

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE INSTITUTE FOR A DEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVE FOR SOUTH AFRICA

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The killing fields of apartheid

By Ian Liebenberg
and
Shauna Westcott

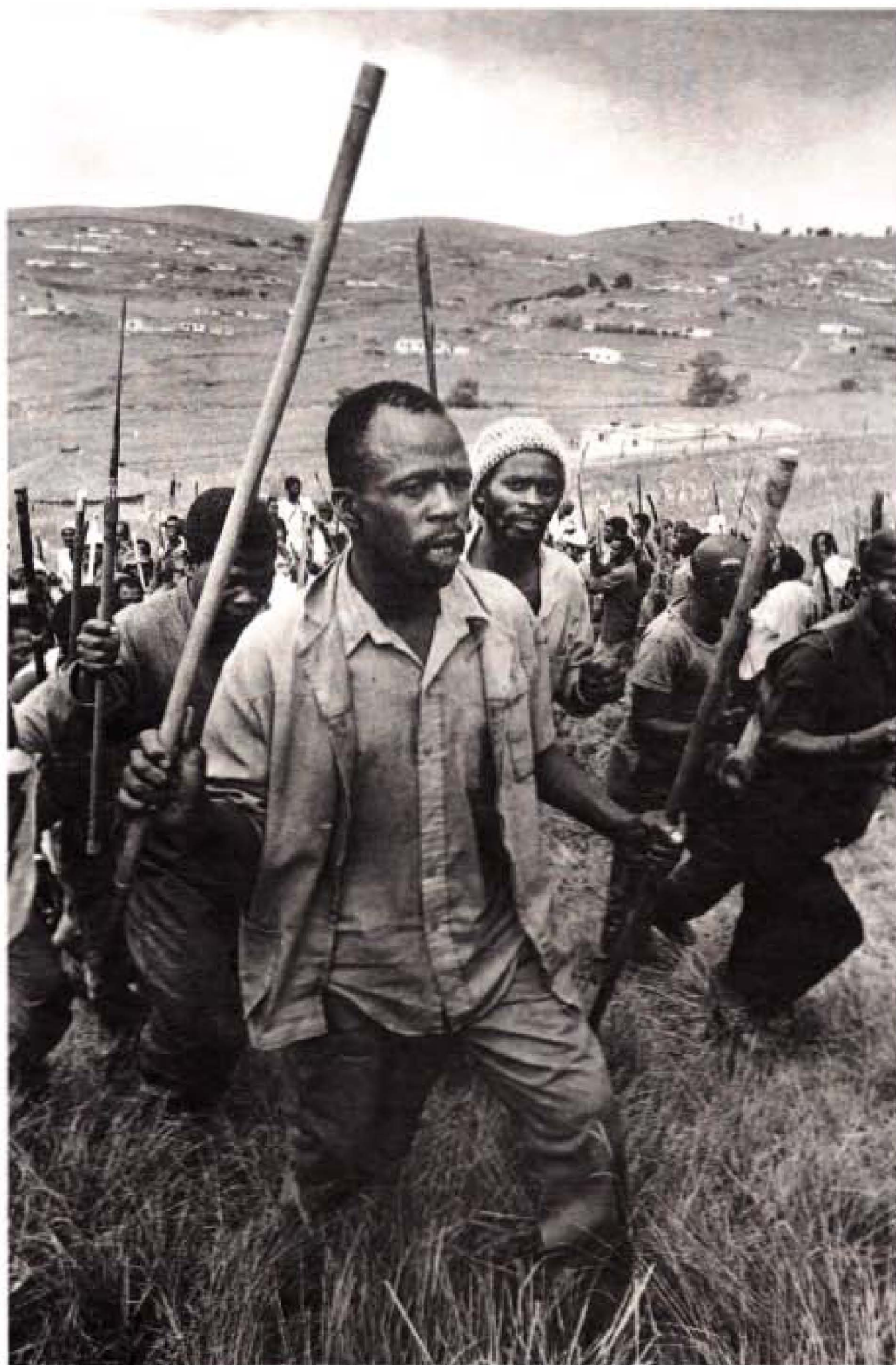
THE carnage in Natal – “nothing short of a national disaster” – is “essentially about Inkatha’s desire to maintain its support (or at least to maintain its ability to claim such support without contradiction)”.

This is the view of the joint working committee of Cosatu and the UDF. But it is also the view spelt out in a nuanced paper by John Aitchison of the Centre for Adult Education at the University of Natal.

Aitchison, who is also a member of the Pietermaritzburg Crisis Committee, presented a sombre report on the Natal situation to a press conference held at the University of Cape Town early in April.

In the nine days between March 25 and April 3, in the Maritzburg area alone, over 80 people were killed, hundreds injured, scores of homes razed to the ground, and at least 11 000 people turned into refugees.

“Whole communities have become traumatised. Schools have closed. Public transport has been halted and many people have not been going to work. An atmosphere of fear, suspicion and aggression abounds,” a UDF/Cosatu memorandum



READY FOR BATTLE: Inkatha impis at Elandskop near Maritzburg.

picture: GUY TILLIM, AFRAPIX

presented by Aitchison said.

The memorandum blames Inkatha. It notes that violence escalated wildly after an Inkatha rally and that “after every Inkatha rally there have been complaints of attacks on ‘UDF’ areas”.

It criticises the “highly dubious role” of the police, who are accused of failing to disperse or disarm Inkatha impis; failing to protect people against violence or the destruction and looting of their property; and of siding with Inkatha in the conflict.

Press

The memorandum also criticises the press for failing to portray the position adequately.

“Most press reports have either explicitly or by implication suggested that most of the current violence has been a 50-50, tit-for-tat series of Inkatha-UDF clashes,” it says.

If this were a true reflection of the situation, the following questions should be answered:

Why do there seem to be so few Inkatha refugees, if any?

How does one explain that all the 11 000 or so refugees have sought refuge in “UDF” areas?

Why is it that the major areas which have been devastated have all been “UDF” areas?

Why is it that most

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DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

IDASA's goals are:

- To encourage South Africans of all races to reject apartheid and discover an alternative that is non-racial and democratic in the true sense of the word.
- To assist people to accept and work for a post-apartheid society as a way of allaying their fears.
- To mobilise the skills, knowledge and experience of all those who can assist the communities in the crisis areas of South Africa.
- To provide forums and opportunities on a nationwide basis to find democratic solutions to South Africa's problems.
- To assist in creating a climate for genuine negotiation towards a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

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EDITORIAL

The best and worst of times

"The best of times, the worst of times," - so it seems in South Africa at the moment. Violence rages almost out of control in Natal, signs of it flash in other parts of the country. Extravagant, irreconcilable demands are made on the polar opposites of the political spectrum; those who drive the centre towards "talks about talks about talks" get bogged down in position bargaining and internal constituency urgencies, and so on. And yet, come to think of it, we are complaining about more interesting, relevant things now than we did last year this time.

Then PW Botha ruled and "the total onslaught" was still in place. Now our pain and trauma can be related to the birth of a "new South Africa". All the major factors that shape our future are geared towards a positive outcome: the international community wants negotiations to succeed; the region desperately needs it, and domestically, despite the distressing signs of conflict and tension, we find the major players still committed to avoiding catastrophe and finding a workable consensus for transition away from domination towards democracy.

We must not lose the long view now. What makes our dilemma compelling is not the prospect of failure - societal skeletons lie strewn around us - it is the tantalising possibility of success. The consequences of us "making it" will reverberate through our continent and around the world. Those of us who are in a position to help dare not flag now.

We must point out that harbouring unrealistic euphoric expectations complicates the matter. Too many people treat the Mandela-De Klerk saga like a

TV soap-opera - two fireside chats and a handshake and away we go. They epitomise the history of struggle for liberation and political domination - the one intimately intertwined with the other. But they also give hope of resolving the conflictual dynamics of that history in shaping a common future.

The experience of oppression and struggle and the comforts and insulation of domination do not evaporate overnight. We are beginning to move from structural inequality and discrimination towards liberalisation and democratisation. Only beginning. It is going to be a painful learning process for all concerned - and we have no option but to go through it.

Idasa as well. We played an important role in preparing the climate for liberalisation, that is, getting ostensibly irreconcilable and hostile individuals/organisations to talk to one another. Now we have to anticipate the problems of democratisation, in other words, how do competitive political organisations with differing agendas and charters shake out constituency-wise and resolve their differences democratically rather than through protest, intimidation and violence.

Idasa must seek to provide a forum for such resolution without becoming partisan and part of the problem. This does not mean that we are above the battle or apolitical. Our commitment to our core values, stated repeatedly in this publication, remains the same. But this commitment must now be tested and reflected in anticipation of our country's shift from the "normalisation" of politics to democratisation.

Van Zyl Slabbert
Director Policy and Planning

JA-NEE

Cold comfort

TIMES are hard for Idasa organisers. A rushed written report from one of us, about a particularly gremlin-fraught township tour (the bus didn't pitch, catering was tricky, tempers were frayed) concluded with the observation: "I put the perishable staff in the fridge."

-Better to be out to lunch?

It's a start

WOMEN are not exactly overwhelmed with gratitude at the inclusion of Cheryl Carolus and Ruth Mompoti in the ANC delegation for talks about talks with the NP government. But it's a start.

- Where are your token women, FW?

Champagne heir

A PROMINENT Cape Town gynaecologist and his wife, sparkling after summer luncheon on a friend's Boland estate, stood next to their gleaming white Mercedes Benz out-

side Paarl to wave at the cavalcade carrying Nelson Mandela to freedom. One of a group of farm workers standing nearby waved a fist at the gynae and said: "Amandla, baas!"

- Merce you think.

Gravy-training?

WAS IT coincidence that a week before Education and Culture minister Piet Clase announced that white schools could be opened to accommodate pupils of all races, the Teachers Federal Council left on a trip for the United States and Europe to look at the privatisation of schools?

-A ministerial sillybus?



Idasa reports 'biased'

I REGULARLY receive and read your journal. I have noticed an apparent bias in favour of socialism and against the conservative liberal traditions of democracy. This bias is apparent in the selectivity of reporting, the relative amount of print allocated to the opponents of free enterprise democracy and those in favour of subsidies and other forms of planning and statist interventionism, and in the choice of people for your platforms. An example is the reporting of your Democratic Accountability conference in your February 1990 edition. On the press, very little was reported on the views of Mr Mulholland while more extended coverage was given to the (fallacious) views of a Mr Van Niekerk who is in favour of subsidies for the press a la Sweden.

His view that the press should function under a system which promoted diversity, quality and equality ignores the important principle of responsibility or accountability. A subsidised press would be undemocratic in the liberal tradition because it would entail the redistribution of funds to enable a few people to disseminate ideas mostly not supported by those from whom the funds have been expropriated.

Another example regards the comments of the Urban Foundation's Ms Ann Bernstein. Ms Bernstein's views are clearly undemocratic in that she favours a system where the state is not merely accountable to the people. To her a political system should also encourage certain ends or results which she lists. It is clear that government "planning" aimed at achieving certain re-

sults is impossible simply because the law makers (or anyone) cannot know what unknown individuals in a community want or what the effect of their end-orientated laws on the unknown individuals will be.

Ms Bernstein is also given prominence in her attack on direct democracy. Ms Bernstein calls it "the permanent dynamic of the people's participation", which is verbose English for "referenda" or "voting on issues" and is very disapproving of this concept.

If Ms Bernstein is not in favour of democracy and accountability she should say so directly and not attempt to define her version of authoritarianism as democracy.

Idasa should also take care to whom they allow platforms in a journal dedicated ostensibly to "democracy in the true sense of the word".

Gavin Weiman

Executive member of the Democratic Party in the Northern Transvaal and an executive member of Groundswell SA, Pretoria

Philip van Niekerk delivered the keynote paper for the debate on the press and his presentation accordingly received more attention in our report; it was not a question of "selecting" opinions.

You seems to have misunderstood Ann Bernstein. Precisely because she was advocating accountability and democracy, Bernstein questioned the meaning of certain slogans behind which authoritarianism often lurks.

Editor (letter shortened)

Opinions expressed in Democracy in Action are not necessarily those of Idasa.

No belt prize

A KARATE Springbok invited to conduct training classes in Port Nolloth was refused use of the town hall when municipal authorities discovered he was "coloured". After a hasty meeting, in which the city fathers sought guidance from the Almighty, the same decision was returned - no go. So the instructor took his students to the beach to train as his wife observed that "even in Port Nolloth the beaches are open to all".

- One wonders if martial arts practitioners in the Port will ever progress beyond their white belts.

Darkest SA

A LETTER to the editor of Democracy in Action from a final-year Australian high school student asking for information about apartheid and addresses of organisations, concluded with this question: "I am planning on visiting South Africa in the next few years: do you think this is advisable?"

- Ja, nee.

Batting on a sticky wicket

Sport and politics was the name of the game, but it was politics that underlined and undermined Idasa's "Sport and Non-racialism" conference in Port Elizabeth at the end of March.

Sue Valentine reports.

The delegates to the conference came largely from the complex (and often intrigue-filled) world of sports administration. They were there to discuss exactly what is meant by non-racialism, what obstacles exist to its implementation in South African sport and how administrative structures can become non-racial and democratic.

However, at the eleventh hour, after months of consultation and initial support, the National Sports Congress (NSC) decided it could not participate – leaving the conference the poorer for its absence. Also missing were Sacos (SA Council of Sport), the SA National Olympic Committee (Sanoc) and the Confederation of SA Sport.

From the outset Sacos had said they would not be there, reiterating their position that: "We will not deviate from our principled stand by engaging in discussions with some of the very people who enjoy the fruits of the present racist regime."

At one stage the Confederation were due to send speakers but later decided that it was inopportune. A similar decision was taken by Sanoc and, finally, despite late-night, last-minute talks, the NSC also withdrew.

However, in spite of the initial disappointment – mirrored in the grey Saturday morning sky – the 60 delegates who did attend ultimately pronounced the conference worthwhile for the range of approaches and ideas aired, compared and discussed.

Delivering the opening address, Idasa director Van Zyl Slabbert said South Africans needed to see themselves in a fundamental process of transition which would affect all the old structures in "rather painful and fundamental ways" and which would affect the traditional sports culture to which whites were accustomed.

Slabbert said South Africans should remember that two thirds of the countries of the world were in a process of fundamental transition. "All the frameworks for under-

standing international politics have gone into a meltdown . . . We must see how we are going to adjust. What kind of sports administration and culture are we beginning to promote?"

Pointing to Namibia, he said that within a week of independence a Namibian 15 had been invited to play rugby against an official Zimbabwean team. He said there was little need to ask what had happened – a fundamental issue of conflict had been resolved, white domination had ended.

"We do not have a midwife like Lord Soames or Resolution 435. In the South African context, for better or for worse, people have decided that negotiation is the way to get rid of white domination and to put a democratic structure in its place. It has

never happened before. We must keep that in mind when we made quick and glib comparisons with Africa or Eastern Europe. We must find unique ways for a solution."

Asking whether a cultural infrastructure existed that could carry and sustain a democratic constitution, Slabbert said: "We cannot impose a democratic constitution and pray for a miracle. Only a strong democratic culture can sustain a democratic constitution. We must promote a democratic culture."

A constitution could not fabricate consensus or unity, it could only reflect it. "The fabric of consensus comes from the everyday community, from transport, telecommunications, schools, religion and sport.

Sport can become an important symbol of unity," he said.

Issuing a challenge to sports administrators, Slabbert said it didn't matter how much they had already tried to promote sporting unity and non-racialism, the challenges were not going to stop. The old structures would either adjust to the new reality or they would become redundant. The major dilemma should not be how South Africa gets back into international sport.

"The central thrust is, how do we become a genuine democratic, non-racial society? If we don't solve this problem then I'm afraid the other issues, including sport, will be pulled into a vortex."

He concluded by saying that, on the sym-



'The major dilemma should not be how SA gets into international sport. The central thrust is how do we become a genuine, democratic, non-racial society.'

bolic cultural level, sport could be an important cutting edge for change towards a non-racial democratic society. But it could also reflect the tensions, problems and aggravations of our society in a very emotional way.

The challenge was to undercut the threat and promote the promise.

Speaking as an individual involved in sports administration within the black community, Idasa co-ordinator in Port Elizabeth Max Mamase said he supported the sports moratorium, but added that South Africa was entering a phase in which a non-racial content was being introduced into the structures and processes that were in place.

It was time for groups to begin debating



DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE: (from left) Vuyisile Cekisani, Peter Glover and Tex Harris.



SPEAKERS AT THE CONFERENCE: The president of the SA Cricket Union, Geoff Dakin, (far left) and Tommy Bedford, a former Springbok rugby captain (left).

‘Too many factions are doing their own thing. The fundamentals of unifying South African sport should be foremost in our minds.’



SPEAKERS AT THE CONFERENCE: The president of the SA Hockey Union, Steve Jaspan, (far left) and Mick Winn, chairman of the SA Road Running Association (left).

with each other about the differences they encountered.

“We are not saying the structures which exist must disappear, but they must merge and integrate; we must have one rugby board. Before we talk of international sport, let’s address ourselves to the practical realities in this country,” he said, urging sports administrators and players to become social forces for change.

THE president of the SA Cricket Union, Geoff Dakin, launched the session on “Our experiences in attempting to introduce non-racialism into our sport” with some sharp words for those organisations which had chosen not to attend the conference.

He said he had opposed the idea of the recent rebel cricket tour last March, but as a loyal member of the SACU he had gone along with the decision of the board.

Referring to the efforts of the SACU to have cricket grounds, change-rooms and bars opened to all races, Dakin said he was not trying to “score points” but added: “We believe we have been the leading, driving force in sport in South Africa. We were the first to take on John Vorster.”

After citing the achievements of the SACU since its inception in 1976, Dakin conceded that although there was some mixing at club level and a little in provincial teams, it had not gone far enough because of the discrepancies in South African society. He said the SACU had failed miserably at school level but said this was because they had been opposed in their efforts by the Department of Education and Training.

He railed against those who accused the SACU of being racist and re-iterated the SACU’s non-racial position. “We want unity. We’re not saying we’re the big white boss.”

Replying to critics from the audience who said the SACU still had a long way to go and who asked where the SACU saw itself heading in the future, Dakin replied that cricket was a vehicle towards brotherhood and a single nation.

SA Hockey Union president Steve Jaspan said the disease of apartheid was the biggest problem facing sport, and the lack of facilities was one of the major tasks ahead for administrators.

He said the SAHU was a non-racial body which administered 95 percent of the game

while the other five percent fell under the SA Hockey Board – a Sacos affiliate. Despite numerous overtures by the SAHU to the SAHB, Sacos had, in consistency with their stance, refused to enter into talks.

“Too many factions are doing their own thing. The fundamentals of unifying South African sport should be foremost in our minds. The time has come for men of integrity and vision to come together.”

Chairman of the SA Road Running Association Mick Winn said road running was a relatively new sport which had emerged in the last two decades and was a sport for the masses.

Giving a brief history, he told of how black runners, denied official entry into races, had nevertheless competed and won and how white winners had handed over their prizes in recognition of the true victors.

In 1975 black runners still had to wear ethnic labels on their running vests and only in 1976 were they allowed to run the Comrades Marathon. Women (of all races) had to wait until 1977 before they were allowed to compete in the Comrades.

"We had to fight for changes," he said, "and had to threaten to break away from the SA Amateur Athletics Union. At long last we have a situation where we can further our own ideas."

SARRA supported the sports moratorium and believed that the tax rebates companies received for supporting international tours could be better spent in South Africa. Winn said SARRA hoped to establish an All Africa Road Running Association – a goal they believed was of "paramount importance".

NEWLY elected executive member of the SA Rugby Board Arrie Oberholzer appealed for an acceptance of both the SARB's bona fides and its shortcomings. He said that if other groups were willing, the SARB would happily offer to disband and form a new board.

"We must stop looking at inconsequential barriers and do what we have to do. I don't think we have a moment to lose. Please accept that we have the best intentions in the world, but also accept that we have an obligation to our players and supporters," he added.

Oberholzer said the problem with the SARB was that it had taken them since 1977 to get where they were and they were still a long way from where they should be.

In the concluding address, former Springbok rugby captain Tommy Bedford said the difficulties being experienced by sports people and administrators arose simply because they lived in South Africa.

"This debate today is illustrative of the dilemma apartheid has brought upon us," he said. "The mere fact that not everyone is here is because of this bloody thing called apartheid."

"One could cry, listening to the questions I've heard today. Sport is about winning, about competition, about outwitting the opposition. We've had no winners – not today at this conference and not since 1910 – every single one of us has been a loser."

Bedford said the ultimate goal of sport was to compete at the top levels – at Lords, Twickenham or the Olympics – which had been denied to all South Africans. He said only by examining the history of sport in South Africa would people be able to go forward.

"I believe one of our difficulties has been that we have not created black heroes in South African sport. Sport is not about officials but about participants, about players, about youngsters. In South Africa 60 per cent of the population is under 18."

Bedford told of his experiences in trying to get rugby started in Umlazi and the total lack of support offered by the Natal Rugby Union for the project.

"If the heart of the matter was addressed we could have moved light years ahead; we've kept the international thing going because that is what the white community wants. We won't catch up as long as the black community feels hard done by."

Venturing the opinion that those who had boycotted the conference were the poorer for not having attended, Bedford said that ultimately it was not through meetings that things would change. Rather it was through friendships and trust that South African sport would get anywhere.

Sue Valentine is Publications Assistant with Idasa.

PERS

Wie is 'n Afrikaner?

Deur At van Wyk

GESOEK: 'n Afrikaner. Drie eue lank is hy al soek, want die naamdraer wil hom nie laat uitken nie. Hy is wit, maar ook bruin en swart, en hy praat Hollands/Afrikaans, maar ook Engels en enige van die swart tale. Wie is 'n Afrikaner?

Kyk éers na die variasies van die naam in die geskiedenis: *Afrikaander*, *Afrikaander*, *Afrikaander*, *Africander*, *Afrikaner*, *Afrikaan*, *Africaander*, *Africane*, *Africanda*. En wéét dat dit óók staan vir 'n soort skaap, bees, geweer en blom, en vroeg aangeneem is as van deur 'n groep gekleurders onder leierskap van Jager Afrikaner.

In September 1683 skryf Olof Bergh oor 'n binnelandse ekspedisie: "Spanden de beesten daar uyt en stuerden 2 man van ons blancken uijt met twee Afrikaenders."

Dit is duidelik dat *Afrikaenders* (met sy wisselspelling) hier gebruik word vir inheemse swartes.

In 1707 mor die koloniste rondom Stellenbosch teen die Hollandse bewind en goeweneur Adriaan van der Stel. Toe die jong witman Hendrik Bibault en ander na Van der Stel se ontslag uit pure vreugde Stellenbosch op horings neem en die landdros hulle met die rottang bykom, roep Bibault uit, "Ik wil niet loopen, 'k ben een *Africaander*."

Daarmee gee hy te kenne dat hy 'n boorling van die Kaap is – 'n *Africaander*, nie 'n Hollander nie. En dit was destyds 'n gangbare betekenis van die woord: 'n witmens wat aan die Kaap gebore is en van Hollandse, Duitse of Franse afkoms kon wees.

Daarnaas, grootliks met dieselfde betekenis, is *Afrikaan* gebruik, of *African* op Engels. Só staan dit in geskryfte sedert die begin van die 18e eeu. Die Voortrekkers het na hulleself verwys as *Afrikaanders*, maar ook as *Emigranten*, volk en *Afrikanen*.

Die verskillende variante was tot in die tweede helfte van die 18e eeu sonder 'n eksklusiewe betekenis of sterk gevoelswaarde, want dit was ook van toepassing op Kaapse gekleurdes, insluitend slawe, en later Engelse.

Om te onderskei kom Dutch *Afrikander* en English *Afrikander* in omloop, en word *Afrikander* soms vir Brits- en dan weer Hollandsegebore Suid-Afrikaners toegeëien. Laasgenoemde maak in toenemende mate aanspraak daarop en stig in 1875 die Genootskap van Regte Afrikaanders – om te "onderskei . . . tussen Afrikaners met Engelse, Hollandse en Afrikaanse harte", met laasgenoemde groep die *Regte Afrikaanders* (Afrikaanse Kultuur Almanak).

Dit kry stukrag met die stigting van die Afrikander Bond in 1879 en die gevoelsopbruising na die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog van 1881. So kom dit dat *Afrikander/Afrikaner* in die tagtigerjare staan vir 'n politieke ideologie, met die kreet "Afrika vir die Afrikaanders" – dus Hollandsegeborenes. Dit is steeds nie eksklusief nie, want vóór en ná die eeuwending word dit ook op Engelse van toepassing gemaak, en in geringer mate op Kaapse gekleurdes.

Vóór die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog sê generaal JBM Hertzog dat Afrikaner Hol-

landse- en Engelssprekendes insluit wat hul belange met Suid-Afrika verbind. Dis in 1899 ook die standpunt van Ons Land en later van Di Patriot (JC Steyn, *Trouwe Afrikaners*.)

James Molteno skryf dat hy op 4 Oktober 1899 die woord *Afrikanderdom* in sy breë wit betekenis die eerste keer uit die mond van die imperialis Alfred Milner gehoor het. In 1906 kies AR Colquhoun *Africander* met opset in sy *The Africander Land*, omdat dit vir hom albei wit taalgroepe insluit. In 1910 gebruik Abraham Fischer dit ook só, en in dié jaar verwys 'n briëfskrywer in *The Natal Mercury* (3 Mei 1910) na *British Africanderism*.

Maar toe Hertzog hom in 1912 teen "vreemde fortuinzoekers" uitspreek en sê die Afrikaner is baas en sal baas bly, bars 'n bom. Hoe hy ook al verduidelik het dat hy met *Afrikaner* Hollands en Engelssprekende bedoel wat Suid-Afrika eerste stel, is hy nie geglo nie.

Midde-in die krisis skryf generaal Louis Botha daarvoor aan president MT Steyn en verwys na Engelse *Afrikaners* en Hollandse *Afrikaners*, terwyl De Volkstem (3 Des 1912) die Engelse Ralph Tatham "'n gebore Afrikaner" noem en terme gebruik soos *de Hollandse Afrikaner* en *de Engelse Afrikaner*.

Dit klink na baie lawaai en min wol, maar destyds was die betekenis wat geheg is aan Hertzog se gebruik van *Afrikaner* as "baas" van die land naas "de vreemde – voornamelik Engelssprekende fortuinzoekers", 'n gewigtige saak wat as hefboom gebruik is om hom in 1912 uit die kabinet te lig.

Vir Hertzog en ander het die benaming *Afrikaner* sy betekenis as Suid-Afrikaner behou, maar met die ontwaking van Afrikaner-nasionalisme sedert 1912, en veral ná 1934, het dit die eng betekenis verkry wat dit vandag nog plek-plek het: 'n wit Afrikaanssprekende Christen-kerkklidmaat van die "volk".

Enkeles het nie die eng betekenis van *Afrikaner* aanvaar nie. In 1960 pleit NP van Wyk Louw om die voortbestaan van "my volk, blank en bruin, en die taal wat ons praat". In 1921 het Hertzog al die swart vakbondleier Clements Kadalie gevra om vertroue "between the white and black *Afrikander*".

NOU sê die ANC in die jongste tyd *African* beteken vir hom nie net swart nie, maar almal wat saamstrewende om 'n toekomstige Suid-Afrika. Dalk is dit sommermaar woorde, maar as die strewende sou eindig in 'n eenheidstaat met vryheid vir almal, sal *Afrikaner* of *Afrikaan* as gemeenskaplike noemnaam sekerlik van pas wees. Dan het die naam 'n volle sirkelgang geloop sedert 1683.

Tot dan bly die vraag wat ook die einde vorm van MDW Jeffreys se grondige artikel in *Africana Notes & News*, Sept 1971, 19/7, waarvan grootliks in hierdie artikel gebruik gemaak is:

Wie is 'n Afrikaner?

(Met erkenning aan Rapport)

Killing fields of apartheid

From Page 1

of the dead have been in these "UDF" areas?

Finally, the memorandum criticises the local authorities for their "unwillingness to assist", asking simply "whether the municipality would have shown the same qualms if the victims had been white"?

Aitchison's paper, titled "What happened in Pietermaritzburg", supports the UDF/Cosatu analysis.

He sketches the evolution of political formations in the area since 1976, presents statistics "quantifying death and destruction", and poses six questions in an attempt to interpret the war:

Is the Maritzburg conflict simply part of the general revolt against apartheid and its structures that flared up in late 1984 and which the succession of states of emergency has suppressed elsewhere?

What is the origin and dynamic of the conflict?

What role have Inkatha and the UDF played?

Has the state sided or colluded with Inkatha?

Why have peace initiatives not succeeded so far?

In whose interest is the continuation of the conflict?

On the first question, Aitchison concludes that while the revolt against government-installed structures was spreading to Natal, "the conflict has been essentially about Inkatha's desire to maintain its support (or at least to maintain its ability to claim such support without contradiction) among black people in Natal".

He cites statistics from another study showing that between 1977 and 1988 Inkatha support in the PWV industrial heartland shrank from 30 percent to 5 percent, while the allegiance commanded by the broad ANC/UDF/Cosatu alliance had grown to 70 percent. The same trend threatened in Natal.

"All the available evidence seems to say that it was Inkatha's attempt to aggressively recruit membership and also to recruit



Homemade guns on display in Natal.

AFRAPIX

membership for its trade union wing Uwusa that created the situation that led to the dramatic rise in violence in 1987 and 1988," Aitchison says.

Nevertheless he acknowledges that there was a "ripeness" for conflict in peri-urban and rural areas of Natal "which everybody seems to have underestimated".

On the question of collusion with Inkatha, Aitchison finds the state guilty, quoting in support a speech made in February 1988 at a police ceremony in Maritzburg by Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok:

"The police intend to face the future with moderates and fight against radical groups. Radicals, who are trying to destroy South Africa, will not be tolerated. We will fight them. We have put our foot in that direction, and we will eventually win the Maritzburg area."

Aitchison notes that police behaviour in the field "appeared to many observers to have been supportive of Inkatha".

This need not be a matter of conspiracy, he says. It may simply be "a natural tendency of an apartheid-nurtured police force to side with what they perceive as the forces of conservative tribalism".

A statement by one Colonel J Fourie in

Durban after killings in KwaMashu "explains much", Aitchison says. The colonel opined that while an Inkatha crowd might look armed to "outsiders", it was not in fact an "armed group" because "traditionally, Zulu men carry arms".

Aitchison notes that the continuation of the conflict is "not in the interests of the UDF or the ANC or anybody espousing a democratic, non-racial unitary state position". But he goes further.

"It is not actually in the interests of Inkatha, for apart from destroying the very basis of its realpolitik moderation - its non-violence and associated willingness to enter into acceptable compromises with the existing white order, particularly in the economic sphere - it is fast losing international credibility and has fashioned for itself a long-term burden of revengeful hatred.

By contrast, Aitchison argues, perpetuation of the conflict "can be seen to be in the (short-term) interests of the South African government" because it is cheap, keeps Inkatha and therefore KwaZulu occupied, and keeps pressure off the state.

Among the complicating factors - apart from the appalling conditions in which so many are forced to live - are "the business sector's tendency to favour Inkatha and particularly Chief Buthelezi, and to discount negative reports about them".

Aitchison observes that in the context of decades of experience in "setting up and co-opting traditional elements in collapsing tribal societies", and "growing experience with destabilisation, often of a violent kind", the South African government faces in the Natal midlands conflict the ultimate and bitter fruit of its own policies.

The burning question is whether "Pretoria's tripartite" now encompasses a will to find a peace for the area (and others, like Crossroads, in danger of succumbing to the same fate). And if there is a will, is there a way?

Ian Liebenberg is Idasa's Director of Research. Shauna Westcott works in the publications division.

Learner peacekeepers for Natal

A TRAINING course for peacekeepers in the Natal conflict was run jointly recently by Idasa and the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies. About 30 people attended.

The objective was to equip the participants with the basic practical skills necessary to play a role in preventing violence. This covered two essential aspects: skills for intervention and possible mediation in a conflict situation, and knowledge of the law to assist in the process of bringing perpetrators of violence to book.

A number of factors led Idasa and CSLS to begin offering the course. Most important of these is that the police force operating in most of Natal's townships is seen by

many victims as a major perpetrator of violence, or at best is seen to have simply dispensed with normal police investigative procedures.

The consequence is that township residents, who live in fear of their local police, are relying increasingly on outside civilians to contact a different police force or the SADF to prevent armed attacks. This breakdown in the policing system has led to the demand for a civilian-based, peacekeeping approach in preventing violence.

Idasa's hope is that the course will build up a body of experienced people who can monitor the conduct of parties in the violence, and mediate between them.

This communication is an essential part

of the negotiation process which is currently under way. A political settlement will demand as one element the political rehabilitation of the police and army in the eyes of black people.

Both forces live at present with their legacy as enforcers of pass laws and other apartheid legislation, and as defenders of apartheid in the low-level civil war between the government and the ANC which we have experienced in recent years.

The Training for Peacekeeping course will continue to be run by Idasa and CSLS on an occasional basis. Inquiries should be directed to the Natal office of Idasa.

Gary Cullen
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