, have "missed the train".

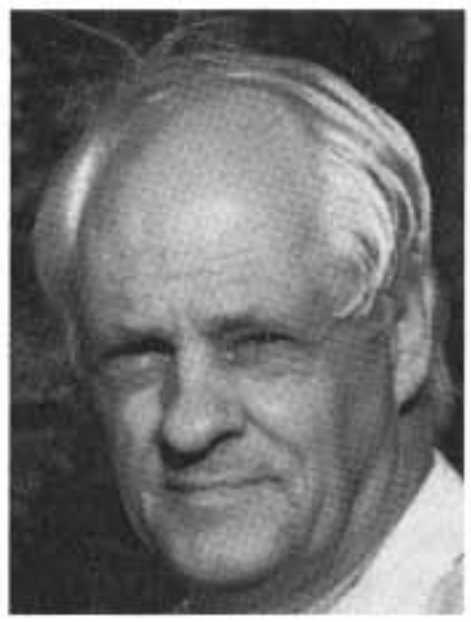
The right wing, on the other hand, perceives the majority group – and, indeed, the government – to be extremely arrogant and possessed of a euphoria and self-confidence which allow for only one option: to push on, regardless.

This leaves right-wingers with the dangerous perception that their backs are to the wall. It also leaves their more reasonable leaders, who have contained considerable pressure up to this point, vulnerable and without any results to support their preference for the strategy of negotiation.

I have been monitoring the mood within the right wing and I am afraid we have reached a critical stage where uncontrollable

To Page 6

'Sometimes I think the classic elements of tragedy are constellating here: the past inescapably determining the future; heroism and valour combining strangely with utter foolishness to help bring about ultimate – and inevitable – disaster'



Braam Viljoen

Taming the tiger

From Page 5

outbursts will escalate and where the leadership will lose control over certain elements. The leadership will also come under severe pressure to stop the process of negotiation which has not delivered balm to the right wing's sense of insecurity.

Over the past few months there have been repeated surges of hope that the right wing may, after all, be brought into the process. However, we are losing the race against the clock as majority powers prove to be preoccupied with electioneering, which leaves little room for the accommodation of political enemies by way of compromise or concession.

Sometimes I think the classic elements of tragedy so vividly captured in the timeless works of the ancient Greeks are constellating here: the past inescapably determining the future; heroism and valour combining strangely with utter foolishness to help bring about ultimate – and inevitable – disaster.

There is an urgent need for a new understanding of the right wing. Superficial political ridicule or liberalist moral indignation serves no purpose. It is my view that it would be sheer folly to fail to accommodate the right in some way. Arrogance, which often mars minds inclined to the left, must make way for tolerance if there is to be real communication between liberals and conservatives. The alternative could be disaster.

A number of misconceptions have had a serious impact on perceptions of the right wing, both in South Africa and abroad. In particular, far too much attention has been given to the lunatic fringe, particularly the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) and such unhinged individuals as mass murderer Barend Strydom. The whole of the right wing is then unfairly and confusingly identified with the extremists when in fact the majority are acutely embarrassed to be associated with the likes of Strydom and the AWB.

Beyond the ugly face of brutal racism is a much wider right-wing movement of respectable and mostly God-fearing people. Their attitudes, by and large, are the product of ideological conditioning by both church and state over many decades. These people may be guilty of racism, but the mitigating circumstance is relentless brainwashing by the media of the apartheid state.

People came to think of the necessity of "population groups", for instance. Grand apartheid was sold in grand terms. *Deus vult* (God wants it), the motto of the medieval crusades, took in many a righteous right-winger. It took a long and bitter struggle to even begin to question the "biblical foundation" of the policy of apartheid.

When more and more brutal repression became necessary to enforce apartheid in the face of escalating popular resistance, the government renewed its propaganda and disinformation efforts around the ideology of "total onslaught". The right wing believed it. When F W de Klerk instituted the massive about-turn of 1990, with very little substantial explanation, the right wing was abandoned to the regime's discarded demons. Little or no effort was made to re-educate the people.

'Right-wing policy has shifted from rigid adherence to the concept of partition to a more nuanced attempt to offer solutions for current problems that are perceived as marketable to stake holders'

Confession, it seems, was just too embarrassing. National Party leaders had future political prospects to consider; church leaders had to shore up a claim on divine authority and try – vainly, as it turned out – to prevent a schism in the church.

The result of this failure of courage is visible for all to see: a large number of hard-working, God-fearing people who are thoroughly confused but stubbornly holding on to the supports of the past.

Simply to accuse these people of racism and think of them as backward is to miss the point. They are the victims of the illusions and fallacies of the past and we have to keep that in mind when we consider what can be expected from them and decide on possible remedial action.

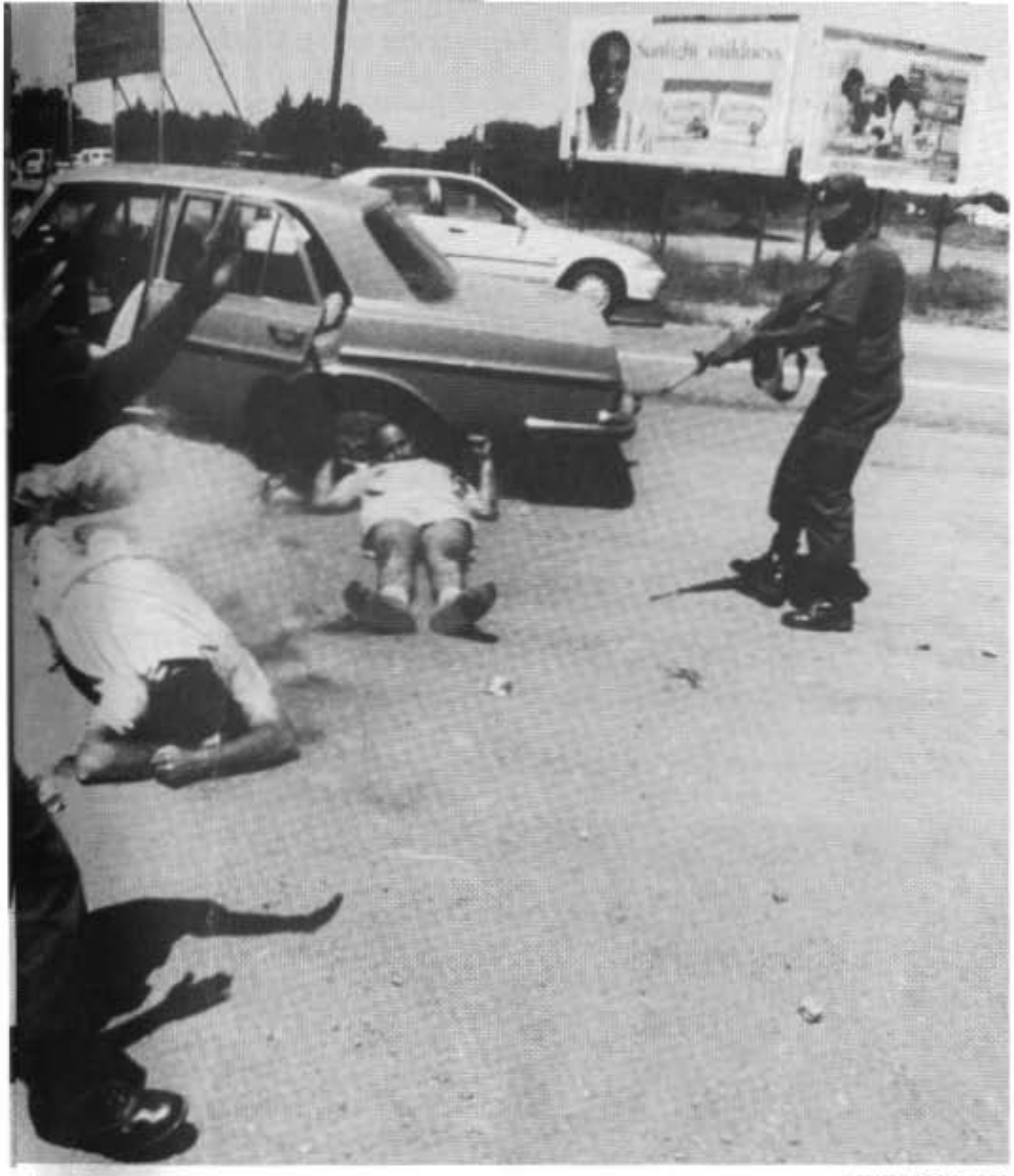
Currently, a sense of grievance is fuelling the ideological fixations of the right wing. They are aggrieved by the apparent relish with which elements in both the National Party and ANC insist the right wing entered into negotiations too late; that it is impossible to accommodate them; that the process of legislation cannot be changed to include their inputs. The right wing feels that the whole process happened with undue haste and that its representatives suffered unfairly from undue pressure as a result.

Slowly, the right-wing tiger is being cornered and its own perception is one of being cheated at the last moment. The right wing resents what it sees as an unwillingness on the part of its political adversaries to open the door to a movement that could rock the boat.

The point I am making here is that growing threats of violence and civil war are not coming from some innate disposition to fight and kill peculiar to the right, but from a normally civil nature that feels backed up

MOMENT OF DEATH: Militant activism goes

Shift from laage



the AWB in Bophuthatswana. COBUS BODENSTEIN

to fast-lane politics

against a wall. The danger is that the cornered tiger will act suddenly from the feeling that it has no option but to die tearing its tormentors limb from limb.

It is true that the recent split in the ranks of the AV – over participation in the election – will have an effect on the ability of the right wing to stage a united programme of disruption before the election. But we should not fool ourselves into believing again that the right wing is disintegrating. Differences between factions are about means, not about the end. Right-wingers all still have one goal: self-determination in a *volkstaat*.

It has become clear from the position taken by AV spokespersons over the past few months that the concept of self-determination is central and crucial to them. It has the same importance to the Freedom Front (FF), and enjoys the support of what remains of the Freedom Alliance (FA).

The attitude of other political actors to the concept, however, has been one of peculiar hostility. It was not that long ago, after all, that detained ANC cadres arguing in court for recognition of their right to prisoner-of-war status based their arguments on the right to self-determination enshrined in Protocol I of the Geneva Convention.

This hostility was among the reasons behind the exclusion of the concept of self-determination from the constitution finally approved by the multi-party process towards the end of 1993. However, after a sustained process of negotiation, the right succeeded in having certain amendments to the constitution agreed to and subsequently passed by a special session of Parliament early in 1994.

The crucial change, from the right-wing point of view, was the addition to the Constitutional Principles, which are binding on the Constitutional Assembly, of a thirty-fourth principle allowing for the possibility of self-determination for groups that feel strongly about it.

However, the right wing needs to acknowledge that its insistence on the right to self-determination does resonate disturbingly with some apartheid principles. It certainly needs to acknowledge that this insistence reveals an unwillingness on the part of certain parties and/or leaders with apartheid backgrounds to accept the logical consequences of the end of the apartheid era.

On the other hand, there is a need for other players to make the effort to understand that there can be a legitimate aspect to the concept of self-determination. It is not necessarily reactionary to insist that distinct communities should be allowed self-determination within the confines of the Bill of Rights and the general Constitutional Principles. Nor is it necessarily fascist to believe that giving space to ethnic allegiance may be a way to prevent the kind of conflict that has so ruinously engulfed Yugoslavia, for example.

It is clear that the protagonists of self-determination are the ones who may risk violence to force a hearing of their claims. The question therefore becomes: can right-wing demands be attended to in a way that will reduce, if not remove, the danger of violent disruption of the poll and national reconstruction which must follow?

I would argue that this can – and should – be attempted. The basic conditions for the success of such an attempt would include:

- tolerance about those convictions within the AV and FF that may be uncomfortable but are not blatant racism;
- acceptance of the sincerity of some right-wing leaders in their quest for a peaceful settlement;
- commitment from the right wing to respect for human rights, including freedom of political activity, and to the principle that self-determination should prevent conflict, rather than escalate it.

Braam Viljoen is a facilitator in the negotiating process which involves the right wing.

Idasa encounters 'Q'

From Page 1

existence has been the subject of speculation for some years.

The primary source behind the current spate of allegations is "Q", a lieutenant from the C-10 unit based at Vlakplaas. As long ago as 1989, former SAP captain Dirk Coetzee and his erstwhile colleague Butana Almond Nofumela were alleging that Vlakplaas was a base for hit squad operatives. Nofumela took the desperate step of making a sworn affidavit about hit squad activities, including the murder of Durban lawyer Griffiths Mxenge, the day before he was scheduled to hang.

Still languishing on death row in Pretoria Central, Nofumela told *The Weekly Mail* this month that there are others from his old unit who "know a lot, but don't have the courage to come forward". Other witnesses have unburdened themselves, however, and at least three, including "Q", have been moved outside South Africa in terms of the Goldstone Commission's witness protection programme.

The three SAP generals alleged to be involved in a third force conspiracy – Basie Smit, "Krappies" Engelbrecht and Johan le Roux – went on "voluntary" leave after the release of the Goldstone report. Police Commissioner Johan van der Merwe truculently defended the generals, vowing to "go on pension" if any firm evidence against them was forthcoming.

That there might be altogether too much confidence about a lack of evidence may be a factor behind the Goldstone Commission's refusal to hand over to the police any evidence relating to the "Q" allegations. Evidence of crucial importance to other investigations – the probe into Civil Co-operation Bureau (CCB) activities and the Goniwe inquest, to name only two on a shockingly long list – has all too often "disappeared", as in the case of police tape recordings relating to the police role in the Boipatong massacre.

Justice Goldstone seems determined that this will not happen in this instance and that the law will take its course.

Justice Goldstone emphasised in his report that the allegations against the generals were allegations. This is obviously an important principle. People are innocent until proved guilty.

However, such is the seriousness of the allegations, so long-standing and persistent have similar allegations been, that it is imperative that the entire third force issue receives urgent, focused attention from neutral persons whose integrity is unlikely to be impugned.

Van der Merwe would appear to have disqualified himself from such a role by virtue of public utterances entirely inappropriate to such serious allegations. His attitude has been inappropriate, also, in the light of the fact that these serious allegations were brought to the attention of the authorities by no less a person than the judge appointed to investigate the causes of the violence that is posing such a threat to the country.

The sinister spectre of a third force stirring up hatred and chaos cannot be allowed to hang over South Africa indefinitely. It must be laid to rest or given a concrete shape and prosecuted – as the Goldstone Commission intends to do.

In the meanwhile, much that is important for future reconstruction is compromised. For example, the third force spectre makes Idasa's work on the interface between the police and communities more difficult. More importantly, it undermines all those police officers working hard in conditions of great danger and inadequate pay to fulfill their task of protecting citizens.

Judge Richard Goldstone and Idasa's Bea Roberts

Most worrying of all, it confirms the majority of the people in an attitude of mistrust that is currently contributing enormously to the crisis of the entire legal system.

So severe is community lack of trust in the police, an attitude established by decades of apartheid brutality, that even the most concerted efforts at establishing good community-police relations are fraught with difficulty.

Nevertheless, Idasa's experience in workshops set up to explore the development of good relations between police and community has been extremely encouraging. It appears that there is a willingness from all parties to put the past aside, and work to develop positive relations, channels of communication and a spirit of co-operation.

Both police and community clearly recognise that this will take some time; nevertheless the shifts in attitude have been nothing short of remarkable. The police officers who have attended these workshops have generally been able to recognise that communities have experienced damage at the hands of the police. They have also generally managed to move beyond defensive positions to a remarkable, constructive engagement with members of these very communities.

However, if the top ranks of the police force have in fact been involved in a third force conspiracy, this entire process – if not the whole approach to community policing itself – may have to be rethought.

It is critically important for the country to have a confident, fully operational and well-supported police service – and for this reason it may be necessary to embark on a cleansing process.

Two issues need urgent attention. The first question is what to do with a police force that could face the loss of its leadership – a frightening prospect. The possibility of chaos and disorder exists and will have to be dealt with. Middle- and lower-ranking police officers may be confused, angry or scared at the prospect of not only a new political order, but also a fundamental change in leadership.

The second issue is a related one. If indeed there has been a third force conspiracy on the scale alleged, then clearly it could not have been the work of a mere handful of generals and their supporters. It therefore follows that, in the event that those already implicated are proved guilty, a ripple effect will be felt across the entire police force. Already a number of "Qs" – driven to talk through fear, revenge or conscience – have been given protection by the Goldstone Commission with the backing of the State President.

While the process takes its course there is another important task: the transformation and support of a new South African police service. In the course of our community policing work – and in the course of the Goldstone investigation – it has been proved that there are honest, committed police who want to see justice done, and want to perform their daily task of ensuring law and order to the benefit of all people. These men and women deserve our support and encouragement.

Ballot safe from seer's gaze

INDIGENOUS HEALERS: Call to draw them into voter education programmes.

How secret is the secret ballot? Can traditional diviners unveil the secret? Are voters safe from the power of the sangoma to reveal what is hidden? MANTON HIRST investigates.

VOTER educators in the Western, Eastern and Southern Cape are concerned about anxiety among some voters that their votes will not be secret from traditional diviners.

It seems that some traditional healers, used to acting as some form of social control, are threatening dire consequences to those who vote for a party other than the one suggested by themselves. Others say that once their diviner has prophesied which party must win, they must vote accordingly.

Traditionalist African healers or diviners (termed *izangoma* and *amagqirha* among the Zulu and Xhosa respectively) are reputedly all-knowing clairvoyants. They are said to be able to reveal intimate details of the social background, lives and actions of those who consult them for advice – details which ordinarily are hidden unless revealed by the individual concerned.

Diviners are believed to receive a call to the vocation from their deceased senior male ancestors (women, traditionally regarded as subordinate to men, do not call diviners to their vocation). Diviners are also believed to be in constant touch with the ancestral spirits, particularly in dreams and waking visions.

As one informant put it, diviners and the ancestors are connected by a cosmic telephone. Diviners ultimately speak on behalf of the ancestors, from whom they derive the associated power to uncover concealed truths about their clients.

The ancestors give these perceptive powers to diviners so that they can decide what rituals are needed to overcome whatever illness or misfortune has overtaken the individual or community.

However, the diviners' capacity to reveal concealed truths depends in the first place on the willingness of clients to allow them to do so. A consultation with a diviner is a service that clients must pay for. This is the first giving of permision to the diviner to come close. Then, those who consult diviners participate actively in the consultation. This is the second level of giving permission to the diviner.

It is an unbreakable rule of divinatory practice – as it is of fortune telling or psychotherapy – that those consulting the diviner must interact with her or him. Unless this interaction happens, the diviner (or fortune teller or psychotherapist) has no way of selecting the bits and pieces of the client's story that are relevant to the healing task. Naturally the diviner is then unable to do any healing.

In other words, a diviner can only claim to expose a concealed truth if a client is a willing participant – who requests this service, pays for it, and validates the procedure. Essentially, all the information "exposed" by the diviner is actually given to the diviner by the client.

So, from the perspective of actual performance, the diviner as all-knowing clairvoyant appears to be a sort of socio-cultural fiction. To some extent this is reflected in two Xhosa riddles:

- *Ndinamntu wam; uzidla ngobuxoki. Ligqirha elivumisayo* (I have a person of mine; he prides himself on being a liar. It is a traditional diviner).

To Page 10

Ballot safe

From Page 9

● *Ndinamntu wam; uye athethe, athi umntu nguzipeqe kanti akamazi. Ligqirha xa livumisayo* (I have a person of mine; she is used to speaking and saying a person is this and that, and yet she does not know the person. It is a diviner when she divines).

Nevertheless, the old sociological axiom remains valid that what people define as real becomes real in its consequences. If people believe that it is impossible for their votes to remain hidden from magical powers, these beliefs need to be taken seriously.

Claiming to have the power to know how people voted is a form of political intimidation. Intimidation is illegal. The social control function of healers is not compatible with the democratic process.

'The diviners' capacity to reveal concealed truths depends in the first place on the willingness of clients to allow them to do so'

However, short of locking up all the indigenous healers in the country, what can be done to address the problem?

Although there is a whole mythological complex which surrounds diviners, it is important to remember that in reality diviners are often as illiterate as the people to whom they give advice. In the same way as everyone else, diviners rely on the media for information.

The only effective solution is for indigenous healers country-wide to become a target group for voter education. Various bodies represent indigenous healers throughout the country and could co-operate in the task of taking voter education to their members.

Voter educators can make contact with indigenous healers in a particular locality – for example the rural/urban areas of Crossroads or Nyanga East – and explain why it is important for the ballot to remain secret.

Based on close contact with Cape Nguni diviners over the past 20 years, my own impression is that most indigenous healers will respond positively if they are approached politely and respectfully. Such an approach delivered co-operation between health workers and diviners in Grahamstown to set up a TB clinic.

Manton Hirst is the Principal Museum Human Scientist at the Kaffrarian Museum in King William's Town.

Date with destiny

From Page 1

manageable," she told *The Weekly Mail* in the first week of March. "Yes, we are coping," she said early in April. "We're keeping up to date with our timetable. We've got some really good people in place and good relations among them all. Everyone is carrying out their tasks."

IEC commissioner Ben van der Ross agrees. "We South Africans are a pretty resourceful lot. We're getting the message from the United Nations crowd that we can't do it. But we'll pull this thing together."

Fellow commissioner Helen Suzman shares this determination. Looking forward to retirement after what she hopes will be the final stretch of long public service ("This is Custer's last stand!"), she said of the IEC brief: "It's a pretty awesome task but everyone is working flat out and we intend to complete the job."

Suzman emphasises that the election should be seen as the harvest of years of struggle. "Although the fruits of victory are somewhat sour in some instances, they are to be savoured," she says.

Burton agrees, says work in the IEC is giving her a real sense of the delightful flavour that life in the new South Africa could have.

"One of the things that is wonderful is that people working in the IEC come from all sorts of different political persuasions and histories. This is illustrated by the fact that security in IEC offices is being provided jointly by the South African Police and the ANC. To see them working together day after day, shift after shift, is wonderful.

"In our office we're beginning to get a real sense of what things are going to be like in the future. So that's what I hope: that we're developing a little model of how things can be."

And it's not just the police and old ANC cadres who are in on the act of building the future. An astonishing variety of people have flooded IEC offices with offers of help. The person now responsible for human resources in Burton's office demanded to be released from his top-level job in the commercial sector for the election period. "This is the first and possibly the last time I can do something for my country," he told his boss, "and I am determined to do it."

It is also important to remember that, in addition to the vast effort of the IEC and other transitional structures, thousands of South Africans are quietly working away at hundreds of projects, big and small, to build a better future. These people seldom make newspaper headlines. Their projects are unsung. Yet in a range of fields – from education to agriculture, from small business to conservation – South Africans are already engaged in reconstruction.

So, when you see the latest catalogue of horror on your TV screen, remember that you see only part of the picture. Over 90 percent of our country is at peace. The vast majority of South Africans want peace and many are actively engaged in making it happen.

At the same time we cannot be indifferent to how much suffering there is. Nightly we see or hear about the savagery that has been part of the South African political landscape for decades. Each person speechless with loss, each weeping victim of atrocity is one too many. Each rightly evokes our horror, our deep sympathy, our sense of outrage, our commitment to urgently seek ways to end the terror.

This commitment was a fundamental part of the motivation behind the meeting between State President FW de Klerk, ANC president Nelson Mandela, KwaZulu Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi and King Goodwill Zwelethini that took place on 8 April. The meeting was preceded by an encounter between three of these leaders – and others – at the traditional Zion Christian Church assembly of millions in Moria over the Easter weekend.

'In our office we're beginning to get a real sense of what things are going to be like in the future. So that's what I hope: that we're developing a little model of how things can be'

However sceptical some might have been about their motives, the sight of the three on their knees amid the masses of the faithful gave hope that there could at last be a breakthrough. It is profoundly disappointing, although not really surprising, that there was not.

Nevertheless, we should not despair. De Klerk said after the meeting that he thought much progress had been made, adding: "I think we have achieved today the beginning of negotiations that should have started long ago." The king said he hoped the meeting would show people at grassroots level what South Africa's leaders expected their followers to do. A task group has been set up to pursue unsolved issues.

ON TARGET: IEC official Mary Burton says the IEC is keeping up to date with its timetable.

Beyond these slim grounds for optimism stands the towering achievement that four years of hard work in negotiations has produced. This is work that continues across the country in regional and metropolitan forums.

We need to remind ourselves what a long distance we have walked; that we did turn away from ruin, turn our backs on the compulsive acting out of hatred and rage – however legitimate it might have been – and devote ourselves to constructing a future for those who will come after us.

Many of the building-blocks of that future are ready to be put into place. Some are quite simply astonishing, not only in the context of our grotesque past but also in relation to the rest of the international community. Our new Bill of Rights, for example, is the only one in the world that affords protection to the rights of gay people and provides for the principle of affirmative action.

So, it is no rough beast slouching towards birth in South Africa. The centre *is* holding. And what is about to be born – in the pain and blood that accompanies all birth – is the chance for peace and justice for which so many thousands of South Africans have sacrificed their time, their freedom, and their lives.

Poll watchers hail from near and far

ELECTION observers have become a world-wide phenomenon in the last decade.

With the upsurge in democratic elections, many countries needed help in making sure that their elections were free and fair. Independent observers provided them with a way of evaluating their elections and validating the elected government.

A number of specialist international organisations provide electoral assistance and groups of observers. These include intergovernmental groups like the United Nations (UN) as well as non-governmental organisations like the Carter Centre in the United States.

In some countries the words monitor and observer are used interchangeably. In South Africa each play different roles and have different powers.

In South Africa, the Electoral Act encourages the participation of two types of observers – international and domestic.

International observers will be co-ordinated by the UN but sent by governments and intergovernment organisations.

A number of local organisations will also be sponsoring observers and co-ordinating their efforts.

Observers do two things:

- They provide an independent presence that inhibits people from acting against the law and encourages them to stick to negotiated codes of behaviour.
- They report on what they have seen and in this way assist their organisations and ultimately the election authority to assess the conduct and outcome of the national election process.

In order to fulfil these functions, observers have to be present not only at potential trouble spots but at all voting stations and election activities.

In South Africa there will also be two types of monitors. The IEC-employed monitors act as inspectors and situation managers on behalf of the IEC. The peace monitors act as on-the-ground mediators and crisis managers.

Each of these plays a different but complementary role in ensuring that at the end of the day, voters can go to the voting station confident that their voice will be heard.

Parliament becomes 'friendlier for women'

Parliamentary staff are hurriedly making changes to accommodate the increased numbers of women expected to take up parliamentary seats after the election. But these efforts have stirred controversy over 'special privileges'. SHIREEN BADAT investigated.

OLD GUARD MAKES WAY: Fleur Ferri's July

THE face of Parliament, white for centuries and almost as entirely male, is about to change forever. For the first time in the history of South Africa, significant numbers of women of all races will help to reclaim the space between the neo-classical facades associated for so long with the twin enterprise of privilege and oppression.

Before they can do so, however, Parliament must be transformed into a "women-friendly" place. So says a memorandum from the ANC Women's League delivered to Parliament on International Women's Day last month.

In concrete terms, the memorandum demanded child-care facilities, including provision for collecting children from school and after-school care. It also called for adequate cloakroom and toilet facilities for women.

The immediate response was a feasibility study into the issue of women-friendliness under the command of Secretary of Parliament Robin Douglas. According to Douglas, the study found that there was indeed a need for further cloakroom facilities, and extensive refurbishing and renovation is under way.

On the question of child care, Douglas said the recommendations of the study would be implemented after the elections, since there was a need to see "who is elected to Parliament, how many women there are and what their needs are".

"We have been looking at what facilities are available in the vicinity of Parliament," he said. "We realise that Parliament is not an ideal place for children to be running around, although we will be able to make use of existing facilities, for example the huge catering facilities and the trained nurses who are on the staff of Parliament.

'Because of the history of this country, white, wealthy women in particular have been able to participate more fully than their black counterparts because they were in a position to employ people to look after their children'

"We do not want to spend a lot of money on new structures when we may be able to use existing facilities. It could be necessary to embark on a staff recruitment campaign to meet these new needs."

Surprisingly, these efforts have not received a unanimous welcome from all women involved in politics. Helen Suzman, for years the sole female in an otherwise male Parliament, described the demands of the ANC Women's League as unrealistic and unnecessary.

"There has always been more than one lavatory in Parliament," Suzman said. "For many years I was able to confront 164 men in Parliament without demanding special privileges."

She agreed that women with small children might struggle to meet both parental responsibilities and the demands of parliamentary life, but said: "If women want to enter the political arena they must realise that it's a big, tough world out there."

The Democratic Party's Dene Smuts dismissed the demands of the ANC Women's League as a political ploy "to make the papers and impress the voters".

"Demands for special rules for female Members of Parliament will reduce us all to second-class MPs," said Smuts. She conceded that most law-making bodies worldwide were still male-dominated, but said changes were under way.

"There are women prime ministers and speakers now. Our capacity for competence has been established by a generation of pioneers who didn't have the luxury of being able to demand a women-friendly world."

Nina Romm, of the Women's Rights Peace Party, agreed with the position of the ANC Women's League that practical measures were necessary to facilitate women's participation in government.

In particular she agreed that the issue of child care was central. "If you want a true democracy, then you have to have proper representation of women. This means that the issue of crèches needs to assume national importance and not remain a secondary issue."

As important, she felt, was that women support each other in Parliament.

"It is important for a women's caucus to

ting of the Cabinet currently on display in the Poorthuis entrance to Parliament.

be formed in Parliament to advance women's issues. As long as women continue to fight each other along party-political lines, we will remain a minority in Parliament."

Citing the Women's National Coalition as a useful exercise in this kind of co-operation, Romm urged women in the public arena to support each other and lobby collectively around the need for women in government.

ANC candidate Tasneem Essop, who is also the mother of a four-month-old baby, said it was important to introduce mechanisms to enable women to be active in all aspects of life. She said the demand for crèches in Parliament was a progressive one, made on behalf of all working women. Those working away from their homes needed to be confident that their children were in a safe environment.

"It comes as no surprise to me that some women feel this is an unnecessary demand. Because of the history of this country, white, wealthy women in particular have been able to participate more fully than their black counterparts because they were in a position to employ people to look after their children," Essop said.

"Women have been reduced to the position of second-class citizens because they have been confined to their homes due to the restrictions placed on them by society."

Mojanku Gumbi of the Black Lawyers' Association said black women entering Parliament would probably face the same problems she had faced when she became the first black woman at the Pretoria Bar.

"I was expected to change at a public toilet way across town. No provisions were made for female advocates. It was as if no one had thought that women could become advocates.

"I refused to do this and used the cloakrooms at court, although it was characterised as a men's room. The chairperson of the Bar called me in after receiving complaints."

'There has always been more than one lavatory in Parliament. For many years I was able to confront 164 men in Parliament without demanding special privileges'

Gumbi said women's demands for crèche facilities at Parliament were not selfish. "Children are the responsibility of society," she said. "Women reproduce in order to ensure the perpetuation of society and not for selfish needs."

Lynne Brown of the ANC Women's League pointed out that "Parliament must be a place for everyone". She said it was important to ask: "Why is it that for the past 43 years the South African Parliament has been the domain of white males and that only one woman was able to play an active role in it?"

Charting change in justice

The transition to democracy in South Africa presents an important case of regime change affecting institutions of justice. DIANA GORDON, who has written about criminal justice policy in the United States, was recently in South Africa to study the democratisation of criminal justice here.

PROMINENTLY featured in *The New York Times* on 12 March this year were two separate but related stories about events in Bophuthatswana.

One reported the capitulation of Lucas Mangope to the reality of his constituents' desire to be included in the 27 April election.

The other described the white rightists' bloody attempt to defend the apartheid homeland. In what reporter Bill Keller called "the defining moment" of the day, a member of the Bophuthatswana police suddenly trained his automatic rifle on two wounded vigilantes lying in the road.

On the eve of democracy, unrest spurred by people's desire for political and economic participation in the future of their country had been capped by a grisly act of official violence.

The event manifests a common dilemma in many countries with more experience of democracy than South Africa. (Think of the recent example of the African-American Rodney King, whose beating by Los Angeles police officers – and their subsequent acquittal – led to the worst riots in United States history.)

Popular participation in political choice does not necessarily ensure the accountable and fair exercising of state power. Unless this problem is contained, particularly in the criminal justice system, the legitimacy of the new regime may be undercut.

To study this process of regime change I visited South Africa in January to see where things stood in the period prior to the election. These observations will be the foundation for a future study of changes in criminal justice over the transition period.

THE ARGUS

'A core assumption of community policing – that a trusting citizenry will provide information and assistance to the police – seemed largely unexamined by interviewees'

I observed South African Police (SAP) management, interviewed scholars, lawyers and judges, visited projects where people were working with police at all levels, and loaded up with essays, posters and manuals documenting the commitment to change.

I was struck by how the politics of liberation, for many people, had already evolved into a politics of construction. And the project of building a non-racial democracy was forging some strange alliances, especially those working on police reform.

Particularly moving for me was the moment when Zelda Holtzman of the Community Peace Foundation told me she was now working closely on police-community relations in a Cape Flats township with an officer who had supervised her detention several years earlier.

Traditional definitions of democracy focus on its procedural aspects: popular and competitive voting, universal adult suffrage, fairly-drawn electoral districts, broad access to candidacy for office and free communication of political ideas.

I am, of course, interested in looking at how police and courts reflect those procedural elements. Will the racial composition of the judiciary change decisively as a reflection of voters' choices about who should lead them? Will the SAP develop rules and practices by which it demonstrates accountability to a popularly elected regime?

But I also want to examine whether and how police and courts can further the democratic process with more substantial accomplishments – the embrace of what US political scientist Robert Dahl calls "primary political rights", those rights necessary to exercise the right to self-government.

The adoption of a constitution that honours free speech, freedom of association, fair trial and equal protection under the law is of course significant. But that alone does not ensure that police will neither repress dissent nor enforce the law disproportionately against the poor, nor that courts will require adequate and equal representation for criminal defendants.

With both the process of change and my research still in an embryonic stage, I can report only on vision, not on performance.

The representatives of the SAP and South African judiciary with whom I met expressed more commitment to institutional reform than I expected. This could of course reflect self-selection: the judges who did not return my calls requesting interviews may have been more resistant to change than those I spoke with, and several of the police managers I saw were attending a voluntary training session on issues of transition.

In addition, anything but the most general discussion of the future was necessarily speculative. None of the six judges I interviewed opposed taking aggressive action to expand the pool of black candidates for judgeships – abandoning the requirement that candidates have taken silk and thereby making some attorneys eligible – but their permissiveness on this issue has yet to be tested.

Heartfelt expressions of goodwill by police managers towards a very different future in the SAP did not preclude significant contradictions when it came down to considering the implications of that change.

"Community policing" as advocated – and only sometimes practiced – in Britain and the US is the buzzword of the profession in South Africa too, but the library at the policing training college in Paarl contained none of the recent literature on that subject.

Furthermore, a core assumption of community policing – that a trusting citizenry will provide information and assistance to the police – seemed largely unexamined by my interviewees, a particularly revealing blind spot in a country where a repressed majority has often seen the police as part of the problem, not part of the solution.

And finally it remains to be seen whether the professional sensitivity of the best police managers will spread to their colleagues and filter down to the ordinary constable.

Nonetheless, I returned from my trip greatly encouraged by a strong sense that at least some of the operatives of criminal justice in South Africa see themselves as agents of political equality in a pluralist democracy.

Diana Gordon is a professor of political science at The City College, City University of New York.

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New SA, new Idasa director

Two things enticed sociologist Wilmot James into accepting the job of Executive Director at Idasa from August: it offers an 'attractive interface' between where ordinary people are at and ideas about how societies are organised and how they can be changed; and it provides a unique 'institutional platform' for engagement in politics without involvement in party politics. SHAUNA WESTCOTT reports.

AS IN South Africa, so in Idasa: a new hand takes the helm. As current incumbent Alex Boraine bows out gracefully to take up the question of how to deal with the crimes and agonies of the country's past, Wilmot James enters with his gaze focused keenly on the future. He has a vision, he says, incomplete and "by no means comprehensive", of how Idasa's role as ally to the transition may shift to include "assisting the government to rule by consent".

Ruling by consent means "pursuing policies based on a clear sense of what people want, need and think is important". James believes that Idasa can play a critical role in assisting the new government to read this. Secondly, he would like to see the institute developing a policy review role: one of assessing how government policy is working and failing to work, and offering inputs on alternatives.

He adds, however, that he sees a need to continue – and to expand – established areas of work, particularly materials production, education and training for democracy, and Idasa's facilitation and mediation function.

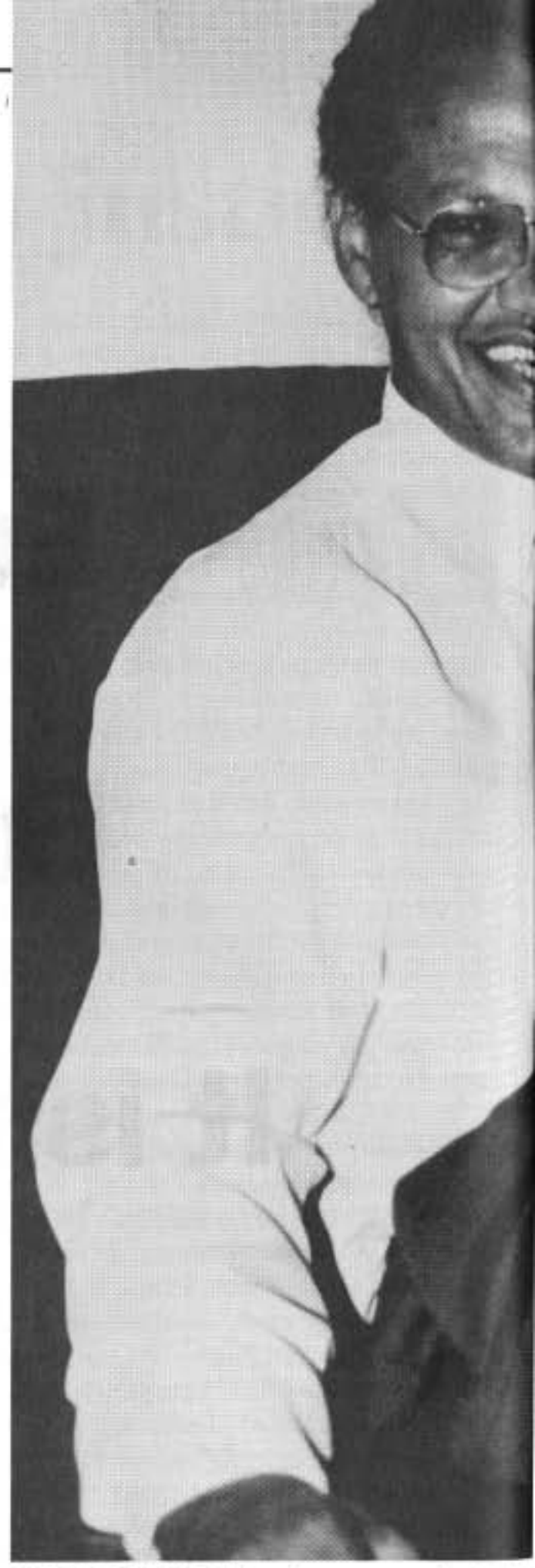
James will have a more difficult task than the new government in so far as Boraine's will be a hard act to follow. For, whatever pyrotechnics fellow Idasa founder Van Zyl Slabbert was pulling off centre-stage, it was Boraine who steered Idasa from its humble beginnings in 1987 as a three-person outfit on a shoestring budget to its present shape as a national organisation with a staff of 70, six regional offices, an enviable international profile and an influence on South African affairs that has been immense.

But if anyone can walk sure-footed in the footsteps of the great man it will be Wilmot James. He's too accomplished himself to feel insecure, no matter how long the shadow his predecessor may cast, and he shares with Boraine a kind of courtly charm that one imagines is the right stuff for meetings with the captains of large corporations looking for social responsibility opportunities.

'If anyone can walk sure-footed in the footsteps of Boraine it will be Wilmot James. He's too accomplished himself to feel insecure, no matter how long the shadow his predecessor may cast'

An interesting difference between the two men is the gap in age that has been so striking in the transition from George Bush to Bill Clinton in the United States. A mere 40, James sizzles with contained energy, plays squash and describes his strength as "a capacity to conceptualise a problem and find a reasonable solution in a short space of time". He adds that he's "extremely hardworking", and laughs.

He laughs a lot does Wilmot James, a really engaging laugh, one that signals an ease with people and a capacity for enjoyment of situations. "Post-modern bizarre" is how he describes his first day in the offices of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), where he has been been seconded from his post as Professor and Head of the Sociology Department at the University of Cape Town (UCT) to run the Western Cape analysis function for its monitoring directorate. (Why post-modern bizarre? They had computers but no chairs.)



WILMOT JAMES: 'A serious person who also kn

He's also very clever: got a BA Honours *cum laude* from the University of the Western Cape; knocked off a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison a year later and then a doctorate four years after that; has an almost indecently long list of publications to his credit, including *Angry Divide: Social and Economic History of the Western Cape*, which he co-edited with UCT colleague Mary Simons.

Asked for a thumbnail sketch of James, a quotable quote, Simons says: "I think he's an extraordinary human being. Anything he sets out to do, he does. He is prodigious in output and excellent at human relations. Idasa is very lucky to have him."

She pauses to send herself up (doesn't

w to play'.

want to sound "over the top like an adoring middle-aged fan") before adding: "He's focused but not obsessive and he plays properly. I have a sense that he plays; a serious person who knows how to play."

But Simons worked with, rather than for, James. What of subordinates? Well, the accolades continue. Linda Foulkes, secretary to James in his role as Head of the Sociology Department, is "very sad to lose him". She describes James as "the best boss I ever had. He's incredible to work for; he's open, he's fair, he's fun."

This paragon was born in Paarl, second-eldest of a family of four (three boys and one girl). "We used to stay opposite a vineyard which we used to raid. I used to enjoy having grapes at hand in my backyard," he says.

He has less pleasant memories, though. "It was a rough place, Paarl. The farmer (owner of the vineyard) was quite old-fashioned – racist, I guess, a bully. The cultural milieu often was not all that pleasant."

But the family escaped in 1963 and James moved on to Garlandale Primary and then Athlone High, which he remembers as "a very good school" where he enjoyed dedicated teachers and gifted classmates.

Fascinatingly, James grew up surrounded by teachers. "My dad comes from a family of nine and all except one are teachers. My granny in Paarl was a teacher; taught Afrikaans in a largely white school at the turn of the century. On my mom's side they are all teachers as well. There are teachers everywhere. So when the family gets together they talk about school."

'The world political environment welcomes countries organised democratically and showing economic growth. We could deliver both'

It was a bit overwhelming, James says. All the kids learned to play the piano, for instance, because the family idea of what a child should be included time at music school.

Also part of this formative ethos was the political style of the New Unity Movement (then the Non-European Unity Movement). James had two uncles who were "senior, serious NUM members" and he was "part of an environment where boycott politics was the norm, where there was quite a lot of political discussion; quite a vigorous intellectual environment".

James is married to artist Julia Teale, whom he met at a party in Johannesburg. ("She was a Fine Arts student at Wits and I was doing some research in Johannesburg and the friend I was staying with took me to the party. I was the only non-artist in the place and she picked on me.")

He says it's "interesting" being married to an artist. What they do is "incredibly different" and he is fascinated by the foreign rhythm of the process of creation his wife goes through and by creativity that is evident ("there's no picture and then there is a picture"). But, he confirms the popular wisdom, living with an artist can be "quite demanding". This has to do with the highs and lows of the creative process and, naturally, it's not the highs that are difficult.

If marriage is interesting, fatherhood is "a lot of fun". James says he's involved in parenting two-year-old Gabriele, although not as involved as he'd like to be. She's "at the very talkative stage and you can see that little brain being very busy"; she's "amazing"; James is "surprised by her all the time".

So who does the laundry in the James household? "Julia, typically, would stick it in the washing machine," says James. "I often take it out and hang it up and often take it down." And who cooks? "We both cook. Julia cooks more than I cook."

Careful answers, you will agree. Would he describe himself as a feminist? "Um, yes; I suppose it depends on what one means. But if it is about working towards egalitarian power relations; about respecting people across the board; about paying attention to the discrimination women often experience – then, yes, I would make those commitments."

And is he a Green? Yes ("Julia is more than I"). Religious? Yes ("not in the denominational sense, but in a general sense"). His favourite place in the world? "A toss-up between Chicago and Florence." Favourite meal? A southern Provencale chicken dish (made with tomatoes, chillies, anchovies and capers) that Julia once cooked.

Is there an image that sums up South Africa for him in some way? "Julia just finished a painting – it's on exhibition at the Mount Nelson – and it's of Cape Town, a black woman looking into a mirror and peeling a lush, rich, colourful fruit against a background of Table Mountain and squatter camps."

Like Gauguin? Hmm. ("Julia's more realist than Gauguin.")

Leaping on to the future of the country, James responds like this to a question about the chances of a South African success story:

"We've got some serious problems. We may be in a situation where we cannot get it together politically. The test for that will obviously be the next few months. Among the other problems we face is the fact that we have a badly educated population. But we also have enormous capacity. It's possible that this country will take off. It has a good economic base, incredible human potential, and the world political environment welcomes countries organised democratically and showing economic growth. We could deliver both."

Wilmot and Julia live in Observatory in Cape Town; have done so since 1988. When they moved in, the neighbours complained about the "mixed couple" next door and called the police. They still have the same neighbours. "Yeah, they're great," James says. "It's amazing how when a regime changes, attitudes become more natural."

So, a lesson on tolerance thrown in. Are there any weaknesses to this Wilmot James? Well, he does have difficulty saying "no".

'Toxic waste' of history

South Africa can learn a lot from other countries that have fought their own struggles against totalitarianism and brutality. At a recent Idasa conference Latin American and Eastern European speakers offered their 'pool of world experiences' in dealing with the past. MOIRA LEVY and JANET LEVY report.

FAILURE by South Africa's new government to deal with past human rights abuses would be akin to dumping political toxic waste for future generations to deal with, international experts warn.

This was the urgent message delivered at a recent Idasa conference by American commentators and veterans who have experienced the fallout of painful political transitions in South America and Eastern Europe.

Entitled "Justice in Transition: Dealing with the Past", the conference heard that issues such as the future of former torturers and assassins "will be boiling underground, waiting to erupt". Chilean lawyer Jose Zalaquett, who served on his country's National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation investigating the human rights abuses of the Pinochet regime, said "it would be political blindness to ignore the fact that examples of this abound worldwide".

The toxic fallout of maintaining short-term equilibrium at the expense of a country's long-term future was articulated by American journalist Tina Rosenberg: "It can damage your legal system. It can damage the rule of law and future civilian control of your security forces. It can lead to private acts of revenge by victims despairing that justice will ever be done. It allows criminals to pass myths down to their political followers and new recruits. It leaves victims unhealed and unable to contribute to the building process of their society."

She warned against "living with a dragon on the patio", in other words, hoping that the past would lie down quietly if it was not prodded or provoked. "To let bygones be bygones is tantamount to reconciliation at gunpoint and should not be confused with the real thing," said Rosenberg.

Pledging that world experiences would be taken to heart, legal academics Kader Asmal and Albie Sachs (both of whom serve on the ANC constitutional committee) said it was the task of a democratic government to set up an official commission to deal with past abuses.

"A new government of national unity must move swiftly towards building, reconciling, healing and reconstructing," said Sachs. "Mandela, speaking as the elected representative of the South African nation, will proclaim that we assume responsibility historically for all the evil and injustice of the past. We see it as our task to remedy the hurt and to ensure it never happens again.

"A commission can expose all crimes on all sides, but it can do much more than that. It can find appropriate means of acknowledging and honouring those who suffered."

The conference, held in Somerset West, was intended to serve as a comparative study and lay the ground for further forums on the subject of truth and reconciliation, with a focus on illegal activities such as dirty tricks, rogue policemen and death squads. A possible follow-up conference may be open to the public as well as to limited participants, observers, major organisations and the media.

The conference was timed to take place before the election because Idasa considers it critical that a government of national unity should have information at its disposal that would enable it to act swiftly in establishing a truth commission. The organisation's executive director, Alex Boraine, said the conferences could assist the new government with a mandate or "road map" to the complexities of the subject.

At the conference, themes such as acknowledgement, reconciliation and amnesty, reparations and prosecution were discussed during what Judge Richard Goldstone termed "an intellectually stimulating but emotionally draining" three days.

Some delegates expressed doubts about whether a new government would have the political will to deal with the past, while others warned that a truth commission could turn into a witch-hunt or be used as a political tool.

Speakers such as Idasa's director of policy and planning, Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert, and Barney Pityana of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT), pointed to the dilemmas involved in trying to balance various factors: How does one proceed with a truth commission if some of the very people who need to be indicted are in the government of national unity? How can one draw the right wing into negotiations if they face the threat of prosecution?

UCT sociology professor Wilmot James added: "What is feasible has to do with how different forces play out in the new state. The least propitious circumstances for looking effectively at the past seem to involve a transition where the old order does not collapse, the old state institutions do not fall apart, the police and military are intact and the bureaucracy is its normal inefficient self but has not collapsed. With this scenario one gets

AMNESTY LAWS

THE INDEMNITY ACT OF 1990, promulgated after the Groote Schuur Minute, gives South Africa's State President the power to indemnify people for "political offences".

THE FURTHER INDEMNITY ACT OF 1992 indicated the government's eagerness at the time to indemnify state officials guilty of atrocities against the opponents of apartheid. When one of the houses of the tricameral parliament refused to assent to the bill, President FW de Klerk referred it to the President's Council.

The act gives the State President the power to grant indemnity for acts committed before noon on 8 October 1990 and to release people convicted for political offences if he believes this will "promote reconciliation and peace".

This act facilitates self-amnesty. It resulted in the freeing of the ANC's Robert McBride and "Wit Wolf" Barend Strydom, both of whom did not qualify for release under the 1990 act.

THE TRANSITIONAL CONSTITUTION will come into effect on 27 April 1994. The existing indemnity legislation will then become subject to constitutional review and to scrutiny in terms of the Chapter of Fundamental Rights in the new constitution.

According to Lourens du Plessis of the department of public law at Stellenbosch University, the issue of amnesty is also referred to in the new constitution by way of a postscript with the following theme: For the sake of reconciliation we must forgive, but for the sake of reconstruction we dare not forget.

Du Plessis told the Idasa conference the two indemnity laws were likely to be ruled invalid if brought before the new Constitutional Court. This was because they contradicted parts of the transitional constitution designed to ensure transparent and accountable administration.

Du Plessis said a new government of national unity should deal with the issue of indemnity as soon as it took office, before the matter came before the Constitutional Court.

MAIMED: Father Michael Lapsley.

WIDOWS: Nomonde Calata and Mbuyi Mhlauli.

Victims want truth not revenge

NOMONDE Calata did not cry when Cradock police banged at her door at midnight to take her from her children for questioning. She did not flinch when police warned her that one day they would get her husband, United Democratic Front activist Fort Calata.

But eight years later she faces the questions of the child she was carrying the day her husband's body was found, the alleged victim of a hit squad killing. When she speaks of her child's desperation for any flimsy piece of information about her father, Calata cannot hold back the tears any longer.

Nomonde Calata, like the countless victims of the gross abuses under apartheid, is a symbol of her land – she needs to forgive, to heal and to experience reconciliation.

At Idasa's conference on Justice in Transition, the worth and dignity of victims was high on the list of reasons for holding a truth commission in South Africa. Few victims ask for revenge, but many ask for the truth to be told and for past wrongs to be acknowledged.

Chilean lawyer Jose Zalaquett said that "at a societal level the process of moral construction is in the hands of the society. Thus victims cannot hold veto powers in this regard."

Speaking with Calata and others on a panel entitled "Experiences Under Repression", legal academic Albie Sachs said: "What I seek is acknowledgement that the values we stood for were fundamentally right and human. Our generation got into trouble for being good, not for being bad."

Sachs, who lived in exile for 23 years and who was severely injured in a car-bombing, said: "The greatest healer will be the final honouring of everybody. It will be street lights, education, the health system, a sense of dignity, participation and true equality."

Father Michael Lapsley said it was ironic that the parcel bomb explosion which caused him to lose both hands and an eye in Zimbabwe "took place after 2 February 1990; it was part of the 'new' South Africa, as have been the deaths of thousands of people. We are dealing with a regime that has not repented. This would involve an amendment of life, not a glib and cheap way of speaking about a 'new' South Africa as one would of putting on a clean shirt."

Lapsley said he did not see the matter as a simple choice between revenge and forgiveness. "I do not want revenge, but that doesn't mean I don't believe in the simple processes of justice.

"At a personal level I believe that those who committed the crime of apartheid should be punished. Yet I also know it may be in the interests of the nation as a whole that they are not."

Judge Richard Goldstone warned that decisions regarding victims would be complex: "There are too many people who have suffered as a result of apartheid to compensate them all adequately. As a result decisions have to be taken and one has to prioritise even the victims, as horrible as that may sound. Those will have to be political decisions."

a negotiated settlement and power sharing for a period of time."

Responding to reservations, UCT political science professor André du Toit said that instead of focusing on the difficulties of dealing with the past, one should rather consider the huge costs of *not* having a commission. Sachs added that "to wallow in the impossibilities is to disclaim responsibility for what is our historic task". Asmal pointed to the encouraging fact that South Africa was the first African country to enter its transition without a general amnesty law.

Explaining the need for a truth commission, Black Sash vice-president Mary Burton said that only if victims knew "whom to forgive and for what" could real healing take place.

The conference heard that perpetrators needed to acknowledge their past crimes in a meaningful way in order to recognise the dignity of the victims, to reconstruct a morally just order and to enable healing to take place.

Delegates spoke out against "blanket amnesties", adding that truth telling should go hand-in-hand with immunity from prosecution. Sachs assured delegates that although South Africa was constitutionally committed to an amnesty, "it is balanced out with the concept of reconciliation and reconstruction".

To Page 20

'Toxic waste'

From Page 19

Umtata lawyer and former detainee Dumisa Ntsebeza said the liberation movements should deal effectively with the "skeletons in our own cupboards" and heed recommendations made during an internal inquiry into the ANC camps. If the ANC failed to do this, the National Party government could opt out of dealing with its past, and public unease over the camps would not be laid to rest, he said.

A commission could also look at the feasibility of reparations, compensation and land restoration. However, Zalaquett cautioned, in a country such as South Africa where the majority of the population was aggrieved by apartheid, "once you start pulling a thread of the knot of reparation you may continue without an end in sight. For this reason it may be worth considering whether reparations in South Africa should be emphasised more in their symbolic and spiritual aspects than in their material ones."

On the issue of whom to prosecute and for what, Open Society Fund president Aryeh Neier said: "Efforts must be taken to ensure that those who held the highest responsibility for the most serious crimes are prosecuted and punished, not those who simply carried out orders. And in dealing with the past, abuses must not be compounded. One's methods must be beyond reproach and must adhere to considerations of fairness and due process."

Rosenberg said that in highly bureaucratised systems – as was apartheid – it could be difficult to pin crimes to individual authors. However, even a small number of prosecutions could have important symbolic value.

According to some delegates, under international law there is an obligation to prosecute crimes against humanity. Yet delegates also warned that although South Africa fell into this category – with grievous violations such as murder, disappearances and torture bloodying many hands – it did not mean the political realities of South Africa would allow this to be accomplished.

Commenting on the conference, Boraine said the consequences of doing nothing were horrendous. But to "trivialise" the great themes of guilt and forgiveness by not dealing with South Africa's history in a satisfactory manner would also be a tragedy.

"If there is going to be healing you cannot draw a veil over the past. To deal with the past *is* to deal with the future," he said.

● *Conference proceedings are soon to be published as a book with a foreword by convener Alex Boraine.*

'Amnesty' can mean 'amnesia'

THE experiences people of different countries suffered at the hands of totalitarian governments were very varied, the conference on Justice in Transition heard. So were modes of resistance – and the styles of the oppressors themselves.

But all agreed on the need to confront the perpetrators of these crimes – sooner or later. From Poland came the message: be wary of the term "amnesty", for under certain circumstances it can come to mean amnesia. From Latin America the warning was: "reconciliation" can easily be confused with recurrence.

Speaking on a panel entitled "Reconciliation/Amnesty: Past and Present Experiences", American journalist Tina Rosenberg drew a distinction between Latin America and Eastern Europe. In Eastern Europe, the state sought to mobilise the entire society along socialist lines. Silence and non-participation were unacceptable, even punishable, and everyone was expected to be an active, practising communist. In Latin America, however, the state set itself up in opposition to the people and sought non-participation, preferring a passive and docile – even apolitical – citizenry.

> ***'In Eastern Europe they were criminal regimes, whereas in Latin America they were more likely to be the regimes of criminals'***

Consequently, those who challenged the regimes in Latin America were more easily identified and criminalised. By contrast, in Eastern Europe protest often took the form of small, informal acts of defiance and of "working the system".

The conference heard, for instance, of an East German woman who, approached to act as an informer, resolved her dilemma by feigning naivety and proudly talking openly of the approach, thereby displaying what was taken to be unreliability by her would-be spy masters and effectively disqualifying herself from their service.

Opposition included "all kinds of shades of greyness", according to Poland's Wiktor Osiatynski. "People worked out a strategy to live a relatively decent life without being part of either the opposition or the system. This was for the greater part what most people were doing. They were trying to live a full life without being compromised."

In Eastern Europe after the 1950s Stalinist period of brutality and terror, repression largely took the form of economic control. Osiatynski said the main instruments of control over society "switched to control over benefits and rights; rights were treated as benefits. To get a passport or something from abroad or a coupon to get a car or scarce goods you could be easily controlled. The state controlled everything which was a key to a better life."

By contrast, control in Latin America was punitive, direct and explicit, and offenders were usually punished with uncompromising brutality. This meant that state and military crimes against humanity in Latin America were committed by identifiable individuals, whereas the crimes of Eastern European states were the crimes of a criminal system. They were bureaucratised. "They were crimes that could only be committed by organisations as organisations," in Rosenberg's words.

This has huge implications for future retribution; an individual can be prosecuted and taken to court, a system can't.

"In Eastern Europe they were criminal regimes, whereas in Latin America they were more likely to be the regimes of criminals," Rosenberg said.

In Argentina, for example, this meant the individuals who had led the military junta could be successfully prosecuted in court and served sentences of seven to eight years in prison.

Juan Mendez, an Argentine lawyer who spent more than two years in prison for defending political prisoners, told the conference that Argentina had probably gone the furtherest in establishing accountability and bringing out into the open details of the crimes committed during the eight years of totalitarian rule.

He said the new democratic government of Argentina had identified three levels of accountability: those who gave the orders, those who committed excesses in carrying them out, and those who simply followed orders. The law made only the first two categories punishable.

He described the five-month trial of the

DELEGATES: Tina Rosenberg of the US and Wiktor Osiatynski of Poland.

nine-man junta, involving about 300 witnesses who one after the other gave evidence about some 700 charges of illegal detention, murder, torture and kidnapping – the legal term for what had been called, simply, "disappearances".

The 1985 trial, which began two years after the elected government came to power, followed due legal process and ended in the acquittal of most members of the junta for lack of evidence.

However, under great pressure from the military, the new government backtracked, passing new laws that made it very difficult to prosecute any military personnel other than security chiefs.

In Chile, when the military dictatorship ended in 1990, the new government appointed an eight-person commission to record the crimes against humanity committed since the military coup in 1973. For a year the commission took its brief nationwide, talking to every victim's family, perusing court records, even interviewing members of the military, who were forced to cooperate.

Jose Zalaquett, a member of that commission, told the conference "this was a very important healing process. Persons who once had been shunted away from the official buildings were now received with dignity. They were offered a cup of coffee, the Chilean flag was there and an official commission was listening to them with due respect.

"They broke down in these offices and this was the first time that people started crying. When you are confronting arrogance you don't cry. You face it. But you can afford yourself a measure of relief under these very different circumstances."

The end result was a 900-page document that was published as a book and sent with a personal letter from the president to every affected family. The report also made detailed recommendations, including a pension for every victim's family and provision for scholarships and health care, as well as reparations for returnees.

The theme of healing was raised by New York author and journalist Lawrence Weschler, who spoke about Uruguay, a country where the military had a minuscule role before it took over in 1973, "its primary function having been to pick up the trash on the beach".

The economic crisis in the 1960s, and the state's inability to deal with it, provoked "an absolutely remarkable totalitarian transformation", instituting "what was an almost perfect totalitarian system for about 12 years.

"The country had a horrible legacy to deal with when it came out of this period. Because the country was so small, there would be continuous face-to-face encounters between torturers and victims. As one walked down the streets of Montevideo, one would encounter over and over again the people who had done these terrible things to one."

Economist Roberto Canas, who was a member of the national liberation movement of El Salvador, said the truth commission he served on had as its primary focus the reform of the country's judicial system "to ensure the right to due process, respect for human rights and in general the fulfillment of the law".

The Salvadorean truth commission had four objectives: to avoid a repeat of atrocities in the future; to overcome impunity; to avoid a cover-up of past abuse; and to rectify the structural causes of the abuses, Canas said.

"There is no possibility of reconciliation and reunification in society if a society does not expose itself to knowing the truth. The objective is to build peace that is built on truth. In that way the peace will be more solid and durable."

Tightrope over treachery and terror

THE secret service files recovered in the former German Democratic Republic uncovered not only tales of treason and terror, but stories of individual heroism and courage.

Federal Commissioner of the Stasi files Joachim Gauck told the conference that the mammoth task of compiling and organising the files – including pasting together tons of documents that had been shredded – revealed stories of individuals who had stoically resisted totalitarian rule and refused to collaborate with it.

Joachim Gauck

'The Stasi files when placed next to each other cover a distance of 180km'

Opening the files, he said, was an exercise in empowering people through knowledge. "In Marxist terms, we regarded these files as the knowledge required to exercise power. We not only wanted to put these files into a museum, we wanted to put them into the hands and minds of the people."

The East German people believed access to the files would be an essential part of coming to terms with the past, he said.

"Every person, firstly, had to have the right to see what the secret service had recorded about him or her. Secondly, we wanted to keep people who had either worked officially or in an informal capacity for the secret service out of the new government."

To Page 22

State security files

From Page 21

This policy indicates a successful approach to dealing with a grim past. So many documents were retrieved that, placed next to each other, they cover a distance of 180km. More than 3 000 people are employed to deal with the files, and the project has a budget of about R5 million.

Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, however, the issue of secret files has been less satisfactory. In Bulgaria, according to lawyer and human rights activist Dimitrina Petrova, who was mandated by the Bulgarian parliament to uncover secret files, it proved to be an impossibly unwieldy task.

"We discovered a complicated system of archives located in different institutions and duplicated in some obscure way. It was very chaotic and quite discouraging to me personally."

She said names and allegations said to be from the files were released to the public in a haphazard and unsubstantiated way, sensationalised to the point that they lost credibility, and overplayed to the extent that the response was increasingly one of public indifference. Some even thought that those formerly in power may have had a hand in this project of trivialisation.

'Although the government agreed to halt the shredding of security files, Currin was told by an office furniture store manager of a sudden increase in government orders for shredding machines'

She regrets lost opportunities. "I feel guilty in some way listening to the success story of Germany," she says. But regret is tempered by realism. The files could not be relied upon for reconstructing the past: "Some were destroyed or tampered with, new ones appeared naming current political opponents.

"The first generation of anti-communist opponents somehow overlooked the issue of the files. We thought this was a dirty game; it was something obscene with which no one with any self-respect would concern themselves."

Brian Currin of Lawyers for Human Rights said South Africa ran the risk of following the Bulgarian route. He referred to an application by his organisation to halt the destruction of National Intelligence Service files. Although the government agreed to halt the shredding, Currin was told by an office furniture store manager of a sudden increase in government orders for shredding machines.

Ethical, legal and procedural questions exist around the reliability of old security files. Karel Schwarzenberg, former adviser to Czech president Vaclav Havel, spoke of the tragedy caused when the contents of files in former Czechoslovakia began to be leaked.

"Suddenly husbands heard their wives were collaborators and children heard of their fathers' involvement. It was very difficult to prove one's innocence. It was commonly known that some names mysteriously did not appear and others were there falsely.

"The issue of the files plays a very small part these days. In the first year, one was very excited about the prospect of dealing with the past. But now other issues, like the economic problems and the possibilities of creating a free society, occupy people much more than anything that happened in the past."

The conference also heard about a remarkable Brazilian project which in three years achieved the secret photocopying of an entire archive of transcripts of military tribunals. During these trials, about 25 percent of prisoners described how confessions had been extracted from them through torture. A book called *Brasil: Nunca Mais*, based on the project, was subsequently published.

Models of local government management and planning, represented by different cities from around the world, all have something to contribute to South Africa's development. Idasa's DAVID SCHMIDT reports on a fact-finding tour.

DIFFERENT cities have different approaches to managing local government. As part of the local government negotiation process, Idasa, together with the Foundation for Contemporary Research and the Development Action Group, organised a study tour of rapidly urbanising, racially divided metropolitan cities to help South Africans explore and learn from international experience.

Thirty people involved in the Cape Metropolitan Negotiating Forum spent January visiting a number of very different cities – ranging from New York to Asmara in Eritrea – that have in common an innovative approach to local government.

Each participant visited three cities, spread across three continents: either Dakar or Asmara in Africa; Chicago, Miami, New York or Toronto in North America; and Sao Paulo or Curitiba in Brazil. The aim was to study the kinds of local government institutions, urban development, human resource development and financing arrangements that would best suit the South African situation.

Asmara, capital city of Eritrea, is beautiful, with boulevards lined by palm trees and graceful old buildings attesting to its Italian colonial heritage. Population of the city is about 400 000.

Committed to avoiding uncontrollable urbanisation and consequent decline in the quality of life, the Eritrean government adopted a policy of radically restricting growth in urban areas. No new factories may be built in Asmara or other major towns. The rural areas are to be the focus of future investment. Government departments are being decentralised and various ministries are to be located outside the capital.

The Eritrean experience is now widely hailed as the African success story and a model for the continent to emulate; for South Africans it is a humbling and enlightening example.

The country has only just emerged from a terrible 30-year war with Ethiopia, finally winning independence only last year, when 99 percent of Eritreans voted for secession from Ethiopia in a United Nations-monitored referendum.

And yet, apart from destroyed and damaged buildings and the "graveyards" full of rusting military equipment, it is difficult to believe that one of Africa's most brutal and vicious wars ended only two years ago. There were no soldiers in evidence, and the only guns were carried by a police officer and a guard at the bank. Asmara is the safest city the group visited.

Eritrea underwent a remarkable demilitarisation after the war. Except for those remaining in the army, all Eritrean "fighters" – as all members of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) are still called – handed in their weapons. "It is inconceivable that any fighter in Asmara should have or want a gun at this time," observed one fighter.

Many fighters who have not yet been fully demobilised are voluntarily engaged in non-military projects – working on road and agricultural reconstruction. The Eritrean government places special emphasis on integrating the fighters back into society and all fighters will receive a substantial cash grant for each month they served on the front.

However, establishing peace in Eritrea has not been as easy as the demilitarisation process. The country has roughly equal numbers of Christians and Muslims and nine different ethnic groups. To the north in Sudan there is civil war between the Arab Muslims in the north and the Christians in the south. In adjacent Somalia the differ-

World tour holds lessons for SA cities

ent clans are engaged in a murderous conflict.

The EPLF has placed great emphasis on unity, and every effort is made to include all communities in governance and to ensure that all groups in society are represented in government at all levels. The obvious stability they have achieved emphasises the importance of peace for democracy and development.

Although Eritrea is terribly poor, with one of the lowest per capita incomes in the world, signs of development are everywhere. Buildings are being repaired or built, roads are being tarred, agricultural areas are being restored and factories are being repaired. The streets are spotless and no one appears to be without shelter.

There are no extremes of wealth or dire poverty. In fact, most EPLF officials in government have up until now also operated as fighters and have received no salary beyond a subsistence allowance.

All the foreign development workers testify to the enormous changes taking place. They say the government works very hard and there is minimal corruption.

The spirit of self-reliance is very strong. During the war the Eritreans received little support from any other country. Even now, despite major reconstruction projects, Eritrea has been very cautious about accepting foreign aid and investment and apparently has no foreign debt. The country compensates for its lack of capital by careful planning and making the most of what it has – valuable human resources.

'New York has many jurisdictions, and transport and service provision have to be co-ordinated in a area that stretches across three states. New York does not have a primary local authority, and a number of principles have been entrenched to ensure accountability'

In the city of Massawa, the war destroyed public transport and there was no money to buy new buses. At an urgently convened community meeting, mechanics volunteered to rebuild vehicles from abandoned wreckages and within weeks three buses had been constructed.

From dry, arid, dirty, poor Eritrea, members of the group travelled via Washington to big, brash, cosmopolitan New York City. Seven-and-a-half million people live in the five boroughs of the city, and 17 million more in the metropolitan area.

New York City has a single-tier city government and uses the "strong mayor" system. Rudi Giuliani, the new Republican mayor who defeated David Dinkins (New York's first African-American mayor) at the end of 1993, took over in January 1994. Giuliani and Dinkins both attended a seminar held for us, apparently their first public appearance together since the election.

In New York we explored many of the problems experienced by big cities. A city like New York has many different jurisdictions, and transport and service provision have to be co-ordinated in a metropolitan area that stretches across three states. New York does not have any primary local authority, and a number of principles have been entrenched to ensure accountability:

- "Sunshine laws"

Government is extremely open and transparent in most of North America and strict "sunshine laws" ensure that the electorate has access to all the policy-making processes in the city. Members of the New York Planning Commission, for example, may not meet behind closed doors, or even meet informally, to discuss any policy-planning issues.

- "Fair share criteria"

Any new facilities to be provided by the city have to be assessed in terms of fair share criteria. These criteria ensure that all neighbourhoods receive a fair share of both the burdensome and positive aspects of service provision.

- Service delivery through community organisations

Most service provision in New York City is now rendered by non-profit and community-based organisations that are paid by the city. Because these organisations are closer to the people and more accountable than big bureaucracies, they can render a cheaper service. This method also performs a redistributive function.

- Promotion of economic development

The problems of unemployment and inner-city decay have led to local governments becoming more involved in local economic development. Policies include zoning to encourage a greater residential-commercial mix; developing local firms; organising training programmes; and using public funds to initiate development for declining areas which can then draw private investment.

Statue of Liberty

- Independent Agency for Innovation

This agency, funded by New York City, develops and pilots new and innovative programmes and technologies in close collaboration with city officials. It also runs exchanges involving city managers with other cities, and provides extensive support to the non-profit sector.

Appropriately, our visit ended in Curitiba, "the unknown city that could save the earth". This city of 1,4 million people in southern Brazil is rapidly becoming famous as a model for urban development and city management in urbanising countries.

Its "vegetables for garbage" programme is being replicated throughout the world, including Cape Town. Its innovative, highly effective public transport system is widely admired and its famous plastic tube bus-stops have been introduced in New York City.

Mayor Jaime Lerner, the driving force behind the Curitiba revolution, described the formula for success. "You need the political will and determination to make and implement decisions," he said.

"Seek the simple solutions, and make a start. Do not try to have all the answers because this results in postponing change. Plan for synergy by concentrating on a set of programmes that complement and build upon each other.

"Finally you need a strategic vision if you are to make changes. If you focus only on needs you tend to get bogged down. A strategic vision must represent a balance between needs of the people and their potentials."

David Schmidt is Regional Director of Idasa, Western Cape.

OUR COMMITMENT

TO PEACE

Photos: *• Music therapy programmes aim at helping relieve the trauma in communities caught up in unrest and violence. • Bringing tomorrow's leaders together today by promoting mutual understanding and respect. • Combating hunger and poverty through grassroots development skills.*

We believe the vision of a nation at peace, with hope for the future is possible if people work together to ensure that basic human needs are met.

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Tens of thousands of people have benefited from programmes which have been developed in partnership with our local communities.

CREATING A BALANCE

MK, military staff on Idasa-led tour

FOR two weeks in March, Ivor Jenkins of Idasa led a group of South Africans on a military tour of Denmark, Brussels and Vienna.

These 19 participants – consisting of lecturers, researchers, MK organisers and military personnel – aimed to study civil-military relations in Denmark, regional security co-operation based on the example of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato), and the applicability of the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) agreement. At the same time Idasa hoped that confidence and mutual trust would develop between the participants.

BUILDING TRUST: Participants Fana Hlongwane, Ian Phillips and Aaron Ntshinga.

The tour delegation spent five days in Denmark, where they were hosted by the Danish Ministry of Defence. The group was introduced to the theory behind and the practical expression of the ministry and its sub-structures.

In Denmark, the military intelligence organisation reports directly to the military rather than the Chief of Defence.

Most of the personnel planning is civilian rather than military-orientated, creating what could be called a civilian-controlled Ministry of Defence.

The Danes use a draft system of conscription, which they believe to be morally compatible with a democratic society, insist that for the system to work there must be strong support for the concept among the general public.

Conscription is short (as little as 10 months), and extends only to males. Conscriptees are offered a choice in just about every aspect of their service. They can choose which unit they want to serve in, where they want to be base, and whether they would like to serve abroad.

National servicemen are able to choose a particular career path if suitably qualified.

Most interesting to South Africans is the fact that there is a no-strings-attached choice of military or civilian service. Civilian service could involve employment in a community-based organisation or a government department.

In addition, national servicemen have what the Danes describe as a trade union, but what in South Africa would probably be called a staff association. The union carries out most of the normal functions of a trade union, but has no right to strike – this would be totally opposed to military discipline.

Members of the permanent force, of which five to 10 percent are women, sign a contract in which the rights and obligations of both parties are clearly laid down.

The overall impression of the Danish military was that it went to great lengths to ensure job satisfaction and good service conditions – making it possible to demand very high standards of service.

From Denmark the delegation visited Brussels. Niel van Heerden, Director-General of Foreign Affairs under Pik Botha and now South African ambassador to the Western European Union, organised a meeting with Nato. The participants wished to investigate the role of Nato after the collapse of East-European communism.

The end of the Cold War meant a reduction of expenditure on military equipment, but no reduction in the number of Nato forces. The perceived menace of the Warsaw Pact forces has been replaced by apprehensions about the future stability of some former Warsaw Pact countries.

As a result, the Nato structure will stay in place for the foreseeable future, but has been modified to fit in with new situations. The Nato countries need to be able to deal with a variety of possible future problems, ranging from upsurges of aggressive nationalism in Russia to a massive refugee problem in case of internecine war or a collapse of civil government structures.

However, at a briefing at the next stop on the tour – Vienna's Hofburg Palace – it became clear that Nato has not yet sorted out all its responses to the new order of things.

Ten years ago, all that mattered was the external military capabilities of a Warsaw Pact nation. Now the internal dynamics of nation-states are seen as crucial to conflict prevention. A rebellious or secessionist-minded province could affect the stability of that country and, in the worst scenario, the countries around it.

The current feeling in Vienna is that a secessionist-minded province should be allowed to secede. When challenged by a sceptical delegate who doubted whether, as a matter of practical politics, any country would simply accede to such a request, the Viennese spokesperson pointed to the example of the Czechs and the Slovaks.

What was clear, however, was that the future South Africa will have to take pains to reassure its neighbours that it will lead and support rather than dominate.

The response of every participant on this trip was overwhelmingly positive. There is no doubt that the information gathered will have a direct impact on the thinking and process of establishing a new military system in South Africa.

Willem Steenkamp
Military analyst and member of the IEC Security Advisory Committee

Poor process nearly scuttles comic

A COMIC about the education crisis, and a code of conduct aimed at addressing the crisis, have been produced by the Storyteller Group and published by the National Education Conference (NEC) for distribution to all schools in South Africa.

But the comic and the code of conduct were almost scuttled by poor process.

This became vividly apparent at a workshop held in March at the Alpha Training Centre in Broederstroom. The Idasa Training Centre for Democracy had been asked to facilitate the workshop, which was conceived as a pilot for a national process of using the comic to popularise the notion of the code of conduct for all schools.

A total of 120 teachers and student leaders from schools in the Transvaal gathered in Broederstroom for this workshop, which took place exactly two years after its precursor – an education conference aimed at devising strategies to restore a culture of learning and teaching in schools.

The NEC itself emerged from the deliberations at that conference. So did a set of guidelines intended to help parents, teachers and students draw up a code of conduct appropriate to their individual circumstances.

CLASSROOM SCENES: An extract from the Storyteller Group's comic.

Two years later, however, what was intended to be a quiet follow-up conference began in noise and acrimony, as teacher representatives accused the NEC of failing to consult with teachers about the comic, the code of conduct and the workshop programme.

The point was forcefully made that teachers who had been under the authoritarian rule of the Department of Education and Training (DET) for four decades refused to submit to the same treatment from the ANC.

Idasa found itself in the role of mediator in this conflict and managed to facilitate a compromise by the second day of the workshop. In terms of the compromise, the workshop programme was amended to accommodate the demands of the workshop participants.

Various exercises were conducted, in plenary and small group sessions, and common experiences were shared. Representatives from the Storyteller Group described the thinking behind the writing of the comic and why that specific medium had been chosen.

The comic and the incidents illustrated in it were discussed at length and, by the end of the workshop, both it and the code of conduct were seen as necessary methods to bring about democratic solutions to the manifest problems in schools.

It did become clear, however, that many of the teachers and students needed skills training in designing and implementing a code of conduct in their schools.

By the end of the workshop all the participants felt that it had been an extremely worthwhile exercise, despite the initial difficulties. They emphasised that a neutral facilitator, like Idasa, was invaluable to the democratic implementation of a national programme.

David Screen
Administrative Director

'Pivotal role' predicted

THE Orange Free State Education and Training Forum has agreed to adopt the principles of the National Education and Training Forum (NETF) – inclusivity, democracy and transparency.

The forum also decided at a meeting held at the University of the Orange Free State on 19 March that membership should be extended to organisations without excluding individual expertise from working groups and technical committees.

Another decision was that the plenary session of the forum, which serves as the decision-making body, would be responsible for management of the forum in conjunction with its executive committee. Chairpersons of working groups will be included in the executive.

The forum is conducting its work through five working groups, each responsible for: primary education, educare, provision and resources, teacher development, and adult basic education.

Established in 1993 with the aim of addressing education restructuring and provision in the Free State, the forum consists of academics, teachers, members of technikon and university administrations, and representatives of political parties from across the spectrum. Idasa's role has been to provide back-up to its secretariat.

The OFS forum faces mammoth tasks and challenges. The most serious is actual delivery on tasks it has been mandated to fulfil. On a positive note, it is my considered opinion that the forum will play a pivotal role in the integration of education in the province.

Noby Ngombane
Regional Co-ordinator

Inanda Development Forum launched

THE launch of the Inanda Development Forum (IDF) on 26 March represents the culmination of years of effort by four main players: the Inanda Civic Association, the Inanda Landowners' Association, the Natal Provincial Administration and the Durban City Council.

These interest groups began setting up the forum, with the aim of ensuring growth and prosperity in the Inanda area, at the end of 1992.

They made up a Preparatory Committee for the establishment of the IDF, with the process facilitated by Idasa.

Inanda, 24km north-west of Durban, is home to the largest proportion of the informal population of the Durban Functional Region (DFR). Population is estimated at 450 000 people, and there are approximately 793 freehold properties in the area owned by African and Indian people, the church and the state.

Government refusal over many years to recognise the growing settlement has resulted in a very evident state of neglect. The whole area is densely populated, under-serviced, distant from job opportunities and hopelessly short of social amenities.

The IDF aims to co-ordinate and facilitate current and future planning and development initiatives within the area, in terms of a development framework that reflects the community's vision for holistic development.

Its objectives include ensuring: genuine community representation in decision making; shared responsibility between the community, public authorities and development agencies; and accountability.

The IDF is not the local authority or implementation agency. Rather it is a voluntary, non-statutory body, inclusive of all interest groups in Inanda, who are bound by IDF decisions.

Development plans are channeled through the IDF for discussion and agreement before any action is taken. The proposed DFR Development Forum has granted the IDF, as a community-based structure, full membership status.

Vimla Maistry
Regional Project Assistant

Voter education for the SADF

A MASSIVE voter education programme for the entire South African Defence Force (SADF) is under way and due to be completed by 23 April. The organisation appointed to run the programme is Idasa's Johannesburg-based Training Centre for Democracy.

Idasa's accreditation as a voter education agency by the Independent Electoral Commission was vital for the training centre's selection for the task, which is being co-ordinated nationally through its Police and Public Order Programme. The person responsible for co-ordination and logistics on the SADF side is Colonel Martin Rutsch of Defence Headquarters in Pretoria.

The programme began with a signal from Defence Headquarters to the various command headquarters requesting schedules of dates for voter education workshops, some of which are already taking place.

In the Eastern Transvaal, some workshops will be held virtually on the Mozambican border in areas that are in the main only accessible to military helicopters. In Cape Town workshops were held in the Castle, and in a hangar normally used to park Air Force planes. In northern Natal workshops are being run for 121 Battalion in the Mathubathuba area, also close to the Mozambican border.

Other workshops are scheduled for the Witwatersrand area, Orange Free State, Eastern Cape, North West and Northern Transvaal.

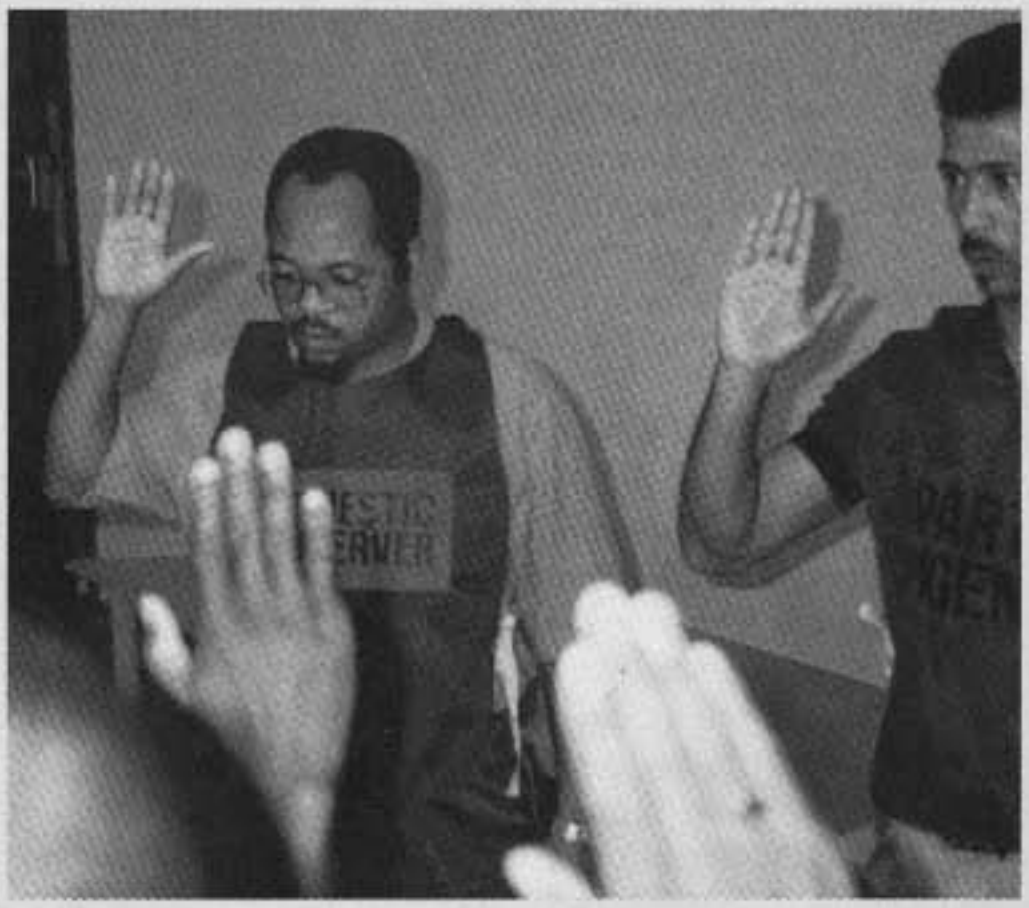
A staff of 40 civilians from various parts of the country, who have attended an orientation workshop, are responsible for running the voter education workshops.

Voter education is being conducted at three different levels:

- workshops for civilian employees of the SADF;
- workshops for soldiers (privates);
- electoral briefings for the Officer Corps.

A further means of education will be articles about the electoral process written for publication in the various in-house SADF magazines, of which *Paratus* is probably the best-known example.

Geoff Brown
Police & Public Order Programme



TAKING THE OATH: Participants get to grips with their role in the election process.

MOCK ELECTIONS: Trainees learn how to run voter education programmes for the SADF.

IDASA IN ACTION

Democracy rules in Eastern Cape

DEMOCRACY rules at last in the Eastern Cape Regional Economic Development Forum, which held a fully representative conference in Port Elizabeth in the middle of March, with delegates from the whole of the Eastern Cape.

The presence of representatives from rural areas was in part the result of Idasa's continuing commitment to promoting grassroots democracy. When the Eastern Cape forum was formed in Port Elizabeth early in 1993, it was assumed that policy could be planned from the capital city simply because that was where the regional leadership lived.

With ANC candidate premier Raymond Mhlaba as its vice-chairperson, and three other of the region's top ANC leaders on its management committee, the forum was perceived by many to be fully representative.

However, Idasa pointed out the inadequate representation of the more rural sub-regions, and the Port Elizabeth office began designing a programme to include these areas. The forum accepted the process-design and asked Idasa to implement the programme, with funding provided by the Development Bank of Southern Africa.

In December 1993 the first series of workshops was held in Humansdorp, Graaff-Reinet, Cradock and Grahamstown, the centres of the four sub-regions of the Eastern Cape.

These workshops consciously avoided creating the impression that they simply wanted to introduce the development forum. Instead they embodied a process aimed at facilitating sub-regional inputs to the shape of the forum, in terms of both structure and objectives.

In the interim, the forum commissioned a R260 000 research study to establish a clear development profile of the Eastern Cape. This study was co-ordinated by the Institute for Planning Research at the University of Port Elizabeth, but subcontracted to academic institutions throughout the region.

It covered 11 interrelated subjects – demography; the economy; inter-regional linkages; human resource development (education); welfare and health; housing and services; transport; water and energy; the environment; tourism and recreation; and labour.

When this study was completed in March 1994, Idasa's local office took its findings to the rural areas.

Workshops in the four sub-regions were designed to ensure an adequate understanding of the study documents and the relevant development concepts.

After reaching agreement on their own area's "key development issues", each sub-region elected 20 delegates to attend the mid-March forum conference. A strong delegation from the PE/Uitenhage metropole also attended.

Conference delegates set "development objectives" in 10 of the subject areas of the study. Building on these, interim recommendations were also determined, which will be brought to the attention of the new provincial legislature as soon as it takes office after the election.

Idasa's message to participants throughout the process was that, in the new Eastern Province at least, development policy should contain no more surprises! People on the ground, even in dispersed communities, should be part of the information-gathering process, part of the prioritising of needs, and part of final decision making.

Keith Wattrus
Regional Co-director

Staff talent pool fills

FOUR people have recently (broadly understood) added their skills to the Idasa pool of talent: Noby Ngombane, Jo-Anne Botha, Janet Levy and Gail Jennings.

Ngombane is new regional co-ordinator for Idasa's office in Bloemfontein – his own home town. Before joining Idasa he worked for the Cape Town office of the Institute for Multi-Party Democracy. He has a BA in politics from the University of the Western Cape and a Higher Education Diploma from the University of the Witwatersrand. He also was awarded an Abe Bailey Fellowship which enabled him to spend a few months in the United Kingdom.

Botha joins the Pretoria office as regional co-ordinator. Her last job was teaching business economics at Prosperitus School in Eersterust.

Sabbatical and Radio Unit depredations on the Media Department created a one-year space for Janet (no relation to Moira) Levy as a media co-ordinator and a six-month stint as media assistant for Jennings, who previously worked as a book editor for Maskew Miller Longman.

Levy brings welcome experience as a reporter and senior sub-editor in both the mainstream and alternative press. She has also worked on a newspaper in Hong Kong, taught in the University of Stellenbosch Journalism Department and served on the co-ordinating committee of a local community radio station.

Letters

'Halt hyperbole'

YOUR previous "Letters" carried the wayward ideas of Ralph Pentecost on freedom of the press.

Pentecost would have us curtail the freedom of the press to further the discovery of "truth". He asks for "integrity" but requires "neutrality".

Must a reporter not comment on the judgment of leaders threatening civil war, or precipitating disaster with their actions?

What would happen next would be for elected politicians and others to deny interviews on the grounds that questions were biased ... and then to forbid the media to report on their refusal to be interviewed on the grounds that that would be prejudicial!

A person who uses such a disgusting hyperbole – saying that the freedom of the press is more dangerous than a nuclear device – has no business instructing anybody to be impartial.

David Gouws
Oranjezicht, Cape Town

Local is key

IF WOMEN want to make changes in government, the place to begin is at local level.

Local government forums are to be established in most areas. These forums will nominate individuals to serve until elections are held. The Women's Lobby (TWL) advocates that women should approach their town councils, civic organisations, ratepayers' and residents' groups to participate.

TWL is campaigning among women's organisations, urging them to claim their group's right to serve on these forums on the basis of having "a vested interest in the political restructuring of local government". This is the interest the Local Government Act requires.

Approximately a year from now, local government elections will be held. We encourage women to become candidates by developing high profiles in local volunteer bodies.

Babette Kabak and Doris Ravenhill
The Women's Lobby

Speaker

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Rethinking SA's

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE WORLD ECONOMY IN THE 1990s, edited by Pauline Baker, Alex Boraine and Warren Krafchik. David Philip Publishers and the Brookings Institution, in association with Idasa and the Aspen Institute, 1993. 280 pages. R54,95.

THE conference from which *South Africa and the World Economy in the 1990s* is derived was organised by Idasa and the Aspen Institute. It generated some 35 papers by leading South African and international economists on the theme of South Africa's external economic relations, including trade and capital flows and interactions with international trade arrangements and financial institutions.

This book contains 20 papers, as well as an excellent introduction by Krafchik and an exploration of conference highlights by Stephen R Lewis.

By LIEB J LOOTS

The papers are organised into four sections: global framework; international competitiveness; international arrangements and institutions; and perspectives on regional integration. They articulate clearly and coherently the core ideas that emerged from the conference:

- a country has a better chance of high economic growth and productivity gains if it competes effectively in global markets;
- this requires effective state intervention to achieve industrial and trade reform;
- if such reforms are to have the desired effect, sound macro-economic policies, especially exchange rate policy, must be pursued;
- these reforms and policies have to be articulated in an increasingly globalised economy in which interaction is probably only a long-term goal that should evolve around mutual self-interest;
- more often than economists would care to admit, a touch of boldness and a sprinkling of good fortune may be the ingredients that propel a country into economic stardom.

South Africa and the World Economy has clearly been written with the intelligent reader in mind. Nevertheless, the authors and editors have succeeded in keeping it free from the jargon and gobbledegook found in some academic economic journals. Interesting and informative, the book is a must for any person concerned about South Africa's economic future.

The tone of the book is set in the competent and fact-filled first chapter by Robert Lawrence. He highlights the trend towards global economic integration and the importance of trade, especially trade in manufactured goods, to a country's economic performance.

Lawrence takes a more optimistic view on regional integration and trade block formation than appears to have become the conventional wisdom. He thinks these could become "building-blocks" rather than "stumbling-blocks" in a more integrated global system. He expresses the concern that Africa, and South Africa in particular, has not participated in these trends.

In the chapter that follows, Paul Krugman describes the major capital flows to and from developing countries over the past two decades. He points out that sharp directional and compositional changes in capital flows have often not been anticipated. This "roller-coaster experience", in his view, leaves us somewhat confused and uncertain about what to expect in relation to the nature and direction of future capital flows.

The seven chapters dealing with aspects of international competitiveness are largely complementary. Sanjaya Lall sets the stage with an excellent and incisive treatment of what determines industrial competitiveness. The key elements emphasised by Lall relate to learning in a broad sense, including skills and technical acquisition, investment in human development, and firm-specific research and development. Domestic technological capacity is significantly influenced by the nature of state intervention and support.

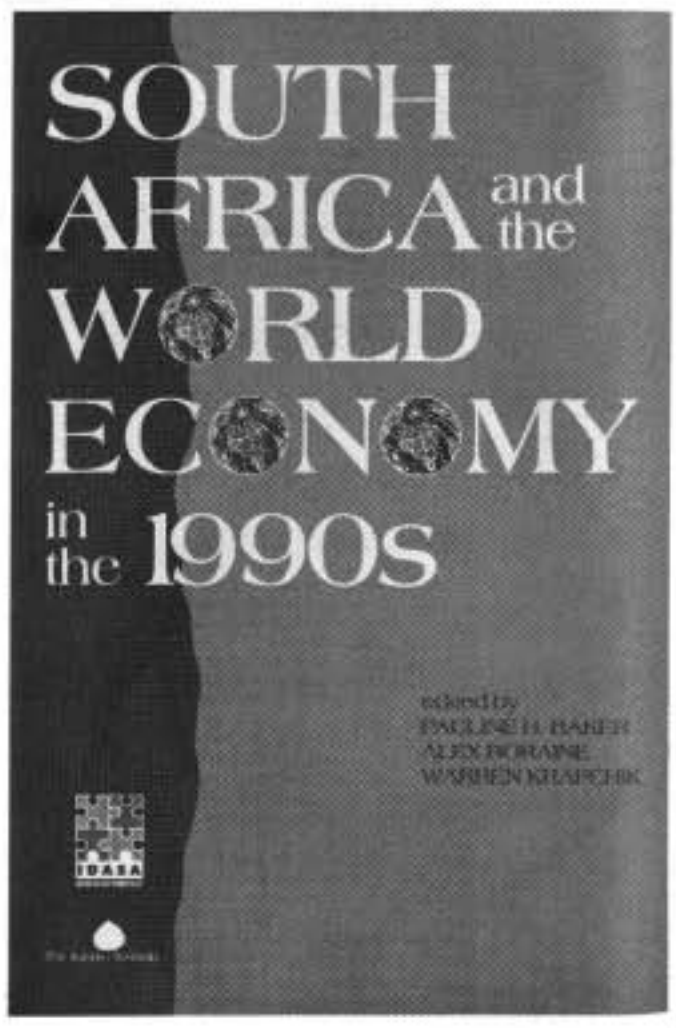
Lall's approach is clearly informed by the South-East Asian experience. It is appropriate, therefore, that the next two chapters deal with the South-East Asian phenomenon.

Duck-Woo Nam summarises the Korean experience of trade policy and the creation of international competitiveness. Daim Zainuddin sheds light on the role of foreign direct investment in the high economic growth achieved by Malaysia and other Asian economies. The theme most relevant to South Africa is an echo of Lall's thesis that government intervention is important, as long as it is effective.

In all these countries trade and industrial policies changed over time, in response to the evolution of the international economic environment and the domestic economy. The one thing that stayed constant was the relative effectiveness of state intervention in promoting the dynamic gains from learning-by-doing, technological changes, market spill-overs and competition. Can South Africa replicate that degree of effectiveness? Not if we simply try to imitate the East Asian success, Krafchik's introduction warns.

The next four chapters were written by South Africans and focus on South Africa. In general, the chapters complement the preceding international contributions, especially Lall's. In the first of these, Avril Joffe, David Kaplan, Raphael Kaplinsky and David Lewis draw on the findings of a large research project to present a framework for South Africa's industrial revival.

One conclusion drawn by the writers is bound to be controversial. Following from their belief that competitiveness cannot be achieved through wage reduction, they propose that real consumption standards can be increased by liberalising the basic goods sector. They argue that this would have the



effect of increasing the purchasing power of those on low incomes, thereby reducing pressure on wages.

The reader is left wondering, however, whether adequate attention has been given to the balance of payments and employment implications of such a strategy, at least over the short term. To their credit, though, the authors emphasise that strategy is best seen as a process, rather than fixed policy, and that careful thought should be given therefore to the particular framework in which industrial strategy can evolve.

The next chapter, dealing with South Africa's international competitiveness, adds

economic future

a business perspective to the trade policy debate. Not unexpectedly, Paul Hatty argues that the average cost of manufacturing in South Africa is significantly higher than in the average Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development country. He concludes by drawing attention to the critical importance of exchange rate policy to the effectiveness of trade policy.

Logically enough, exchange rate policy in South Africa is Brian Kahn's focus in the next chapter. Kahn cautions generally that a country that pursues excessively expansionary macro-economic policies will suffer adverse effects, whatever the nature of the exchange rate regime. He then moves on to discuss the exchange rate policy dilemmas that affect the country's monetary authorities, especially the implications of exchange rate policy for exports as compared with inflation. He concludes that exchange rate policy aimed at maintaining a stable real rate (as opposed to nominal rate), purported to be the appropriate rule for stimulating export-led growth, should not be rigidly applied.

'More often than economists would care to admit, a touch of boldness and a sprinkling of good fortune may be the ingredients that propel a country into economic stardom'

Reserve Bank Governor Chris Stals reiterates his well-known position that the Reserve Bank's task is to keep the rate of inflation as low as possible and to protect the exchange rate. He also states, however, that the Reserve Bank does not regard it as its proper function to smooth out large short-term fluctuations in the exchange rate, especially if these fluctuations are of a temporary and reversible nature. In accordance with the principle that, in the long run, the exchange rate of the rand should reflect underlying supply and demand conditions in the market, the Reserve Bank avoids active management of the exchange rate level.

The six chapters of the third section of *South Africa and the World Economy* address the international arrangements and institutions that will mediate South Africa's articulation with the global economy. With one exception, they are all by international contributors, some of whom write from first-hand experience.

Sheila Page launches this section with a very informative chapter on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and its impact on developing countries. Her basic premise is that GATT will not only be renegotiated successfully but, in general, will have beneficial consequences for South Africa. Underlying this view is the belief that decision makers see strong advantages in reducing uncertainty by means of agreed rules, with formal procedures for enforcing them and non-arbitrary methods of changing them.

David Hartridge, from GATT, takes the theme further by looking more closely at the implications of the new GATT for South African trade policy. Against the background of the achievements of the Uruguay Round (the latest round of GATT negotiations, held in Uruguay) and the likely conclusion of some of the outstanding issues, Hartridge emphasises that South Africa will have to comply with the agreements on subsidies and anti-dumping measures. He emphasises that the only way forward for South Africa is through reintegration into the world economy, and that GATT is the only legal framework within which this can be secured.

In the third chapter of part three, John Williamson gives a short but incisive analysis of the impact of the Bretton Woods institutions (set up at the Bretton Woods Conference to regulate the system which replaced the gold standard) on prospects for development. After sketching the evolution of these institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, Williamson discusses the controversial issue of conditionality. Finally he suggests that the policies of competitive exchange rate, macro-economic discipline, market friendliness and outward orientation prescribed by the IMF and the World Bank are exactly what any government with a decent concern for the long-term welfare of its citizens should be seeking to promote.

Williamson sounds a note of caution in relation to South Africa. He concedes that foreign savings can be important in helping a country to emerge from a crisis situation or to develop faster. However, he argues that the problems caused by excessive foreign borrowing over the years may well outweigh the good that has been done by prudent foreign borrowing.

The South African contribution is from Vishnu Padayachee. The question he poses is whether South Africa can obtain foreign financial assistance, which he regards as necessary, without surrendering control over key aspects of its development strategy.

Padayachee joins Williamson in cautioning that South Africa's relatively favourable position should not tempt a democratic government to rush into foreign borrowing.

Peter Fallon, in a short chapter presenting descriptive material on the World Bank and its activities, warns that World Bank finance will be only mildly concessional and that future governments should therefore make sure projects are worthwhile.

The last chapter on international arrangements and institutions is a short review, by the IMF's Leslie Lipschitz, of the vigorous debate around the prospective roles of the IMF and the World Bank in South Africa. He articulates the growing consensus that growth will have to rely chiefly on domestic savings and that South Africa should work out a coherent economic policy and a strategy for the solution of problems before approaching the bank or the IMF for financial support.

Part four contains five chapters, each providing a perspective on regional integration in Southern Africa. The theme that emerges from the section as a whole (with individual contributions from Robert Davies, Prakash Sethi, Benno Ndulu, Laurence Cockroft and Gavin Maasdorp) is that a programme of regional integration will be sustainable only if underpinned by the principle of mutual benefit. This would require the phasing in of benefits to South Africa and to other member states at roughly the same time. Moreover, sectoral co-operation would probably be easier to achieve initially than integration on a wide front.

The conference documentation in this book has been catalytic in bringing about a remarkable degree of consensus about South Africa's international economic relations. Very important is the confidence that has grown among the members of a future democratic government about South Africa's ability to articulate with the global economy in a way that will be beneficial to the country. It is a process that is not complete, however, especially among investors and business decision makers. This book is still timeous and important, therefore, and very much required reading for those interested in South Africa's economic future.

Lieb Loots is the Head of the Economic Policy Research Project at the University of the Western Cape.

Of memory and forgetting in the beloved country

SOUTH Africa exerts a powerful dynamic. In years of exile it informed virtually every day of my life – through casual memories, through the news, through lobbying at the United Nations (UN) and in Washington. The call of an African dove in some wildlife programme never failed to arouse a pang of nostalgia.

Now, after 33 years, my passport has been returned. It was confiscated because I assisted Chief Albert Luthuli when journalists poured into Groutville to interview South Africa's first Nobel Peace Laureate. To celebrate the election I have come "home".

Home? For several weeks I was not sure. But then from nearby fields a warm wind carried the scent of earth and grass and the sound of drums and singing of black worshippers across this Johannesburg suburb. I knew I was indeed home. How elemental are the feelings for the land of one's birth!

Writer Alan Paton once remarked that when change comes, only those steeped in the past will understand the greatness of the present. And so, for all the profound anxiety about the violence and dismay at creeping corruption – yes, I know it was far worse, and still is, under the Nats – there are continual reminders of victories, like icing on the cake of celebrations.

By MARY BENSON

A blue UN flag fluttering from a car's bumper evoked Reverend Michael Scott's heroic struggle to put apartheid on that organisation's agenda back in 1950; the media circus accompanying the Rivonia men to Robben Island took me back to 1964 when I testified about their lives before a UN committee. Their advocate, George Bizos, after visiting them on the island, wrote: "They are sure they will not become forgotten men."

But what of Bram Fischer? What restitution has been made by the Johannesburg Bar Council for having his name struck from the roll of advocates in 1965? This great Afrikaner gave his life "to establish a bridge across which white leaders and the real leaders of the 'non-whites'" could meet.

The other day, when I passed a hotel on Corlett Drive where we once had a gin and tonic to cheer us after Bram had heard the news, I recalled his terrible anguish. "Dishonest! The judge president called me dishonest and dishonourable!"

I returned recently to a court in the Eastern Cape where I suppose it was remarkable to see a white general being cross-examined rather than the scores of black men and women I saw crowding the docks in 1965.

Yet in studying reports of the Goniwe inquest I am assailed by a sense of *déjà vu*: witnesses for the police and defence force, like state witnesses some 30 years ago, at one moment seem incapable of recalling events then later remember details only too well.

Certainly this is the first inquest to dig so deeply into assassinations. "The country's most compelling political murder mystery" is what *The New York Times* calls it.

This is said to be the Year of the Woman. In the public gallery sit the four widows – Nyameka Goniwe, Nomonde Calata, Sindiswa Mkhonto and Mbuyi Mhlauli – with their loyal friend Judy Chalmers.

Do you remember that funeral in 1985 when tens of thousands converged on Lingelihle's arid stony graveyard? Television viewers in London saw the unforgettable image of four young widows at the graveside, bitter grief on their faces. That was the day a state of emergency cleared screens of such pictures.

Is their story part of a past that must be put to rest as the election approaches?

For nine years these women have hoped for justice. Nyameka Goniwe has told of "the weight of it, the weariness – all the lies". She was speaking not just for herself and the other Cradock widows but for families of the many "disappeared" ones.

"It would be liberating to know what happened," she said. "I must know who they are. I must see them. I think that would heal them as well. I don't believe these can be happy people."

That was before generals Van der Westhuizen and Van Rensburg, having sworn to "tell the truth, the whole truth", denied any culpability for the signal ordering "the permanent removal from society" of Matthew Goniwe and his fellow teacher, Fort Calata, an order which allegedly led to the deaths of their companions Sparrow Mkhonto and Sicelo Mhlauli.

What of Van der Westhuizen's statement reported on 8 September last year that only the security forces had the capability to carry out the murders which had been committed in "a sophisticated and professional manner"? Yet President FW de Klerk told the Transvaal Law Society he did not know of a single individual employed by the security forces who had committed any crime.

His party, in its election manifesto, claims: "The National Party does not kill, threaten or intimidate people."

Mary Burton of the Black Sash says a truth commission should record not only the wrongs of the past but also the losses – the excruciating loss for the community of Lingelihle.

After four years of rhetoric about the "new South Africa", newness will only be truly evident when change comes in the daily lives of the millions confined in shacks. The recent looting in Bophuthatswana showed evidence of rage, frustration and hunger – a colossal social disease.

After April 27, with their right to vote at long last won, dare those millions aspire to a little security and happiness? How long will they wait for the promises of politicians to be fulfilled?

"A year?" I asked a young black woman. "A year!" she exclaimed. "No! Weeks!"

Playwright Athol Fugard says: "There will be two sides to the coin we'll be spending in future, just as we've spent in the past. Every day a reason to despair and a reason to hope."

Mary Benson is the author of a history of the ANC, *The African Patriots*, as well as biographies of Albert Luthuli and Nelson Mandela. She left South Africa in 1966 and now lives in London.