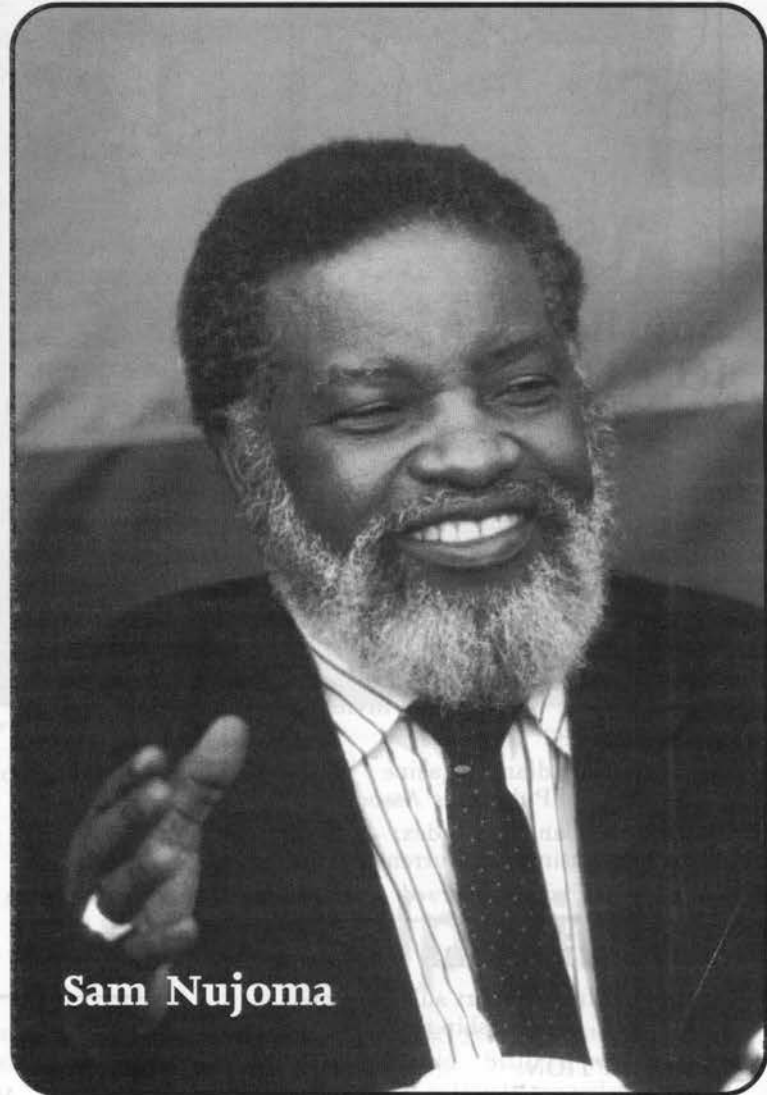


Swapo and Dissent



Ben Ulenga



Sam Nujoma

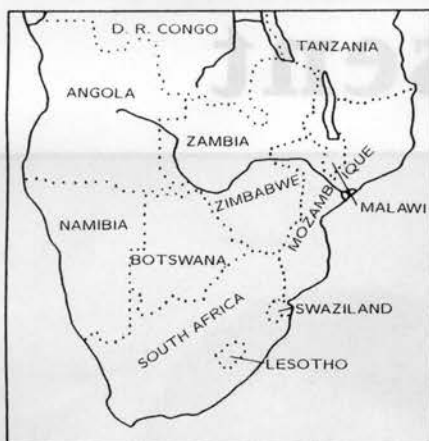
- Is GEAR illegal?
- South Africa Invades Lesotho



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South African troops patrol Maseru streets on 25 September

Of Real Heroes . . . and Realpolitik

Nelson Mandela in Canada! Recent events here had some of the resonance of an aging athlete's last tour of the arenas to receive the kudos of the crowd on the eve of his retirement. Only this time the record of accomplishment was all the more real, the plaudits all the more deserved, the ceremonies all the more moving. A man who spent twenty-seven years in prison and

emerged both to embrace his jailers and to lead his people. Hero of the century indeed.

Of course, it was a bit galling to note just who were sitting there preening themselves in the front row at the various events, politicians and business people who had had little good to say about, and even less help to give, the ANC

during its long years of struggle against apartheid. Still, as veteran anti-apartheid activists craned their necks to catch a glimpse of Mandela from the cheap seats, they tried not to think such profane thoughts, preferring to ride the euphoria of the moment (as at Toronto's Skydome, with 40,000 school-kids shouting out their solidarity with Madiba) which, to put it mildly, was considerable

Not that, as Mandela prepares to step down from office, everything is comfortably in place back home. A previous editorial in these pages spoke of the wide gamut of challenges that face Mandela's presumptive successor as President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki (see "Mbeki's Blues," *SAR*, vol. 13, no. 4, but also, as an example, Salim Vally's article in the present issue on the deep cracks that have appeared in South Africa's post-apartheid education policies). And some of these problems were raised in various media background stories that surfaced during Mandela's visit to Canada.

Still, the one moment on his Canadian visit when Mandela became decidedly testy with media questions concerned a much more immediate issue: his country's military intervention in neighbouring Lesotho, an intervention that occurred even as Mandela was being wine-d and dined in this country. In fact, a certain defensiveness on Mandela's part may well have been in order - if Roger Southall's authoritative account in these pages of the "ham-handed" (his word) nature of South African intervention in Lesotho is to be believed. Controversially, Southall does give the elections themselves a qualified passing grade on the "free and fair" index, despite the more sceptical opinion on this issue of many Lesothans themselves. But of South Africa's own blundering arrogance he has no doubt. Read him and weep.

Even more sobering is the fact that the Lesotho intervention seems part of a broader pattern of interstate conflict in the region - one marked, alarmingly, by the growing ascendancy of *realpolitik* and by the aggressive assertion of "national interests" not easily reducible to extra-continental imperialist machinations. Self-evidently, this dénouement is not quite what militants of the liberation movements had in mind for the region during the heroic days of armed struggle against white minority rule.

Weep, then, but weep even more for the Congo than for Lesotho, since it is in the Congo that military escalation has reached by far its most alarming proportions. Currently the forces of five countries (Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe) are deployed there alongside a congeries of Congolese factions - while, in this case, South Africa seeks in the person of Mandela to play the role of peace-maker! Indeed, it is the Deputy Foreign Minister of South Africa, Aziz Pahad, who sounds the grimmest warning: "If this continues, the danger of a massive African war is a reality. A major conflict on the continent will set us back many years."

SAR readers will recall a recent article by Carole Collins that provided essential background information for understanding events in the Congo ("Southern Africa: A New Congo in a New Region?" *SAR*, vol. 13, no. 3). It is a topic to which we will have to return in future issues. Suffice to note here that the knock-on effects of such conflicts across the region are considerable. Thus, even as the execrable Mugabe mutters darkly of carrying his military support of the Kabila regime directly into Rwanda and Uganda themselves, riots erupt in Harare protesting such expensive external adventurism at a time of deep economic crisis at home. Evidence of just how difficult it is now becoming to disentangle domestic developments from regional conflicts is also revealed in another article in this issue. Pierre Beaudet, in recounting the dismal story of the reactivation of war between MPLA and UNITA in Angola, feels constrained to devote considerable attention precisely to the war in the Congo in which the MPLA government also now finds itself embroiled.

Perhaps Mandela can further embroider his mantle as statesman through his present efforts - rather against the odds, it must be feared - to neutralize outside intervention and bring warring groups in the

Congo together to talk through a new and mutually acceptable political and constitutional dispensation. More power to him if he can, not least because it is the kind of political role he is perhaps, in "retirement," most suited to play - rather like the role now assigned by Africa to his much revered Tanzanian counterpart, Julius Nyerere (who currently chairs an international effort to bring peace and reconciliation to deeply troubled Burundi).

Note, incidentally, that Mandela follows Nyerere's example in another important respect: in his willingness to step down from power even while others might cede him his right to continue - the better to permit a peaceful succession and create a positive democratic precedent for his country. The contrast with many other African leaders could not be more striking, a case in point being Sam Nujoma, the current president of Namibia. No particular hero he (Nujoma is, after all, the foil for Namibian Sam Ndeikwila's barbed parable on presidential power in Africa that we offer below), Nujoma now seeks a constitutional amendment to permit himself a hitherto unthinkable third term.

It is just this bid for continued power, and the undemocratic sensibilities characteristic of Swapo from which it springs, that provides the context for another story central to these pages: the resistance to Nujoma's domestic *realpolitik* offered, at considerable cost and even risk to himself, by Namibian politician and diplomat Ben Ulenga. As chronicled by Lauren Dobell and highlighted on our cover, the "Ulenga moment" may thus offer an additional parable, one that underscores the kind of heroism that can still be offered by a younger generation of southern African politicians. Perhaps such heroism, sustained and emulated, may yet turn the dreams of the best of the region's freedom fighters into reality.

SAR

The Ulenga Moment Swapo and Dissent

BY LAUREN DOBELL

Lauren Dobell is writing a doctoral thesis on development strategies in Namibia. Her MA thesis, War by other means: SWAPO's Struggle for Namibia 1960-1991 was published recently (Basel: P. Schlettwein Publishing, 1998).

The President is furious. Friends profess themselves stunned. Some colleagues quietly rejoice, while others vociferously scramble to distance themselves. A spray-painted "Viva Ben" appears on an overpass. Radio talk shows and editorial pages burst with opinion. In the eye of the storm is a charismatic, articulate diplomat whose sudden resignation as Namibia's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom has made him Namibia's most beloved, hated, feared and admired man of the hour. Who is Ben Ulenga and what has he done that has got his party and his country all shook up?

Impeccable credentials

Ex-combatant, Robben Islander, former trade unionist - Ulenga's freedom fighter credentials are impeccable. A Swapo member since his teens, he was among the first mass exodus of young Namibians into exile in 1974. He served with the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) for two years before being seriously wounded and captured in a skirmish with South African troops during an ill-defined mission into northern Namibia. Convicted under the Terrorism Act, Ulenga was sentenced to 15 years on Robben Island and served nine of these before his release, together with a number of other long-serving Namibian political prisoners, in 1985. Upon his return to Namibia he threw himself into trade union work, helping to organize the Mineworkers' Union

(MUN). At its inaugural congress he was elected to the post of General-Secretary for the union which, under his leadership, was outspoken in its opposition to the apartheid administration, and contributed significantly to a revitalized worker's movement in Namibia.

In 1989 Ulenga was among the internal leaders selected by Swapo President Sam Nujoma to run for office in Namibia's inaugural democratic elections. A favourable slot on the party's candidates' list also secured his place in the Constituent Assembly, which drafted the nation's Constitution before its metamorphosis into Namibia's first parliament on March 21, 1990. A year later, at Swapo's national party Congress, Ulenga's continuing popularity with Swapo's rank and file membership was confirmed by his easy election to the party's Central Committee, despite the weighting of voting procedures to favour incumbents.

In 1996, having served as Deputy Minister of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism, and subsequently as Deputy Minister of Local Government and Housing, Ulenga was appointed High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, in which capacity he served until August 27 of this year.

Treading carefully

Swapo's entrenched hierarchy and political culture have changed little in the transition from liberation movement to governing party. Respect for established authority and unquestioning loyalty is paramount; secrecy pervades decision-making structures and channels. The amalgamation of former exiled and "remainee" leaderships (including Robben Islanders) remains an un-

easy one, with the latter feeling simultaneously excluded from the inner circles of government and party and distanced from erstwhile domestic constituencies among the youth, trade unions, churches and community activists. For the consistently and stubbornly independent-minded Ulenga it has been an increasingly awkward fit. At the same time, having grown up politically within Swapo, and wholly loyal to what he believes to be its principles, Ulenga could not before now bring himself to differ publicly with party policies or practice. Privately he found limited scope for expressing his views and often found himself treading a fine line in carrying out his constituency work. Still, from time to time he was rumoured to have put some powerful noses out of joint, and to have earned for himself in some quarters the damning epithet of "trouble-maker" in his pursuit of debate on, explanation of, or accountability for party or government policy.

Now, with his resignation, Ulenga is testing much more forcefully the precise limits of the possible. For in Namibia, after eight years of governing in a formal democracy, the space for democratic dissent within the ruling party is still severely circumscribed - with significant repercussions for the nation as a whole. Worryingly, the past few years have seen a steady concentration of political power in the office of the President, and periodic threatening noises, from the same source, aimed at suppressing public expressions of dissent: as, for example, a declaration of July 10, 1997 that public protests would require prior police permission in future. Apparently a spontaneous decision - Nujoma's speeches invariably have

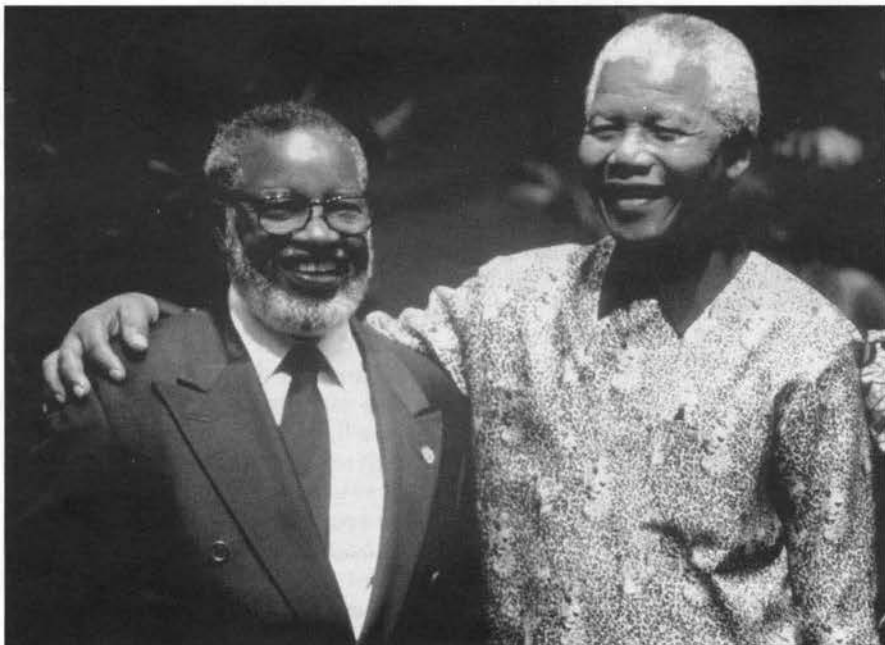
a significant Reaganesque, off-the-cuff component – its implementation was put on indefinite hold, following protests from the judiciary and press that such a ban, except in a state of national emergency, was wholly inconsistent with the Constitution. Constitutional limits to the President's powers of appointment have also occasionally been bypassed, as with the President's unilateral selection (later rescinded) of a new Ombudsman, without recourse to the recommendation of the Judicial

but one for which the governing party perhaps felt no especial sense of ownership or attachment.

In the lead-up to the 1994 national and presidential elections, criticism of the Constitution gave way to talk of amending it. Public references by Swapo party leaders to the two-thirds parliamentary majority required to unilaterally amend the Constitution were made with increasing frequency. Privately top officials talked about the one clause that preoccupied the leader-

advisors discussed not whether but how.

Having been returned to power with a significantly augmented majority, the Swapo leadership paradoxically seemed to feel less secure in office than before. Or perhaps, as some critics suggest, they simply felt comfortable enough to let their true colours show. New security legislation was introduced, and a well-funded National State Intelligence Agency was established. There have been several instances of direct government interference in NBC radio and television broadcasting decisions. Often Nujoma, stepping out of his generally affable persona, appeared to be taking a page from Mugabe's book, lashing out in public speeches at an unduly critical media, un-African gays, interfering judiciary, importunate donors, and sometimes foreigners (whites) in general. The resurrection in 1996 of questions concerning the mistreatment of suspected dissidents by Swapo in exile elicited a particularly ferocious response from Nujoma and the late Swapo Secretary-General Moses Garoeb, who warned of a bloodbath if "unpatriotic" Namibians and "foreign remnants of fascism" did not abandon their subversive agenda. (Moses Garoeb, Media Statement, March 12, 1996). [On this subject, see *SAR*, vol. 11, no. 4 (July, 1996)]



Shaun Harris - PictureNET Africa

Sam Nujoma with Nelson Mandela during the Non-Aligned Summit, 1998

Commission. Both instances fuelled existing feeling, in some quarters, that the Constitution – and its judicial watchdogs – placed excessive restrictions on the exercise of executive powers.

The constitution and controversy

This chafing at the limitations (real or perceived) imposed by the Constitution has roots dating back to the document's inception. Eighty days of negotiation and compromise among the seven parties represented in the Constituent Assembly, advised by an international body of constitutional lawyers, produced a model modern liberal constitution,

ship: that limiting the President to two terms in office. "Two-thirds!" became the campaign's rallying cry – though the President himself sometimes called for "72 for Swapo," in reference to all 72 seats of the National Assembly. Following Swapo's election, with almost 73% of the vote, talk of a Presidential third term was rife. Nujoma himself was non-committal, but promised in a national television address that no amendments would be made to the constitution without a national referendum. (NBC, December 11, 1994). Within the top ranks of Swapo the decision was already made, however. In camera and off the record the President's

Casting such a wide net in pursuit of "unpatriotic elements" and "enemies of Namibia" suggests a political market for scapegoats upon whom to heap the blame for vexing economic and social woes. High unemployment, painfully slow progress with respect to land reform, rising crime rates, a sluggish economy, steadily growing debt, a burgeoning bureaucratic wage bill, and increasing public and press criticism of perceived government corruption are persistent problems for the ruling party. Particularly worrying has been the issue of jobless former PLAN fighters who, since July, have been gathering in demonstrations of hundreds and even unprece-

dented thousands to draw attention to their plight.

Just what role these and other factors played in the President's decision to involve the Namibian army in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's messy war is unclear, the more so because the decision was made by the President and his advisors without seeking the approval of Parliament, or informing the nation. For several days the presence of Namibian troops in the DRC was rumoured in Namibia, and even reported by the BBC and CNN news – reports repeatedly denied by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence – before Nujoma finally confirmed it at a Heroes Day commemoration ceremony on August 26. A few days later the first Namibian casualties were reported in the Namibian press, but it was another full fortnight before the President addressed the nation in a televised broadcast.

The President's enthusiastic support for the Kabila regime has confounded observers since the proclamation of Windhoek's "Kabila St." soon after Kabila's accession to power. It is unclear what Namibian interests are at stake in the DRC to warrant a government-to-government loan of N\$25 million soon after Kabila's installation, unspecified shipments of war materiel, and now the commitment of troops. The war has caused a serious split in SADC, with the majority of members aligning themselves with Mandela's attempts to broker a peace deal, while Namibia joins Angola in lining up behind a defiantly hawkish Mugabe. Namibia's Finance Minister Nangolo Mbumba has insisted that Namibia's involvement will be largely underwritten by Zimbabwe, though with what resources isn't clear. Some rumours point to prosaic business concerns – Nujoma's brother-in-law Aaron Mushimba is believed to have mining interests in the Congo. (In Zimbabwe similar allegations are made about Robert Mugabe's son Leo).

In his televised address Nujoma cast Namibia's participation in sweeping Pan-Africanist terms, invoking motives of African brotherhood and solidarity with "a fellow SADC member state which has fallen victim to a foreign-inspired conspiracy, and duplicity [by Uganda and Rwanda]." Interestingly, in light of the uncertain constitutionality of the decision itself (the President's sweeping powers as Commander-in-Chief of the Defence

in the Great Lakes and the Congo are instigated by white imperialists who want to control the country, take out its riches while the Congolese people live in poverty. This can no longer be allowed to continue." (The Namibian, September 21, 1998)

Saying the unsayable

It was against this general and immediate backdrop that Ben Ulenga returned to Namibia from London



Lauren Dobell

Ben Ulenga (far right) with Namibian parliamentarians

Force are granted under a Defence Act that long predates independence), the President invoked constitutional clauses concerning the defense of Namibia's borders and protecting its citizens in describing the act as also one of "enlightened self-interest." An anti-imperialist theme moved to the forefront in the President's later speeches, especially following an announcement by the European Union that it was reviewing aid packages to African countries involved in the DRC conflict in order to ensure that aid moneys were not financing military activities:

"These foolish Europeans. They formed a political union and again they want to get our raw materials without paying us. ... Disturbances

to participate in Swapo's Extraordinary Party Congress scheduled for August 27-28, 1998. The Congress convened 400 delegates from Namibia's thirteen regions, party wings and affiliated unions, though for precisely what purpose seemed to be in some dispute. Days before the Congress, senior party officials seemed anxious to dispel delegates' understanding – and press reports – that party representatives were meeting in part to discuss the question of a third term for Nujoma, and policy issues, such as land reform, that had been put off at Swapo's second national congress in May 1997. The issue of a Presidential third term had been approved at the full Congress and was not sub-

ject to further discussion, declared party spokesmen. The only item on the agenda of the Extraordinary Congress was a series of proposed amendments to the Swapo party Constitution, designed to "revitalize" the party structures. It would transpire, following the Congress, that such "revitalization" dictated further centralization of the party: to ensure the effective communication of the leadership's policies and programmes to the rank and file, all regional structures would henceforth be headed by Central Committee members.

Ulunga, though himself a member of the party leadership, was also taken by surprise at the narrow confines of the proposed debate. And for him it was the last straw. Following the Central Committee meeting which preceded the Congress, he submitted his written resignation as High Commissioner to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and letters conveying his decision to the President and Secretary-General of Swapo. The same evening he announced his reasons for resigning in a press briefing. For its significance as the first public expression of dissent from party policy and procedure by a Swapo leader, his statement is worth quoting at some length. Noting that he had been agonizing for two years over the issue of the third term in particular, Ulunga said that he had been looking forward to contributing to a debate on the question at the Extraordinary Congress:

"I have ... reached the firm conviction that the proposal to increase the Presidential terms for the current incumbent would be to the total detriment of the country, the Swapo Party and the cumulative process of political democratization and good governance in the country. ...

"[T]he Swapo Party has never given due consideration to the Third Term issue and its implications ... [N]ot once has the Party discussed the ever-important matter of Party

leadership, succession and renewal. Secondly, the Third Term proposal as directed at the present incumbent is an unacceptable subjection of the national good (as represented by the Constitution) to the personal circumstances and schemes of individuals ... [and ignores the] realities of recent African political history, the youthfulness of our state institutions and the precarious nature of our democracy.

"Indeed the leadership problems in the Swapo party have now reached critical proportions. The recent and current crisis involving ex-PLAN fighters, former political prisoners on both sides, and former exiles in general, as well as the long-standing and unresolved land reform issue, are all indicative of the profound lack and total absence of coherent policy and thinking concerning matters of vital national importance. A foreign policy crisis is now being unleashed through an ill-considered military involvement in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo ...

"[The] Party should, in my view, immediately set about shedding its present antiquated leadership, completely overhaul its political and organizational problems, and provide clear direction to government and the nation through clear Party policies. ... I am aware that clear, directed and determined leadership is of the essence. Subject to the democratic views of others, I am prepared to take up the challenge." (Original press statement, August 27, 1998)

Thunderbolt

"Ben's Bombshell" was the headline in *The Namibian* - and certainly the effect was explosive. Ulunga has presented Swapo policy and practice with its most important challenge to date. In speaking publicly, from within party ranks, against a third term in office for Nujoma he has aired a taboo opinion, albeit one which he is far from alone among his colleagues in holding. In his initial statement, and in more detail in subsequent interviews, he has pub-

licly exposed the absence of democratic practice at all levels of the party and government. In standing up for the principles he believes Swapo truly represents he is setting an example for like-minded but more timid colleagues, and in expressing his readiness to "take up the challenge," he is providing a rallying point for Namibians disaffected with the current leadership. Finally, in deploring the weakness of Swapo's party structures, Ulunga has drawn a distinction between the roles of party and government in a democracy, and called for a resurrection of grassroots political activity in opposition to the steady centralization of power within Swapo leadership.

*"The party has taken an unusual step of listening to Government and to forces out there for guidance. ... What is the party there for? The party has been emptied of its essence as a party and is an empty shell. It doesn't do the job that the party should do. The party is there to set the policy agenda for government." (Interview, *The Namibian*, September 4, 1998)*

A husband and father, the 46-year old Ulunga's gamble is all the more striking in light of the personal sacrifice entailed in his resignation as High Commissioner, and the unknown risks he faces in speaking out. Far less notable critics have fared badly in the past. Since independence, the suppression of unpopular views has tended to rely on character defamation, political marginalization and informal intimidation, however, and this critic is likely to possess an unusual resistance to the usual tactics.

Indeed it seems that the Swapo leadership is uncertain as to how to proceed against the rebel within its ranks. (Ulunga has not resigned from Swapo nor its Central Committee). Initially the patrician Hifikipunye Pohamba, Secretary-General of Swapo, publicly rebuked Ulunga for not following "proper party channels" in putting his case, and appeared to threaten "disci-

plinary procedures.” Though potentially sinister-sounding, the mutterings about violations of proper party procedure were lent a comedic note by what Ulenka had already revealed concerning the absence of such channels. The President’s anger, though reputedly titanic, has not been publicly vented. A meeting of the Politburo was quickly convened, but apparently failed to materialize when a number of members suddenly excused themselves on various grounds, suggesting a reluctance to take part in any collective action against the well-liked Ulenka. The usual roster of innuendo and insinuation has been trotted out on the hyperactive rumour mill, involving shadowy conspiracies of whites, foreigners or the inevitable CIA, and the usual charges of “disloyal” and “unpatriotic” behaviour, but even these efforts seem half-hearted.

However, while many in the leadership may be reluctant to condemn him, no one is rushing to his side – at least not publicly. Privately a number are applauding his courage in expressing sentiments that are widely held, though never, until now, expressed. But if party and parliamentary peers are cautiously waiting to see what price is exacted for Ulenka’s heresies, ordinary Namibians have been less restrained. In the weeks following Ulenka’s resignation, open-line radio shows have been abuzz with reaction to the news, while Namibian newspapers have been swamped with letters – the majority supportive of Ulenka. The response has been particularly noteworthy in the unprecedented breadth and depth of critical opinion expressed. Also interesting is the nostalgia it has revealed for the heyday of internal struggle in the

1980s – and for its leaders. For one writer, the example set by Ulenka was reminiscent of a time “when debate about issues within the party and about our society was the order of the day, [a] culture of open debate ... conditioned by the general defiant mood of the mass democratic political activity of the time.” Another reminded readers that “the struggle for the liberation of Namibia did not start in exile.”

Especially fascinating has been the reclaiming of not only the spirit, but the unwritten history of the struggle, both inside and outside, by earlier generations of activists and dissidents, most notably Samson Ndeikwila of the Council of Churches of Namibia. One of Swapo’s first “detainees,” having, with eight other young members, fallen afoul of the exiled leadership in the late 1960s after charg-



Swapo election rally, 1994

Lauren Dobell

ing them with being "oblivious to their own people." Ndeikwila has been steadily working to clear the names of those detained or killed as "spies" while living in exile during the 1980s. His letters explicitly place Ulenga in a continuum of democratic dissent from authoritarian practice within Swapo - a history which appears finally to be taking fragile root in the collective consciousness of Namibians.

"Bravado and heroism"

The enthusiasm for Ulenga's stand is still tempered with caution: letters to the editor are often anonymous or pseudonymous; reporters polling passersbys discover very few willing to go on the record as opposing a third term for the President. No such reserve has characterized self-declared loyalists and "patriots" however, as witnessed by one letter urging swift disciplinary action against Ulenga: "This would be necessary in order to discourage similar conduct by those members who wish to display thoughtless bravado and heroism."

Such "bravado and heroism," it seems, is still mainly the purview of individuals: Swapo's youth, women's and elders' wings have declared officially unanimous support for a third term, while affiliated organs and unions waffle uncomfort-

ably in eloquent testimony to their lack of independent policy-making structures. The diplomatic community, foreign investors, and white Namibians have mainly withheld comment (*The Namibian's* spirited editor Gwen Lister is a notable exception), citing reasons ranging from a reluctance to interfere to a fear of exacerbating matters. An element of "better the devil you know" also plays a significant role. The generally dormant parliamentary opposition, however, seems to have taken courage from public opinion. In more than its usual state of disarray in recent months (following the expulsion of the leader of the official opposition DTA party for alleged separatist ambitions) opposition parliamentarians have belatedly braced themselves to defend the nation's Constitution.

The issue was front and centre as Parliament reconvened at the beginning of the month. After some minor procedural difficulties, occasioned by the unseemly hurry with which it was introduced, the Prime Minister has already moved the "Amendment Bill," allowing for the amendment of the Constitution "so as to provide that the first President of Namibia may hold office as President for three terms," while a companion bill has been introduced "to provide for incidental matters." Among the

latter, so casually advanced, is another proposal to dramatically alter the Constitution by empowering the President to appoint Namibia's thirteen regional governors. Previously, governors were selected by their respective elected regional councils.

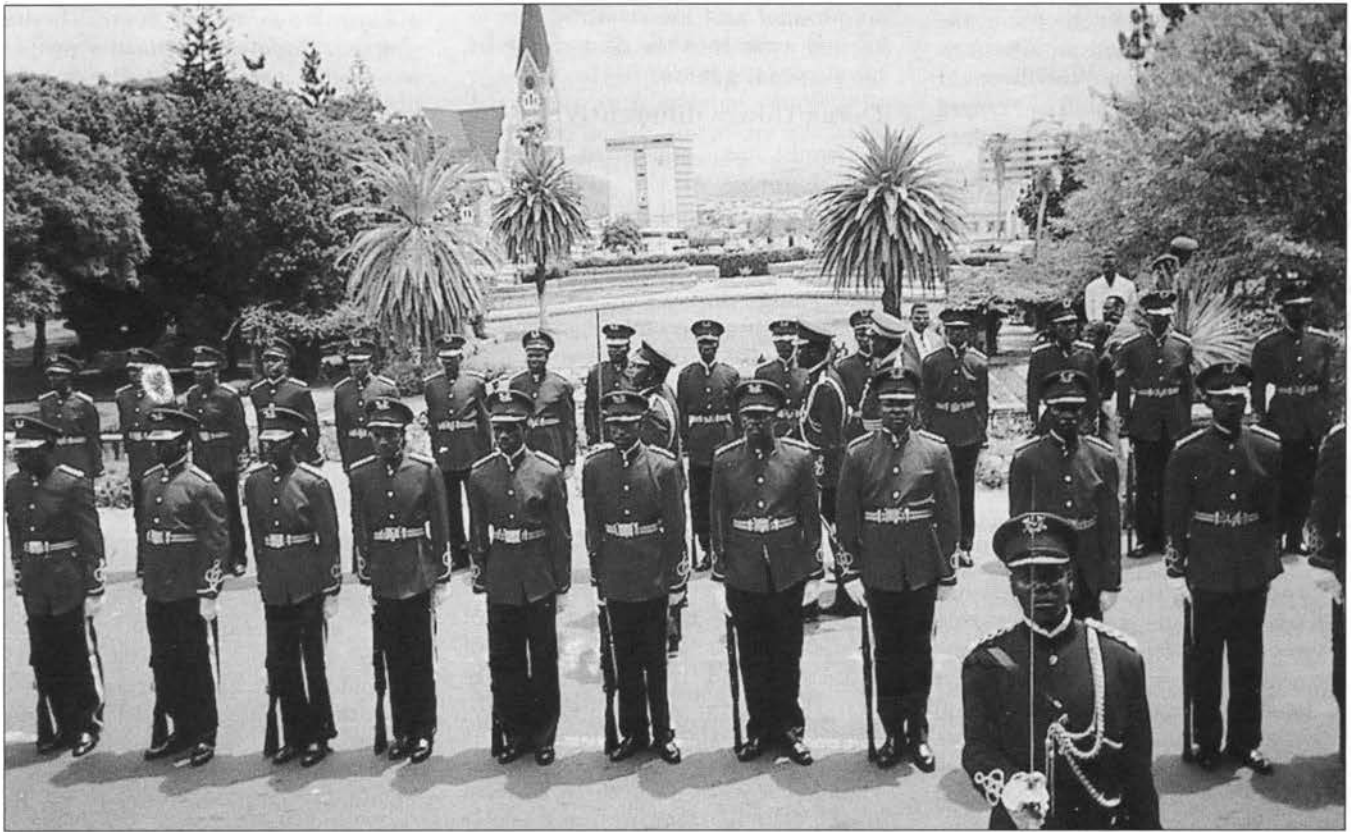
It is likely, of course, that the battle to preserve Namibia's original Constitution is already lost. Swapo has the necessary two-thirds majority to push the amendments through; only the unlikely defection of some of its own MPs can prevent it. And with its passing, a dangerous precedent will have been set. As one former student leader lamented: "Namibia is busy degenerating into a Zimbabwean-type politically. And with Nujoma's third term we must expect the situation to worsen drastically ... especially taking into account the absence of critical and active civic structures and people. Even Ben Ulenga's brave decision may become a matter of history, since people are trapped into their material positions. They just can't afford to differ with the ruling [clique], even if they wish to." (Paul Kalenga, personal communication, September 29, 1998).

And yet, as Ulenga has shown, not everyone is trapped. While parliamentarians were preparing to debate constitutional amendments that will extend the term and the powers of a President who has led Swapo for the past four decades, and the nation since independence, hundreds of Namibians gathered for the inaugural meeting of a "Forum for the Future," to hear addresses by Ulenga, by the Secretary-General of the CCN, and by the Governor of the Bank of Namibia. If, as Ulenga's wife Nambata has observed (invoking a popular Namibian expression), it is true that within Swapo's leadership people brave enough to be critical are "as rare as chicken teeth," such people appear to be rapidly proliferating among the Namibian citizenry - and, collectively, may turn out to have some bite.



Peter Bennett - CIDA

SAI



Lauren Dobell

The Statesman who Brought Honour to Africa (a parable)

BY SAMSON NDEIKWILA

In her article on recent developments in Namibia featured in this issue of SAR, Lauren Dobell cites Samson Ndeikwila of the Council of Churches of Namibia as epitomizing in his work the efforts of "an earlier generation of activists and dissidents" now seeking to reclaim "not only the spirit, but the unwritten history of the [Namibian liberation] struggle, both inside and outside" the country. As she writes, Ndeikwila was "one of Swapo's first 'detainees,' having, with eight other young members, fallen afoul of the exiled leadership in the late 1960s after charging [the latter] with being 'oblivious to their own people'" (on this moment in Swapo's history see also Colin Leys and John S. Saul, *Namibia's Liberation Struggle: The Two-edged Sword* [London, 1995], ch. 3). More recently, notes Dobell,

"Ndeikwila has been steadily working to clear the names of those detained or killed as 'spies' while living in exile during the 1980s." This personal history of considerable courage and commitment gives added resonance to Ndeikwila's deft and illuminating parable, reprinted here with permission from The Namibian where it first appeared as an extended letter to the editor.

The president was born in a poor family in a remote African village. His country had experienced brutal colonial oppression, repression and exploitation. He knows what it means to go hungry, barefoot and in rags or half-naked.

It is this background which has shaped his world outlook. And it is his simple lifestyle which has had tremendous impact on the thinking of so many people at home and

beyond. This is the man today whose mere utterances are echoed in different languages all over the world.

Many people do not know his real name. At home he has proven himself consistent in words and deeds to be called the Father of the Nation. In church circles they call him the Great Visionary of our Age. All over Africa and among the Afro-Americans they call him Our Pride. Somewhere else he is referred to as the Great Leader of Africa.

Scholars of different disciplines have all concurred that he is the most original thinker, most articulate speaker, most simple in lifestyle, and most organised and disciplined in time-management. He sincerely believes what he says and courageously says what he believes.

One reggae band in the Caribbean has released an album titled "The Statesman Who Brought Honour to Africa." The record praises the President's exemplary approach to life. It praises his government's policy guide and the revised constitution.

Notorious leaders

It recounts the priorities and initial achievements of his five-year plan. However, the last part of the record is very harsh with African leaders, dead and alive, who have killed, imprisoned, tortured, exiled and impoverished their own people. The record calls on the people of Africa never to be deceived again.

Then comes the "No More" and "Shame on You" part where solo voices shout the names of some notorious African leaders. The list is long and controversial. You hear the names of Idi Amin, Bokassa, Samuel Doe, Karume, Sekou Touré, Kamuzu Banda, Siad Barre, Mobutu, Mengistu, Abacha, Eyadema, Kabila and others. To the astonishment of some people, the record mentions several names of certain figures in former liberation movements in Africa who brutalised their own followers in exile.

Some of these people are now holding important positions in governments. This record has become so popular and fascinating that at times a person finds himself or herself singing or humming it spontaneously. Some governments have attempted in vain to suppress it by banning it from their state radios and television. One dictator President went to address the students at the university where he was also chancellor.

As he ascended the rostrum, ready to start with his speech, the students burst into the last part of this record. His own name was mentioned amongst the shouts of "No More" and "Shame on You." The chancellor started sweating all over, shivering and collapsing on the rostrum. The students continued to

sing louder and louder until he was carried away into the ambulance by his personal guards.

Doing things differently

It would take pages to describe the character of the president or to enumerate what he has done in the first four years of his leadership. He is one individual who always does things differently. He speaks of the genuine second liberation of Africa. His first appearance in Addis Ababa at the OAU summit left the world without words. His was the smallest, cheapest but most effective delegation, consisting of himself, the minister of foreign affairs and a representative of the media. They made use of economy class tickets. They booked into a guest house on the outskirts of Addis Ababa. They made use of a taxi to and from the meetings and they were always the first to arrive. Throughout the meetings he dresses casually while other leaders changed clothes even three times a day. One dictator military leader had his whole chest covered with medals and his shoulders decorated with several golden stars. However, the president was the one who really went with concrete ideas how to overcome current problems facing Africa and how the continent should move with dignity into the 21st century and beyond. The part of the President's OAU speech which was widely hailed and echoed was when he called on African leaders not to cling to power or tamper with their national constitutions unnecessarily. He urged them to follow recent examples set by respected statesmen like Julius Nyerere, Nelson Mandela and Ketumile Masire.

Prepares his own speeches

The interesting thing is that the staff in the President's office are not burdened with preparing speeches for him; they compile what the President has said and they enjoy it very much. When addressing people of whatever category, the president never reads out his speeches. He speaks from the heart, as he

always says. He never shouts slogans, threatens or insults people at public meetings. He speaks of empowering and giving vision to the people. Thousands and thousands would flock to public meetings when they knew that the president would speak. He refuses to refer to the people as the "masses," arguing that the term was coined by the advocates of totalitarianism. At the beginning the president had difficulty in convincing the people to cease servile behaviour like dancing in front of him, carrying his briefcase, opening doors for him, etcetera. He reminded them to treat him like anybody else. Though the president has been given so-called special advisors and consultants, local and expatriate, he has a special ear and heart for the views and feelings of the ordinary people. With his locally-assembled Toyota Cressida, he drives freely wherever he wants to go, day or night. He refuses to have a chauffeur and bodyguards. He goes to weddings, barbecues, soccer matches, or to church. He eats, drinks, dances, sings and mixes with people like anybody else. During festive seasons, the President would go to his home village as is the custom with many people.

Modest personality

It is a known fact that the President has great difficulty with a host of protocol procedures, dull formalities and bureaucratic constraints. He dislikes figurehead titles. He refuses his photos being hung everywhere. He argued against being the symbolic commander-in-chief of his country's defence force. He refused to be chancellor of any of the four universities in the country. He argued that he believes in and upholds the principle of T and T (Train and Trust). However, the President is an honorary member of many organisations, clubs and societies. It is at social occasions where the President would draw material for his speeches. Ex-combatants would thank him that they had not been forgotten and left jobless as had

been the case in some countries. Ex-refugees would urge him to encourage the nation to accord African hospitality to refugees, sojourners and visitors in their midst. Ex-criminals would tell him how they had been robbing, raping, house-breaking, smuggling, defrauding the previous governments, etcetera, and why they had decided to abandon criminality. Ex-prostitutes would urge him to deliver an inspirational speech against such a social vice. Even ex-beauty contestants would tell him of the dilemma of being paraded like animals at an auction.

The President would then address such issues so eloquently to empower and encourage the people to lead a simple and dignified life. He would even go to the extent of telling his audience that it is not a lot of money in the bank, a big and luxurious house or car, the latest fashion dress or a diamond wedding ring which would make life more meaningful or give a person real dignity in life. He would elaborate on the concept of "full pockets and empty hearts." He states that the secret to a happy and dignified life lies in self-denial and concern for other people's welfare and successes.

True service

It is worth mentioning how the President had appointed a team of able and dedicated men and women, black and white, young and old, non-partisan politicians and technocrats, a quarter of the size of the previous cabinet and much cheaper in many ways. Before appointing this cabinet, the president gave a three-hour address to the nation explaining, amongst others, what true service to the nation means. He bemoaned people who aspire to go to parliament with the sole intention of enriching themselves and to pave the way for their families and next of kin. He emphasised that today a leader who is a combination of being most simple and humble, most truthful, most ready to admit mistakes and most hardworking is the greatest of all. This was the

type of person he was looking for to work with in a team. He did not conceal the fact that the country has many such reliable people who just need be identified. He discussed the difference between good and bad leadership. He also explained, giving concrete examples in Africa and elsewhere, how corruption, nepotism, bribery, favouritism and squandering of tax-payers' money would lead to national disaster and bloodshed at one or other stage in the life of a nation. He warned the nation against bad leadership, using a famous African proverb which says: "When the fish gets rotten, it all starts from the head."

Dislike of grovelling

The President spoke of leaders who tax their people so heavily but use the money to pay themselves big salaries, build themselves expensive state and government houses, buy themselves most luxurious cars and airplanes. He spoke of leaders who are in the habit of hosting lavish parties and receptions with taxpayer's money. He elaborated on the debt yoke where leaders from poor countries borrow huge amounts of money which, in the end, their countries would not be able to pay back. He added that often this money does not reach the people in whose name it was borrowed. He also gave examples of leaders who stash vast amounts of money in foreign banks. In most cases this money has been stolen in one way or another. He categorised all such acts as institutionalised robbery and fraud. He went into some detail about the following as leading items of his government's five year priorities: education, water supplies to rural areas, primary health care, housing, local processing industries, etcetera. Addressing the future of democracy in Africa, the President identified ethnicity or tribalism and clanism as future threats with the potential to blow nations and communities apart if not handled with understanding and wisdom. He cautioned against monopolistic tendencies and encouraged civic societies, including

trade unions, student organisations, women's groups, etcetera, to welcome differences and appreciate unexpected challenges from new quarters. For example, two or three student organisations in the country would serve the student population better if they saw the wisdom in appreciating, supplementing and enriching each other rather than embarking on futile and obsolete exercises of discrediting and undermining each other. The president called upon the nation, particularly the church and the media, to assist his cabinet, not through grovelling, whitewashing, flattery and bootlicking but by plain and candid criticism. He surprised some of his listeners when he praised and thanked one local newspaper which has been very critical of his government and which had exposed traces of malpractice in high offices. He challenged this newspaper to pick up more courage and call a spade a spade. He challenged all members of parliament, whether of the ruling or opposition parties, not to defend their parties but to defend the truth and the best interests of the nation. He warned against the danger of "comrades" covering up for "comrades." This was the malady of the OAU during the last 30 years of its existence. This was also the main contributing factor to the collapse of the socialist system. Finally, the president was explicit in stating that the problems facing many countries, such as unemployment, increasing crime, lack of educational and medical facilities, shortage of housing and skyrocketing cost of living were not natural catastrophes; they were man-made and therefore surmountable. Referring to a discussion he had the previous evening with a delegation of troubleshooter students from the four universities, the president concluded by saying that even if he would drop dead the following day, he would depart in peace and very optimistic about the future of Africa, including that of his own country.

SAR

Democracy at Gunpoint? South Africa Intervenes



Adil Bradlow - PictureNET Africa

Looters in Maseru fleeing intervention force, 24 September 1998

BY ROGER SOUTHALL

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South Africa's recent armed incursion into Lesotho has provoked a massive controversy. Formally conducted on behalf of the South African Development Community (SADC) to pre-empt a military coup, it is widely blamed for precipitating an orgy of looting, arson and violence which left the main street of Maseru, the capital, a burnt

out shell. It has also raised questions concerning the necessity for intervention, the international legality of such actions, the credibility and consistency of South Africa's foreign policy, the effectiveness of South Africa's armed forces, and the appropriate role for SADC.

Election woes

It was far from evident when voters went to the polls that Lesotho's May 23, 1998 general election would trigger such turmoil. Its roots, nonetheless, lie in Lesotho's ongoing political crises.

Back in 1993, the Basotholand Congress Party (BCP) won an overwhelming victory in an election brought about by pressures upon the then military government to withdraw to the barracks. Under the first-past-the-post electoral system, the BCP won 75% of the popular vote and 65 seats, while the Basotho National Party (BNP), which had ruled the country from independence until its displacement by the military in 1986, made a showing of only 20% and won no seats. But internal divisions split the BCP in 1997 when the aged

and ailing Mokhehle, the founder and leader of the party, lost control as potential successors wrestled for power. In response, Mokhehle formed a new party – the Lesotho Congress of Democrats (LCD) – and took with him a majority of the country's elected Members of Parliament. The key question for the 1998 election, then revolved around whether or not Mokhehle would be able to carry the popular vote.

Some 150 international and 400 Basotho electoral monitors declared the subsequent elections more or less free and fair. This was striking because the LCD was reported to have won 60% of the popular vote and 78 out of the 79 single-member seats contested on election day. As in 1993, the mechanics of the electoral system had worked in Lesotho to deliver one party a virtually clean sweep.

Even if the electoral process had been fair, the result still left 40% of the voters who had voted for the opposition unrepresented in the Lower House of Parliament. The opposition cried foul, with the BNP and BCP, hitherto sworn enemies, forging an alliance of convenience in protest. The insignificant but vocally noisy Royalist Marematlou Freedom party joined in. Together, they proclaimed that the election had been rigged and that the government was therefore illegitimate. Supporters were mobilized to demonstrate in Maseru, and the opposition alliance openly called for King Letsie to exercise powers he does not legally possess to dismiss the government.

Mokhehle who had led the LCD party in the election was immediately succeeded as party leader and Premier by Paseka Mosisili, who proved woefully indecisive, failing dismally to make a vocal response to the opposition allegations. Underlying his uncertainty was his realization that his government, due to its history with the BCP, was wholly unable to rely upon the support of the security forces.

Indeed, during the years of its rule, the BNP had stuffed the military with its supporters. Thus, when the BCP assumed office in 1993, it faced a largely hostile army. This hostility was confirmed when the military backed a brief dismissal of the BCP government by King Letsie in August 1994. This episode had only ended when,

Acronyms

BCP – *Basotholand Congress Party*. Won an overwhelming majority in the 1993 elections, the party split in 1997, and some members formed the LCD.

BDF – *Botswana Defence Force*.

BNP – *Basotho National Party*. Ruled Lesotho from independence until the 1986 military coup.

IEC – *Independent Electoral Commission*. In charge of organizing and conducting elections in Lesotho.

LCD – *Lesotho Congress of Democrats*. Formed in 1997 after a split in the BCP, they won the 1998 elections.

RLDF – *Royal Lesotho Defence Force*.

SANDEF – *South Africa National Defence Force*.

acting on behalf of SADC, the newly elected, post-apartheid, ANC-led government in South Africa acted in concert with Botswana and Zimbabwe to insist that democracy be restored, resulting in the return of the BCP government to office in mid-September 1994.

This previous involvement by SADC now paved the way for further engagement. There was growing regional and South African concern at rising tensions in the kingdom. From August 11, hundreds of opposition supporters began to congregate at the gates of the King's palace in Maseru to protest against the alleged rigging of the election. Meanwhile tensions were increasing

within the military. These culminated in the arrest of army chief General Mosakheng and other senior officers by junior officers on September 11 – less because they were loyal to the government than because they were deemed too hesitant to ignore the opposition's urgings to overthrow the government.

Given the mounting crisis, the LCD government proved to be in no position to gainsay SADC's proposals, driven by South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, that the best way to resolve matters was via the appointment of a commission to examine the conduct of the election and to adjudicate upon the result. The resultant SADC Commission began work in the second week of August and was headed by Judge Pius Langa of South Africa.

The Commission appears to have conducted its work efficiently, yet the announcements of its findings were delayed by what was referred to as the need to report to SADC leaders. Its report, dated September 9, was not made public until September 17th. Such a delay allowed accusations to fly about its allegedly "explosive" findings being doctored in favour of the LCD. Consequently, while the final report did find clear evidence of administrative deficiencies, the committee's judgment that there was insufficient evidence to indicate that the election result was invalid was regarded as profoundly unsatisfactory by the opposition alliance. Demands for fresh elections and the formation of a government of national unity began to swell.

Meanwhile, the internal dynamics of the situation had been transformed by the army revolt. Rumours of a coup were rebutted by government assertions that it was still in office. Yet it was steadily losing any last remaining grip on power, as the BNP, BCP, the soldiery and the police were working together to paralyze the functioning of the government. Road blocks prevented civil servants go-

ing to work, soldiers provided small arms to undisciplined youths, and BNP supporters secured the closure of the University and other public structures.

SADC diplomatic efforts continued under the leadership of South African Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufumadi, but on September 20 the LCD refused to attend all-party talks called to resolve the crisis, citing a lack of security for its delegates. This forced the Minister to meet the LCD and opposition alliance separately. While the opposition alliance continued to call for a government of national unity to prepare for new elections, the LCD demanded that the opposition accept defeat. On September 21, Deputy Prime Minister Kelebone Maope issued a statement that the LCD was still in power, and that it had appealed to SADC for assistance. Whether this would extend to military action he could or would not say.

At around 4 am on Tuesday September 22nd, a voice on Radio Lesotho declared that the King must dissolve the government and proclaim a government of national unity. Basotho soldiers later captured by the SANDF are said to have subsequently confirmed that a coup was in the making, in spite of strong counter warnings issued by SADC. This precipitated the South Africa/SADC military intervention – an action purportedly taken to preserve democracy.

SADC's South African-led intervention

Not long after the announcement on Radio Lesotho, some 600 troops of the 43rd Mechanised Brigade of the SANDF crossed into Lesotho via the Maseru Bridge border post. The objectives were to create a safe environment to enable the Lesotho police to restore order by security Royal Lesotho Defence Force (RLDF) installations, Radio Lesotho, the Royal palace, the airport and other important infrastructure. Policing was to be reinforced

by a policing component of the interstate defence and security committee of SADC. They were to be followed by a further 200 troops from the Botswana Defence Force (BDF), which was going to be responsible for guarding Maseru. The apparent supposition was that the intervention force would meet limited resistance from opposition forces and the 2000-strong RLDF. Events proved this expectation dismally wrong.

When the troops arrived at the Royal Palace through the front gate, the armed opposition simply exited through the rear and proceeded to the town centre, targeting anything that was vaguely associated with South Africa. Within hours there was total mayhem. By the next morning, practically every commercial building along the capital's main street had gone up in smoke.

Reports indicate that the SANDF met heavy resistance at both Makoanyane and Rajamotse barracks. At the Makoanyane base, as at the palace, the majority of those opposing the SANDF escaped by the rear, so that only 149 prisoners had been taken. Those who escaped were armed. Colonel Robbie Hartsliel, officer commanding the SADC force, reported that the whereabouts of the vast majority of RLDF rebels was unknown. It was only after the second evening (the 23rd) after the intervention, as snipers continued to take pot-shots at the SADC troops, that the latter were ordered to adopt a more active stance towards the looters. A dusk-to-dawn curfew imposed upon the capital only took effect by the third night.

By the 23rd, Mangosutho Buthelezi (who was acting as South African President in the absence from the country of both President Mandela and Deputy President Thabo Mbeki), declared that the situation in Lesotho had been stabilized. But newspaper reports suggested that this had been at the cost of some 58 RLDF and 8 SANDF soldiers killed in this hostilities. By

the first weekend after the intervention, a further 1000 RLDF soldiers had surrendered to the SANDF. But BNP leader Sekhonyana raised the prospect that the rebels still at large might stage hit-and-run missions against LCD refugees who had streamed across the South African border. SADC subsequently sought to contain any such threats by deploying further troops, who presently number around 3500.

The political aftermath

The intervention drew vigorous criticism from many quarters in South Africa, and not only from the opposition parties. Various human rights NGOs, such as the Black Sash, and church organisations have argued that South Africa had failed to explore all avenues for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Press comment was overwhelmingly negative.

South Africa/SADC moved to deflect criticism by calling upon the main political actors in Lesotho to resume the process of political negotiations.

The first initiative was President Mandela's invitation to King Letsie to meet him in Cape Town. Apparently, he was warned to stay out of political involvement, and urged to play a reconciliatory role. Mandela also stated that South Africa and SADC would accept no responsibility for the damage to Lesotho's economy, although they would listen sympathetically to any formal requests to help rebuild. After all, he argued, it had been Basotho themselves who were responsible for the destruction of buildings and property.

The opposition reiterated its demand that the government resign, to be replaced by a government of national unity for a year or so until new elections could be held. The governing LCD was equally uncompromising. It would not consider holding new elections, nor resign in favour of a government of national unity – these were its preconditions to enter the talks.

lesotho

These stark attitudes found little favour with South Africa. The South African government also brushed off all suggestions that its controversial role had rendered it unsuitable to chair negotiations. Behind the scenes, both sides were pressured to meet together with the SADC mediating team (drawn from South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe) on October 2. Thabo Mbeki's scheduled public address on the Lesotho crisis the night of the meeting added further pressure.

Mbeki announced in his address that a solution to the crisis had been found. The main points were that the LCD would stay in power, but new elections – supervised by a reconstituted Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) – would be held within 15 to 18 months. A

“security presence” would remain in Lesotho until the country's own security forces “were able effectively to discharge their legal and constitutional roles.” Reports suggested that South Africa had pressured the LCD to concede early elections under a reformed electoral system that would allow increased representation for losing parties.

The opposition, however, declared that Mbeki had lied and that there had only been “tentative agreement” on some issues. Everything awaited agreement about the administrative machinery necessary to ensure that elections could take place.

At an October 6 meeting, the SADC team put forward a compromise that would provide for (i) the LCD to remain in government but

(ii) for a multi-party committee to oversee all activities relating to the election, including the appointment of a new IEC.

This eventually provided the basis for an agreement, reached over the course of the next ten days. But the subsequent arrest by the government of 30 soldiers alleged to have been involved in the arrest of Mosakheng is said (at the time of writing) to be putting the peace agreement in peril.

Was the election rigged?

The Langa Commission uncovered many administrative flaws and irregularities in the electoral process. It was unable to account for the unusual distribution of birthdates revealed by an independent audit of the voters' register, and reported



Philip Otto – PictureNET Africa

Opposition party supporters protest outside the palace of King Letsie III in Maseru

that its attempts to make judgment on the allegations had been rendered almost impossible because the electoral records supplied by the IEC were in a chaotic state.

Nonetheless, the Langa Commission countered many of the allegations made by the opposition. The IEC was the first ever appointed in Lesotho, and it had been given very short notice to prepare for the election, which involved drawing up a new registration list, delimiting new constituencies, and so on. Overall, therefore, it concluded that although it was unable to state that the invalidity of the elections has been conclusively established... [it could not] postulate that the result does not reflect the will of the Lesotho electorate.

This conclusion was unnecessarily limp, as I have argued elsewhere [*Mail & Guardian*, 2-9.10.98]. The election outcome was valid. It was almost certainly a fair reflection of the electorate's opinion on the day of the election.

The BNP has a history of refusing to accept election loss (1970 and 1993). The protests against the results of this election need to be seen in that light.

Even if the IEC was biased in favour of the LCD, and even if there were some efforts by persons unknown to massage the electoral register, the overall impact upon the outcome would be uncertain. There is no significant evidence of systematic voting by "ghost voters" in favour of the LCD. There is no evidence that the traditional methods used by ruling parties to rig first-past-the-post elections by delimiting constituency boundaries to the disadvantage of the opposition, excluding opposition supporters from the voters' register, refusing to register opposition candidates, fraudulent vote counting and ballot box stuffing, or statistically manipulating the results apply to Lesotho's 1998 election.

Given that the 1993 election demonstrated that the distribution

of party support broke down in favour of the BCP fairly evenly across the country, the result of the election - 79 seats for the LCD on the basis of a 60% popular majority - is entirely credible. But it is thoroughly unfair that the 40% of the population that voted for the opposition is almost wholly unrepresented in Parliament. As in 1993, what was wrong with the election was not the result, but the electoral system. What is badly needed, therefore, is a move towards proportional representation.

Did the intervention achieve its purpose?

The intervention was launched at the explicit request of a legitimate government to pre-empt a military coup designed to overthrow a democracy, SADC claims. Furthermore, the military operation was conducted in a humane manner with minimum loss of life.

The strength of SADC's position is that orderly government had broken down and a government which had recently won a sweeping victory at the polls was being challenged by an opposition alliance whose leading element, the BNP, had dubious democratic credentials. It would appear that while the opposition alliance was talking negotiations with the LCD via the SADC mediators, the BNP was also organizing a "virtual coup" by mobilizing its youth militia to paralyze the activities of government by intimidating opponents, recklessly urging the RLDF to intervene, backing the dismissal of senior officers of the army, and urging the King to take unconstitutional action. From this perspective the SADC intervention succeeded in preventing a coup against democracy, even if there are some legitimate questions about the electoral process itself. Post-hoc analysis suggests that given the urban environment, the number of opponents and the geographical spread of the objectives, the military force performed its limited task rather well.

History may judge that the SADC intervention marked a turning point in Lesotho's political history. If the outcome of the present imbroglio does take the army out of politics, and produce more representative political arrangements, then all may not have been in vain. Nonetheless, South Africa and SADC can scarcely escape blame for the ham-handed way in which they conducted the operation.

The burnt out shell of Maseru's main street says it all. It would have been one thing if the SADC force had neutralized the opposition and the army with sufficient troops and hardware. An efficient operation could have provided the framework for a long term solution to Lesotho's perpetual political crises. While there would have been numerous objections concerning the international legality of such an intervention, its evident military success would have muted criticism. Perhaps, SADC would have even earned plaudits for defending democracy.

Instead, South Africa/SADC is now having to count the cost of an operation gone badly awry. Critics have noted that a force of 600 SANDF troops was inadequate to confront the 2000-strong RLDF. The units were not the most suitable, simultaneous entry was not coordinated with the BDF (responsible for securing Maseru), and intelligence was poor. Those who approved the military logistics certainly provided their critics with enough ammunition to question their competence.

Apartheid South Africa precipitated the 1986 coup by imposing a virtual blockade. Democratic South Africa cajoled a reversal of the "King's coup" in 1994 with a mixture of arm-twisting and negotiation. Had all such avenues been adequately explored this time around? It will now remain a moot point. To be sure, the opposition in Lesotho may have been inflexible, deceitful, and thoroughly prepared

to act unconstitutionally. But even if the army had staged a coup, how long would such a government have lasted?

Was the intervention legal?

The intervention does not seem to have been founded on sound international legal ground. South Africa/SADC cannot be faulted for helping a legitimate government, recently elected, which requested assistance. This does not appear to have been sufficient grounds to validate a military intervention, however.

SADC's argument that the intervention was legitimate is based on (i) the South Africa-Botswana-Zimbabwe guarantee of Lesotho's stability forged in 1994; and (ii) SADC's own inter-state security arrangements, particularly Article 5 of the protocol on politics, defense and security. This protocol permits intervention where there is large

scale violence between sections of the population, or between armed or paramilitary forces and sections of the population; if there is a threat to the legitimate authority of the government; or if any crisis could threaten the peace and security of other member states. Neither of these instruments has yet been formally ratified, however.

A cleanly conducted, successful operation might have avoided objections on international legal grounds. But the operation was a mess, and now, governments in the region must deal with the consequences.

And South Africa's foreign policy?

The intervention was handled in a way that made post-apartheid South Africa appear little better than its apartheid predecessor. South Africa's perceived new economic hegemony has already incited a growing resentment throughout the

region. Now there is a danger that South Africa will be seen to be throwing its military weight around.

The intervention also shows an inconsistency in South Africa's post-apartheid Africa policy. It was promoted as a program based on principle rather than pragmatism, with human rights and peace-making at the front of its agenda. When Pretoria protested the extension of military support by other SADC countries to the dubiously-democratic regime of Kabila in the DR Congo, it earned praise on moral and logical grounds. In contrast, the armed intervention to impose a political solution in Lesotho has rightly aroused concern.

That the intervention was bungled has led to the question of who is actually in charge of South Africa's foreign policy. Numerous critics have pointed out that neither Mandela nor Mbeki were in the country at the time. The role, if any, played by the Department of Foreign Affairs remains unclear, beyond post-hoc justification by Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad.

Finally, much attention has been paid to stresses emerging within SADC. These are often attributed to growing rivalry between Zimbabwe and South Africa, and the organization's failure to develop adequate decision-making structures. Developing such structures will be difficult, but the crisis in Lesotho has pointed to the dangers of continuing an ad hoc approach.

Lesotho must now live with the consequences of the failure of its political institutions and of South Africa/SADC's bungled intervention. The best that can be hoped is that a negotiated solution will preclude the need for SADC's involvement in Lesotho's domestic affairs after what will be a bitterly contested election in eighteen months or so.

If that outcome is achieved, Maseru might not have been burnt down in vain.



King Letsie III at his coronation in October 1997

Adil Bradlow - PictureNET Africa

SAR

Current Moment in Maseru

BY TSEBO MATS'ASA

Tsebo Mats'asa is Lesotho correspondent for Africa Information Afrique

In the aftermath of the storming of Maseru in September by South African and Batswanan soldiers under the Southern African Development Community (SADC) banner, Lesotho ponders its options and assesses the damages.

Business has almost come to a standstill after angry civilians, in reaction to the military intervention – which they describe as an invasion – looted and burnt shops and offices.

South Africa has already made it clear that it will not be responsible for the damage in Maseru, which is estimated to be almost US\$1 million. South African Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi says the Basotho have to take responsibility for the burning of their capital.

More than 2,000 people have been rendered jobless. This, combined with the on-going massive retrenchment from the South African mining industry, and the estimated military cost of about US\$200,000 a day that Lesotho spent during the military intervention has intensified poverty.

Before the SADC 'intervention' 58 percent of the country's population was classified as living below the poverty datum line.

Lesotho is totally surrounded by South Africa and has traditionally provided cheap labour for the mines of Gauteng, where 50 percent of its male population works.

Another bone of contention is the continued presence of the SADC troops. General suspicion over the role of the troops could jeopardize the agreement between the three main opposition political parties and the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, LCD, that general

elections be held afresh within the next 15 to 18 months.

According to the government the main task of the troops is to oversee confiscation of property that was stolen from looted businesses and repossession of firearms in the hands of civilians.

"They should pack and go immediately. They are soldiers of occupation and aggression..." said Reverend J. Khutlang, a political scientist and lecturer at the National University of Lesotho.

Khutlang said the intervention was not necessary as the problems in the country were entirely a domestic matter which had nothing to do with any other country.

Unrest had been growing in Lesotho following accusations by opposition parties of poll rigging in the August elections, when the party of Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili

won 78 out of 80 seats. A commission of enquiry was appointed, headed by Justice Pius Langa of South Africa, but its findings have yet to be made known.

Khutlang said the intervention was neither peace keeping nor peace enforcing because SADC violated all international laws regarding peace keeping missions.

He said if the troops left the Basotho would work together in finding a lasting and peaceful solution to the problem.

The Justice and Peace Department of the Catholic Bishops' Conference said that inviting the troops in was just "a political trick to downplay the negotiations."

A group of women who call themselves Concerned Women of Lesotho, recently presented a petition to the South African High Commissioner to Lesotho, Japhet Ndlovu, calling for the removal of the troops.

They said it was astonishing that the ANC would invade Lesotho after being supported and given refuge by the people of Lesotho during the anti-apartheid fight. "Is this how you thank us? Graves of you ANC people who, together with some Basotho, were killed by former apartheid soldiers are here in Maseru," said Malefa Maphelaba, spokesperson for the group.

The SADC soldiers, who are widely referred to as "Satan's Troops" have been slammed for alleged rape and hooliganism. About 15 soldiers appeared before the military court in Lesotho recently charged with rape, being absent without leave, drinking and taking drugs while on duty. They were given prison sentences ranging from two to five years.

Maseru, 9 November, 1998
(AIA/Tsebo Mats'asa)





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The War Machines



João Silva - PictureNET Africa

. . . Again

BY PIERRE BEAUDET

Pierre Beaudet is the Executive Director of Alternatives in Montreal.

Angola appears to be heading for a new war. Since August, both the Angolan government and UNITA have been preparing for what could be another bloody confrontation in a country which has suffered heavily over the last 25 years. Both internal and external (particularly regional) factors need to be analyzed in order to understand these current trends in the country.

The big regional shake-up

Take the regional picture first. A major earthquake rocked central Africa last year with the overthrow of the Mobutu dictatorship in Zaire. An extraordinary African coalition was built up around Angola in the west and Uganda and Rwanda in the east who, with the support of South Africa and several other central and southern African countries and with help provided by the United States, succeeded in pushing into power a new Zairian alliance, the Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la

libération du Congo (AFDL). The Angolan army itself, as well as the famous Zairian "Katangueses" who had been located in Angola since the late 1970s, played a major role in the west and the south of Zaire while AFDL forces led by Ugandan and Rwandan elite troops pushed forward from the east until they took Kinshasa after a three month war. This temporary complementarity of activity expressed the need of both Angola and Uganda to secure their borders while eliminating Mobutu who had been a con-

stant source of destabilization in the region. Later, in August 1997, Angolan forces pushed their offensive forward and succeeded again in terminating an unfriendly regime in Congo-Brazzaville, which had been supporting UNITA and dissident forces in the Cabinda enclave. By the end of 1997, the new regional dispensation appeared extremely positive for those who had initiated the big shake-up.

Internally in Zaire, however, the AFDL rapidly revealed itself as being what it had really been all along, a patch-up job bringing together a wide but totally incoherent spectrum of political interests. The new president, Laurent Désiré Kabila soon proved unable to hold things together and new tensions developed. Thus, by the spring of 1998, Kabila wanted his eastern allies (Uganda and Rwanda, as well as the large numbers of Congolese Tutsi who had been important to his success) out of the picture. Soon discreet talks were being held between Uganda's Museveni and Angola's Dos Santos about getting rid of Kabila and imposing new faces in Kinshasa. Kabila himself moved rapidly, however, eliminating Rwandan officers from the army (including his own army commander and mastermind behind the overthrow of Mobutu, James Kabahre) even as anti-Uganda and anti-Rwanda opposition forces, with the tacit compliance of Kabila, intensified their actions using Congo as a rear base.

In July of this year, various political and military forces, with the tacit support of Uganda and Rwanda, again rebelled in the east and appeared ready to move towards the west much as the AFDL alliance had done a year before. But then an extraordinary new shift occurred. Kabila succeeded in bringing onto his side Angola (with the support of Zimbabwe and Namibia). Angolan forces moved swiftly to block the eastern offensive and save Kinshasa from a new take-over. Very angry words were exchanged with Uganda and Rwanda, and a major split

appeared within SADC, with South Africa still siding with Uganda while also trying to play the role of broker of peace.

What motivated Luanda in this turnaround is still a matter of speculation. At first glance, domestic reasons seem most important in the sense that Luanda wanted to take advantage of Congolese tensions in order to move against UNITA's Congolese sanctuaries. Indeed, despite promises made when Mobutu was overthrown, UNITA had continued to maintain its bases and, moreover, its access to and from the Congo to transport goods into Angola and to export diamonds. Perhaps the entrance of Angolan troops on the side of Kabila can be seen, at least in part, as a pretext to move against UNITA directly.

And yet, why would Angola move with Kabila against Uganda, a country which has no special interest in supporting, directly or indirectly, UNITA? After all, an anti-Kabila rebellion supported by Uganda and Rwanda could have had the same effect, i.e., cleaning UNITA out of the western Congo. One rationale here could be Angola's own ambitions at the regional level. In many ways, the imposition of a regional deal under Museveni's guidance is feared in Luanda as possibly shifting the political centre of gravity in central and eastern Africa.

In any case, the Congo situation remains very volatile. The country is effectively split in two parts. The eastern rebels operating under the *Rassemblement pour la démocratie au Congo (RDC)* and with effective Ugandan and Rwandan military control are well entrenched and even able to exert a great deal of pressure. Their taking of the eastern city of Kindu early in October is indicative of that. On the other hand, Kabila's forces are secure in the west, at least for the moment, because of Angolan-Zimbabwean protection (with the rest of Francophone Africa supportive but not really effective).

Secret talks are under way between Uganda and Angola to resolve this "technical problem." It appears that Museveni would be willing to give new guarantees to effectively dispose of UNITA once his allies are in power. If Angola buys that, the rebels will access Kinshasa relatively quickly (although this may also depend on the role Mugabe - whose own Zimbabwean troops have also come to Kabila's defense - chooses to play in the longer run). The calculation in Luanda is therefore that of balancing of short term military gains (against UNITA) versus long term political threats resulting from a new deal in Kinshasa where Museveni would certainly be the obvious king-maker and controller.

Of course, the important limitation in these calculations is that the Angolan government is thinking once again in purely military terms. The elimination of UNITA is seen in Luanda as strictly a military process and not as a political one (whatever its obvious military aspects) which has, ultimately, to be won politically or not at all. For whatever "deals" are made in the short term to isolate UNITA and cut off its access routes, will not be a substitute for the political engagement that the government will need to make with that movement as well as with other political and social forces inside the country in order to bring stability to Angola.

The war machines

Even if the Congolese business is far from over, the most recent developments have helped the Angolan government at least for the moment to put more pressure on UNITA. Over the last two years Luanda has been in a state of military preparedness, a move at least partially understandable when it became clear after November 1994 (when the peace process was put on the agenda again) that UNITA would not meet its obligations in the setting up of a government of national unity, or in demilitarization and the full integration of its forces

angola

into the national army (the FAA). All along, Jonas Savimbi made it clear that he was refusing the substance of peace by keeping away from Luanda. And, in the meantime, UNITA was consolidating its grip over the diamond-rich eastern and northern regions along the border with Congo. It was reported that diamond smuggling was generating over \$600 million for UNITA, which helps explain its ability to maintain significant military forces. Later in 1997, UNITA forces moved on government-controlled zones.

portant set back when most of its senior political officers based in Luanda, including top UNITA negotiator Jorge Valentim, defected and came out in support of the government. And in the latest SADC Summit in Mauritius, President Dos Santos called Savimbi a "criminal" and asked, with some positive response, southern Africa to support the government's efforts to end the military stalemate. And yet, despite these reverses, Savimbi is far from finished. He commands the bulk of UNITA's armed forces includ-

ical base of the MPLA government remains extremely fragile.

Such a situation seems to lead to a kind of "lose-lose" scenario, with no side able to "resolve" the crisis one way or the other and with the people, in the end, as the biggest losers. But this merely prolongs a situation that has defined a suffering Angola for the past 25 years. How to explain the unending agony? Perhaps the chief cause, according to Angolan expert David Sogge, is the fact that the economic base on which both the government



Paul Velasco - PictureNET Africa

In Luanda, such moves have strengthened the position of hardliners like FAA commander João Matos who has always advocated the launching of a "war to the finish" against UNITA. Large-scale military purchases have been made by the government and paid for by loans based on future oil exports. In a context of renewed escalation several important clashes occurred, particularly in Kwanza Norte. In August, UNITA attacked UN food convoys. In late September, UNITA forces were closing in on Uíge, the biggest city of the north. Moreover, faced with all this, the UN peacekeeping operation is a shambles, with its effective presence also negatively affected by the unexpected death of the UN special representative in Angola and by declining commitments from the international community to maintain UNAVEM and prevent the military build-up.

True, UNITA did suffer an im-

ing battle-hardened troops that were never demobilized despite the 1994 peace accords. In the past, Savimbi has always been able to extract himself from apparently inevitable defeats, so it remains unclear just what outcome might emerge from the current confrontation.

Moreover, the Angolan government is also unsure of its capacity to "go all the way" as General Matos would wish it to do. Many senior officers have expressed reservations about the prospect of a new and prolonged war in the inhospitable northern and eastern zones, and also about being bogged down in a prolonged stalemate in the Congo. An additional factor is the continuous social and economic crisis, particularly in large cities like Luanda and Huambo. Exhausted by years of neglect, the civilian population is clearly in a very dissenting mood, even if unable to express this through mass movements and mass actions. At best, in fact, the polit-

and UNITA are built has very little to do with the Angolan people. The off-shore oil with its yield of over \$3 billion per year is appropriated by the government and feeds the FAA. On the other hand, UNITA lives off diamond smuggling. The immense profits are used by both sides to buy arms and hire mercenaries, with the Angolan people themselves rendered more or less dispensable.

In consequence, the lack of reciprocity between those who staff the two war machines and ordinary Angolans has created a situation where the basic needs of the population in terms of food security, health and education remain unmet. At the present moment, according to the UNDP, Angola is the second worst-off country in the world in terms of living conditions. In the meantime, the war economy remains profitable for a handful of military rulers on both sides, with no end in sight.

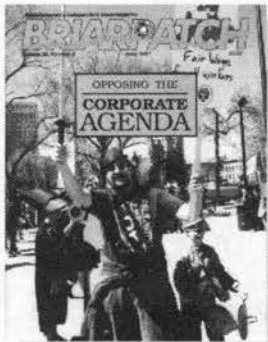
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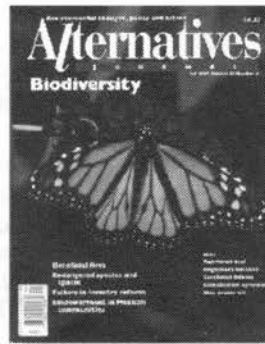
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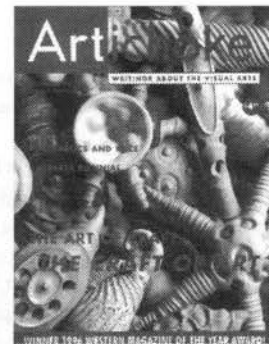
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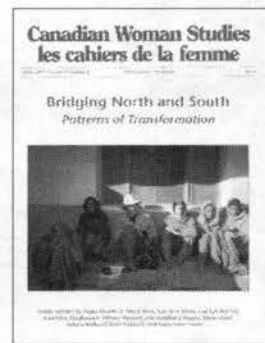
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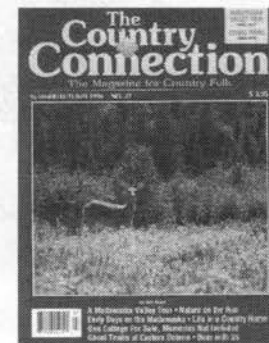
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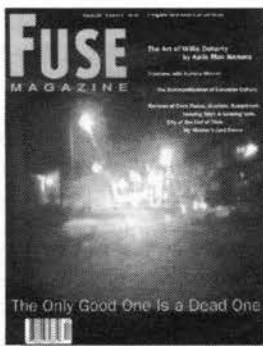
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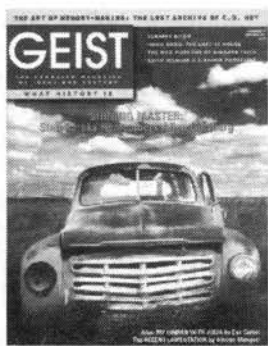
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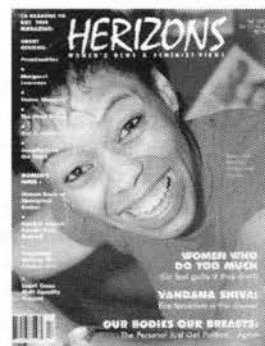
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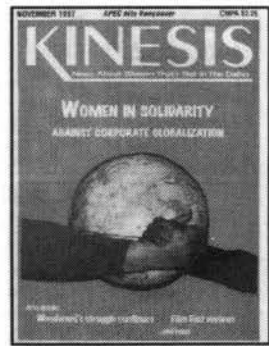
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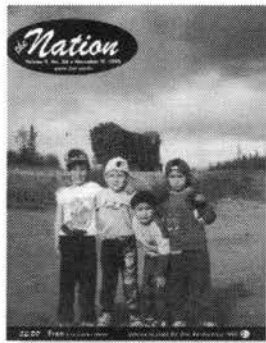
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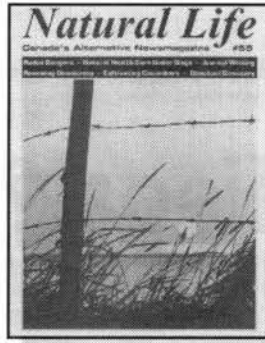
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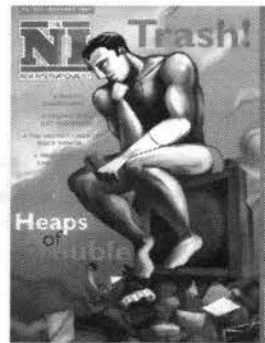
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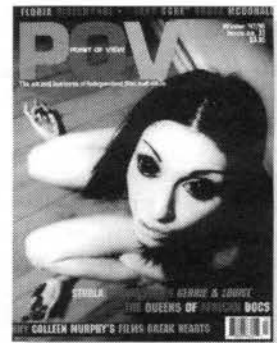
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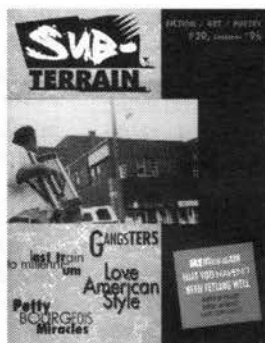
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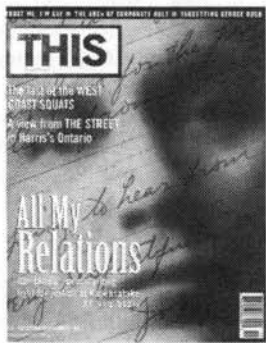
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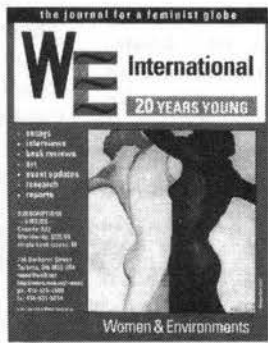
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Is GEAR Illegal?

BY CAROLYN BASSETT

Carolyn Bassett is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Political Science at Toronto's York University. This article is based in part upon a taped transcript of the address given by South African Justice Minister Abdullah Omar and Human Rights Commission Chairperson Barney Pityana at Osgoode Hall Law School, Toronto, July 8 1998. Thanks to Ken Turiff, York University's media relations officer, for providing us with the tape.

Is GEAR illegal? This provocative question has seldom, if ever, been asked of the new South African government. Nonetheless, the bill of rights in the new South African constitution specifically enumerates social and economic rights. Many critics of the government's *Growth, Employment and Redistribution* economic restructuring strategy, GEAR, argue that it threatens the social and economic well-being of the poor majority.

GEAR's failure to improve basic human needs is unlikely to lead to a successful legal challenge. But the disjuncture between the aspirations of the constitution's bill of rights and the emerging socio-economic reality of post-apartheid South Africa raises some uncomfortable questions for the ANC-led government. These questions loom even as the ANC prepares for an almost-certain victory at the polls in a few months.

Constitutional issues

Interestingly, such issues were among those that were raised when South African Justice Minister Abdullah Omar and Human Rights Commission Chairperson Barney Pityana were guests of Toronto's Osgoode Hall Law School on July 8, 1998. There, they spoke about the new government's constitutional achievements and real world challenges to achieving the basic human

rights that are necessary for an inclusive democracy.

"The struggle for a just order in South Africa has not yet ended," Omar remarked. "We achieved a historic success in 1994, removing the white minority regime from power through democratic elections. But that did not bring about any other change. It brought about no change in the police, in the army, in the civil service, in our courts, in the economy, in the structural imbalances in our society. And so 1994, historic though it was, has been for us only the starting point of a very difficult process of transformation."

Since the elections, the new government has begun to make some of these changes. It finalized a new constitution, and began to overhaul the justice system.

"We took over a South African state which was fragmented, legally and structurally, on racial and ethnic lines," Omar observed. "Our people did not enjoy equal citizenship. Under the dispensation where there were ten homelands, and one so-called Republic of South Africa, blacks were deprived of their South African citizenship, as you know, and declared to be citizens of one or another homeland. And so the establishment of one single equal citizenship is a big achievement of South Africa. Our constitutional slogan 'One Law for One Nation' represents the importance which we accord to nation-building in our country."

The Department of Justice has now integrated the judicial system. The eleven ethnically and racially based departments of justice, each with different laws, personnel rules, financial management structures and practices were dismantled. A single department and

unified structure has been created instead.

In addition to changing the institutions, the Department of Justice has attempted to transform the legal culture, to remove the racist biases of the apartheid era. *"Building an independent judiciary, and establishing the rule of law are two very important components in the creation of a constitutional state," Omar commented. "A lawyer who had practiced under the old regime, Omar noted that the judiciary was never independent, despite the independence and integrity of some individual officers. "The ethos of apartheid society, a society based on repression, seeped through the thinking of all South Africans. Whites believed that the legal system served the people, blacks believed that the legal system maintained the system of oppression. ... At the level of magistrate's courts [the lower level courts in South Africa], the lack of independence was most evident and racism was rampant."*

Human rights culture

Building a human rights culture, Omar argued, is absolutely central to creating a new South Africa. Therefore, a bill of rights that incorporates civil and political rights, social and economic rights, environmental rights, cultural rights, women's rights and children's rights is prominent in the new constitution. Indeed, the values at the core of the entire constitution, Barney Pityana noted, *"are the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality, and the advancement of human rights and freedoms."*

But it is on this point that some uncomfortable questions emerge, some of them from Pityana and the Human Rights Commission itself.

Pityana noted that the bill of rights lists the rights to be achieved

non-hierarchically. This implies that economic rights are as important as political and civil rights. Enumerating such rights also imposes duties upon government. *"If we are to carry out our mandate with regard to social and economic rights, environmental rights, protecting women and children, and creating equality for the first time in our land, this will require a developmental state, a state that needs to be interventionist to the extent necessary to implement the values of the constitution,"* argued Omar.

Therein, precisely, lies the contradiction. If these rights are to mean anything, government policy must conform to them. But would GEAR pass the test?

Here, a difficulty for GEAR's critics, is that socio-economic and cultural rights do not appear to be legally enforceable in the same way that civil and political rights are. In line with the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, on key socio-economic rights, the government is obliged merely *"take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of each of these rights."*

When the constitution was drawn up, some legal experts argued that social, economic, cultural and environmental rights should be left off the list entirely, precisely because they cannot be legally enforced. But the constitutional negotiators rejected the suggestion. *"We argued that the issue of rights is for people,"* said Omar, *"and should include those matters which represent the aspirations of the poorest of the people of our country, those who have brought democracy to our land."*

The Human Rights Commission

To attempt to give some meaning to the socio-economic and cultural rights enshrined in the constitution, provision was made for a series of

statutory, independent institutions that would support constitutional democracy. The Human Rights Commission (HRC) is one of those institutions. Its role is to encourage the government to work to achieve the citizen rights outlined in the constitution.

Under the constitutional provisions, the HRC is empowered to request reports from government departments as to what measures were taken to realize rights to food, water, health care, housing, social security, education, and the environment. It also has the power to take steps to secure appropriate redress where human rights, including economic rights, have been violated. Pityana argued that *"until the state of poverty of a large number of people in the country is addressed, for many, the rights in the bill of rights are going to be meaningless."*

Could this extend to macro-economic policy itself? Or at most, could one merely hope to call the various service-providing government departments to task if they fail to develop effective programs to ameliorate the impact of neo-liberal restructuring, and instead perpetuate, perhaps even increase, the impoverishment created by colonialism and apartheid?

A controversial report, *SPEAK out Against Poverty*, was recently released by the HRC, the Gender Equity Commission and the South African NGO Coalition (SANGOCO). One of the report's central recommendations was to reverse the GEAR economic program, arguing that GEAR clearly had failed to create jobs. The report was based on the input of 10,000 people, with three months of hearings held throughout the country.

This conclusion raises two questions: whether GEAR can be challenged on the basis of its failure to deliver to the majority, and whether constitutional bodies like the Human Rights Commission and the Gender Equity Commission will con-

tinue to have the freedom to produce such reports. Despite the independence guaranteed to these bodies in the constitution, such concerns may not be too far fetched. The HRC is presently financed by the government through the budget of the Minister of Justice. This led Pityana to suggest that the government could restrict the scope or autonomy of the body through budgetary allocations. Some day, this could compromise the HRC's independence.

Economic rights

But it is the first question that is really tricky. *"Surely the economic restructuring program appears destined to jeopardize the social and economic rights of poor South Africans, as has been the case in so many places where neo-liberal programs have spelled disaster for the poor,"* York University Professor John Saul asked the speakers.

Pityana noted that there is a lively debate in South Africa on the GEAR. He also suggested that the government accepts that poverty and human rights issues are as real as the pressures from the global economy. *"Even though there is GEAR, from where I sit, I also see a real sensitivity to the needs of the people and to improve the basic standards of living. I am suggesting that there is an awareness, and a commitment to try to address the implications of poverty."*

In fact, Mbeki's office and the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Poverty and Inequality recently produced the report *Poverty and Inequality in South Africa*. It argues that GEAR is a tool to address poverty and therefore economic rights, rather than a threat to them. Nonetheless, even this report recommended *"that government reassess the use of monetary policy to contain consumption and inflation due to the negative impact that this appears to have had on growth, employment creation and access to home ownership."* Short-term redistributive policies and asset transfers,

the report argued, should occur before the medium-term growth strategies.

Justice Minister Omar restricted his comments on the GEAR to its budgetary dimensions, concluding that the economic strategy was a justifiable short-term measure. "We ... must curb borrowing and reduce the deficit for two reasons. ... [I]f we are able to continue reducing that deficit, then in the years to come, there will be more money available for social delivery, because we will be spending less money on servicing the debt. ... The second reason is that one of the major problems over the past four years has been the poor handling of finances."

Most departments have been unable to disburse all of their budgets, due to the incapacity and incompetence of government engendered during the apartheid era. Corruption, also an apartheid era vice, further hindered service delivery. These problems were particularly acute, Omar suggested, at the local level. Indeed, the *SPEAK* report and report produced by the Deputy Prime Minister's office echoed Omar's concerns about the capacity of local service delivery mechanisms and the legacy of the apartheid and homeland governments.

Limiting global context

The extent to which global economic norms and institutions would limit the "historically possible" of the South African transition has preoccupied the liberation and democratic movement since before the release of Nelson Mandela. "We are living and operating within an international environment which is not necessarily favourable towards the objective which we want to achieve," Omar commented. "Globalization is a fact, it's a reality. I am not making a virtue out of it. We have to work within the constraints of globalization."

"At times," remarked Pityana, "I wonder if there is enough of

a critical understanding of the problems of globalization by the government."

Mbeki recently reflected upon some of these problems. "One of the results of the current international financial crisis has been that it has made it necessary and possible for most thinking people to question the prescriptions which have been proclaimed during the recent past as the cure for all economic ills, including those which affect our Continent [Africa]," he commented at a conference on the African Renaissance.

"We must therefore insert ourselves into the international debate about the issues of globalization and its impact on the lives of the people and make our voice heard about what we and the rest of the world should do actually to achieve the development which is a fundamental right of the masses of our people.

"Surely, there must be a way whereby the surpluses accumulated within the world economy become available also to the developing countries, including and especially the countries of Africa, as long-term capital helping us to address the socio-economic development objectives. ... Accordingly, we must be in the forefront in challenging the notion of 'the market' as the modern God, a supernatural phenomenon to whose dictates everything human must bow in a spirit of powerlessness."

Does this signal a change of heart on the part of Mbeki and the next ANC-led government? It appears unlikely that the neo-liberal inspired economic strategy will be abandoned in substance, although politicians may be reluctant to defend it as rigorously now that the ANC is gearing up for an election. Sentiments like Mbeki's comment that "Interventions have to be made into this market by other human beings in pursuit of the measurable objectives of ending poverty and underdevelopment" may go a long way to smoothing relations with former allies over the next six months.

The tensions highlighted by Saul, Pityana, and the *SPEAK* report will remain, however, so long as attracting foreign investment remains the main policy priority. And a careful reading of Mbeki's speech makes it clear that this is the over-riding priority: "we have to attract into the African economy the significant volumes of capital without which the development we speak of will not happen."

What a terrible paradox it would be if in this neo-liberal era, the attempt to attract the foreign investment believed to be necessary to address the legacy of apartheid required perpetuating, and perhaps even intensifying, the substantive inequality of South Africans.

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Education on Trial

The Poor Speak Out

BY SALIM VALLY

Salim Vally is a policy analyst based in the Education Policy Unit at the University of the Witwatersrand and is convenor of the Poverty and Inequality Hearing on Education.

Over the past few weeks the media in South Africa have had a field day engaging in what can only be described as teacher-union bashing. Taking their cue from Deputy President Thabo Mbeki's address to the SADTU (South African Democratic Teachers' Union) congress on September 8 newspaper headlines screamed "Drunken Teachers Lashed" and "Lazy Teachers Warned." Mbeki, who as one unionist explained "has made it his business to bring unions into line [with the government's GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistributive Strategy) policy]" scathingly admonished teachers said to be derelict in pursuit of their professional duties. Moreover, his attacks were not only aimed at "drunken" and "lazy" teachers, but also at teacher militants. The following extract from his belligerently sarcastic speech conveys the essence of his tone (note too the disarming use of the associative "we," Mbeki apparently seeking in this way to signal his affinity with the teachers even while mercilessly castigating them!): "... the members of SADTU, stand out as competent, practitioners of the toyi-toyi. We come across as militant fighters for a better pay cheque at the end of the month. We are seen as excellent tacticians as to when to disrupt the school programme so that we can extort from the Government the greatest material benefit for ourselves and create space for ourselves to improve our own qualifications. We behave

in a manner which seems to suggest we are alienated from the revolutionary challenge of the education of our youth and masses and greatly inspired by the value system which motivates the traitor and the criminal."

At the same SADTU congress, the newly elected secretary-general of the SACP, Blade Nzimande, echoed Thabo Mbeki's sentiments when he warned SADTU to avoid "the ultra-leftist recklessness" which sought to "break" the tripartite alliance of the ANC, Cosatu and the SACP. This charge of "ultra-leftism" is regularly used by cabinet ministers against workers and other members of grassroots organizations who express their increasing frustration with the policies of the government. For instance, Derek Hanekom, the land affairs minister, recently launched a stinging attack on the National Land Committee (NLC) after the organization called for the scrapping of the property rights clause in the constitution. The NLC an umbrella organization which champions farm workers' and dispossessed communities rights to the land was dismissed by Hanekom as "stubbornly frivolous" and "ultra-left." Its crime? The NLC in their presentation to the parliamentary land committee had insisted that the property clause was an impediment to the process of land restitution. (Since 1994 less than 1% of South Africa's total farmland area has been redistributed to the land reform's target group, poor, black, rural households: this contrasts starkly with the RDP promise to redistribute 30% of the country's land to black hands in its first five-year term!) Similarly, the constitutional affairs minister Valli Moosa has also labelled the South

African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) as "ultra-left" because of their campaign against the privatization of water and municipal services.

Changing discourses

Why this kind of attack in the education sphere? Education policy, like policies in other sectors, has shifted from the discourse favouring equity, redress and access to one which stresses budgetary constraints, corporate managerialism and fiscal austerity. Despite the development of numerous policy documents intended to provide a scaffolding for schools, districts and provinces to begin to address immediate problems and the demands for social justice, the language in which policies are discussed has changed. In response teacher unions such as SADTU have denounced the national and provincial departments for "not promoting the interests of working class communities by addressing inequalities in the education system." Besides resisting the retrenchment of teachers (which the unions have temporarily stalled by a near strike in mid-June) such unions have criticized the government for failing to prevent overcrowding in schools; failing to prevent additional costs of financing education being passed on to schools and consequently parents; failing to create a funding mechanism to address the disparities between the previously advantaged and disadvantaged; and failing to provide textbooks and other educational resources.

Most analysts of the schooling system in South Africa agree with SADTU that manifest and massive inequalities remain despite marginal improvements to facilities, and attempts to instill a democratic ethos

and to increase access. Differentiation in schooling increasingly occurs along class rather than racial lines. There seems to be an expansion instead of a diminution of the resource gap and education quality indicators between richer and poorer schools.

Many have also expressed concern that the rapid growth of private schools, colleges and companies providing private education poses a growing challenge to public education. The extent to which education has become a commodity to be paid for by those who want and can afford it, and from which companies can profit, is seen by the phenomenal growth of corporatized education and training concerns listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. For instance, in this quarter the South African owned Education Investment Corporation (Educor) acquired four colleges in Canada for the sum of about \$1.4 million. In South Africa, Educor provides services to 300,000 students through schools and colleges like Damelin, Allenby, Midrand Campus, Academy of Learning and others. By March of this year, the market capitalization of Educor exceeded R2.5 billion (not considering the Canadian acquisition). Educor's education arm has 160 branches and franchises, employing 4,000 academics, lecturers and trainers.

Rich over poor

Small wonder critics contend that the government's macro-economic policies, specifically GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistributive Strategy), strengthens market forces and therefore richer constituencies over poorer communities. And yet the latter communities, as many analysts have pointed out, require resolute state involvement in social sectors in order to rectify historically accumulated inequalities.

Thus, in schools, the impact of fiscal austerity measures has resulted in cuts in textbook supply, the removal of transport subsidies and cleaning services. It has also

aggravated the apartheid legacy of a shortfall of classrooms, an absence of basic utilities and infrastructure such as electricity, water, toilets, furniture and libraries, and continues the paucity of training for educators, managers, governing body members and district officials. Moreover, such apartheid inherited inequalities have been further exacerbated not only by underfunding but also by mismanagement, improbity, new forms of wastage, lax administrative and financial mechanisms and the unavailability of reliable data.

Such school funding policies are seen to contradict previous commitments to free pre-primary, primary and secondary education. While decentralization allows local communities a greater role in schooling, it paradoxically also forces them to carry the financial burden of education costs. Although the argument is made that the payment of school fees by some communities will free up resources for poor schools, many observers feel that, in conditions of already existing disparities, this will tend to perpetuate inequality in education, with poorer communities who desperately require quality education only able to afford rudimentary provision.

Recently, the Poverty and Inequality Hearings have shown that members of many impoverished communities cannot even afford fees of less than R100 per year, and this does not include out-of-pocket expenses such as uniforms, transport, food and school initiated sporting and educational excursions. Although it is true that legislation prohibits schools from denying admission to pupils whose parents cannot pay, and allows for the partial or total exemption of parents who earn below a certain income threshold (parents who are not exempted from paying fees can be sued by governing bodies), various strategies can be employed to prevent admission to pupils from poorer families, not least because a preponderance of non-fee paying parents will affect the revenue-raising abil-

ity of schools. Note in this regard that the Education Laws Amendment Act allows governing bodies to employ additional teachers from their own funds: in an apparent context of market competition among schools this can only further the differentiation between schools.

Poverty and inequality

As one of several related initiatives (including the Poverty and Inequality Report - PIR - prepared for the office of the deputy-president and the inter-ministerial committee on poverty and inequality and the Poverty Summit convened by Archbishop Ndungane), the above-mentioned Poverty and Inequality Hearings have highlighted, in recent months, the extent of poverty and inequality in South Africa and provided some clearer sense of the context within which education issues should be viewed.

Convened jointly by the South African NGO Coalition [SANGOCO], the South African Human Rights Commission [SAHRC] and the Commission for Gender Equality [CGE], the Hearings drew evidence primarily from people's lived experience of poverty. Between 31 March and 19 June over 10,000 people participated in the campaign by either attending the hearings, mobilizing communities or making submissions. Not since the Workers' Charter Campaign between 1989 and 1991 have so many people expressed their views in such compelling ways. While thousands of people related stories of impoverishment, dismal drudgery, dashed expectations and an uncaring, aloof and often callous bureaucracy, there was little evidence of sullen apathy or hopeless resignation. Naturally, the lethal mix of brutalizing conditions people find themselves in provides the ideal ingredients for anti-social behaviour such as rape, child abuse, gangsterism and general crime.

And yet, while such morbid symptoms were evident, so too were

numerous examples of initiative, creativity and courageous attempts at mere survival against the severe lack of resources and other odds stacked against people. It became clear that, instead of being defensive, government officials need to heed the sentiments of ordinary people who spoke with passion, often using the eloquence of local idiom born of lived experience and struggle. The evidence gathered from the dusty townships, sprawling informal settlements and neglected backwaters has more authority than the glossy,

tributes to improved conditions or aggravates poverty and inequality, and recommendations on the measures required to assist groups to access their socio-economic rights. Not surprisingly, the education sector was amongst those focussed upon for a special sub-set of hearings

The Education Hearings

The Education Hearings, as one part of the overall hearings process, were held from the 10th to the 12th June in Thabong, Manguang and

Sekhuthé testified that, after losing her job as a domestic worker, she is no longer able to afford the bus fares for transporting her children to school. And Noel Kok of Prieska, described how he and his wife sold their cupboard in order to pay their daughter's examination fees.

A number of people highlighted the shortage of schools within a reasonable distance, as well as the lack of transport, while others spoke of school fees that were unaffordable. While many school governing bodies are sympathetic to these parents, others are not, and have illegally excluded pupils or withheld exam results if pupils did not pay fees. As Violet Nevari observed: "Our new government promised us free education but to our surprise, when we go to school, the kids don't have books or the whole package. The kids are outside the classroom and are being chased home to get money for books."

The lack of electricity, desks, adequate water and toilet facilities in schools were also referred to in a number of submissions. Overcrowded classrooms continue to be a standard feature in poor communities. Frustrated by unfulfilled promises, many poor communities, particularly women in these communities, scraped together their meagre resources in order to provide rudimentary education facilities. Annah Mokgabane said that the pre-school in Bofula "is a little shack built by the community. There is nothing that the children can entertain themselves with within the pre-school." Adam Dichaba explained how parents were bearing the costs of running pre-schools: "We are paying for those teachers because we know the need. The government promised us that it will help us sometime, but it has done nothing so far."

There was also the question of the link between education and employment. Although many hoped that education would provide the key to the door out of poverty,



Henner Frankenfeld - PictureNET Africa

uncritical, state of the art computer software-produced reports of consultants and "experts" which state functionaries increasingly seem to rely on.

The hearings, organized thematically and held in all nine provinces, dealt with employment, education, housing, health, the environment, social security and rural urban development. They were supplemented by background papers compiled by NGOs and research organizations involved in the different fields. The research focussed on the legacy of poverty and inequality in each sector and its impact on people's lives, the extent to which current practices and policies con-

tributed to improved conditions or aggravates poverty and inequality, and recommendations on the measures required to assist groups to access their socio-economic rights. Not surprisingly, the education sector was amongst those focussed upon for a special sub-set of hearings

Phuthaditjaba in the Free State. The Hearings provided concrete evidence that the inability to afford school fees and other costs such as uniforms, shoes, books, stationery and transport are some of the major obstacles blocking access to education. Amongst the voices heard was that of Ellen Motlakhana who testified that her son in grade seven decided to stay at home "after realizing that I didn't have money to buy books." Similarly, Lemile Thabitah Lebone explained that "Because it is Winter he is unable to go to school, he doesn't even have a pair of shoes ... he could not just go to school barefoot, because it is very far." Paulinah



Ken Oosterbrook - PictureNET Africa

Konela Lekhafola, speaking for the Free State Unemployed Graduate Initiative (FSUGI), soberly reminded those assembled at the Hearings that thousands of graduates are unemployed and have no employment opportunities. Many people like Johanna Sebetlela expressed the fear that her younger brother would drop out from school because "so many standard tens have passed but they are just roaming around because there are no jobs." While FSUGI aims to discourage anti-social acts by getting "young graduates to assist with voluntary services in the community," Konela felt at the very minimum they require some form of basic subsistence and training to sustain their activities. In the long-term Konela insisted that "education alone is not enough. We need a new economic system based on need and not on profit." After attempting to meet with different government ministries, Konela has

come to the realization that "It is not us that cause the problem but government policies and deficits." He challenged government to set up a commission for unemployed people: "If we as graduates can't find work then what about those without degrees. . . . We need to be involved in finding the solution."

Golf courses

In addition to the verbal testimonies, the Education Theme coordinators received scores of written submissions from parents, teachers, school governing body members, ECD and adult education and training providers and learners, student and youth organizations, trade unions, NGO's and church groups. These ranged from the carefully worded, logically argued views of research organizations to the poignant testimonies of some of the most marginalized such as child workers and prisoners.

Many of these submissions provide new insights into the problems confronting education in South Africa. The Network Against Child Labour for instance show that the vast majority of child workers attribute their suspension of study to the poverty of their parents and an even greater majority ache to return to school. It is not, however, only the expenses incurred to pay school fees that induce parents to withdraw their children from school. It is also the potential of the children to help the family with some earnings, however small these may seem. Besides school fees, the additional costs of transport, stationery and uniforms are a great burden to poor parents. The Network proposes that not only should education be free but the general upliftment of the overall economic conditions of the parents is the only solution.

Marcus Solomons, himself denied access to the soul-enriching company

of children for many years during his stint as a political prisoner on Robben Island and now working for the Children's Resource Centre, argues that children learn primarily through play and yet that activity "which is essential for the development of the child is, for the majority of the children in South Africa, accomplished in the most unhealthy, increasingly dangerous and most unstimulating of environments." Solomons points out that Cape Town has twelve impeccably groomed and manicured golf courses ranked as amongst the best in the world. Yet there are no parks for children on the Cape Flats which even come close to the quality and facilities of the golf courses. He indignantly concludes that "what this in effect means is that the average white South African male (with a few black ones joining them of late) has much more playing space than the average black South African child. We cannot think of a better example to demonstrate the immorality of the situation in this country at present."

Testimony after testimony reminded us of the sacrifices people made to end Apartheid and how at the point of victory the fruits of their labour are "snatched away by a new elite." This view was expressed by a father of three children at a time when his children's school had been closed because of "unhygienic conditions" resulting from the retrenchment of cleaning staff. This parent, also the chairperson of the Phoenix Community Education Forum, declared that "together with thousands of other people I picketed demanding 'free education, 'accessible education now, 'equal education, 'housing for all,' before the 1994 elections. I was arrested many times. The leaders now rich and famous have distanced themselves from the people. They have traded in our rallying cry 'all power to the people' for 'all reverence to GEAR'."

All reverence to GEAR?

Interestingly enough, the govern-

ment's own Poverty and Inequality Report (produced by a group led by Julian May of the University of Natal) itself registered the fact that South Africa's distribution of income and wealth is among the most unequal in the world, with over 50% of households, or 19 million people, being classified "poor." The PIR also specifically criticized the assumption that economic growth would, through a trickle down process, reach the poor and that all that is required is a freeing up of markets and the removal of state controls. However the compilers of the PIR report attempt to demonstrate that government policies and programmes do reflect a broad commitment to reducing poverty - even while suggesting that more of the current expenditure needs to be targeted specifically towards the poor, (and suggesting, too, that severe weaknesses in planning and implementation exist). Perhaps the major limitation of the PIR, however, is that it recommends a reprioritization of expenditure within the given budgetary limitations without exploring the possibilities of going beyond these limits.

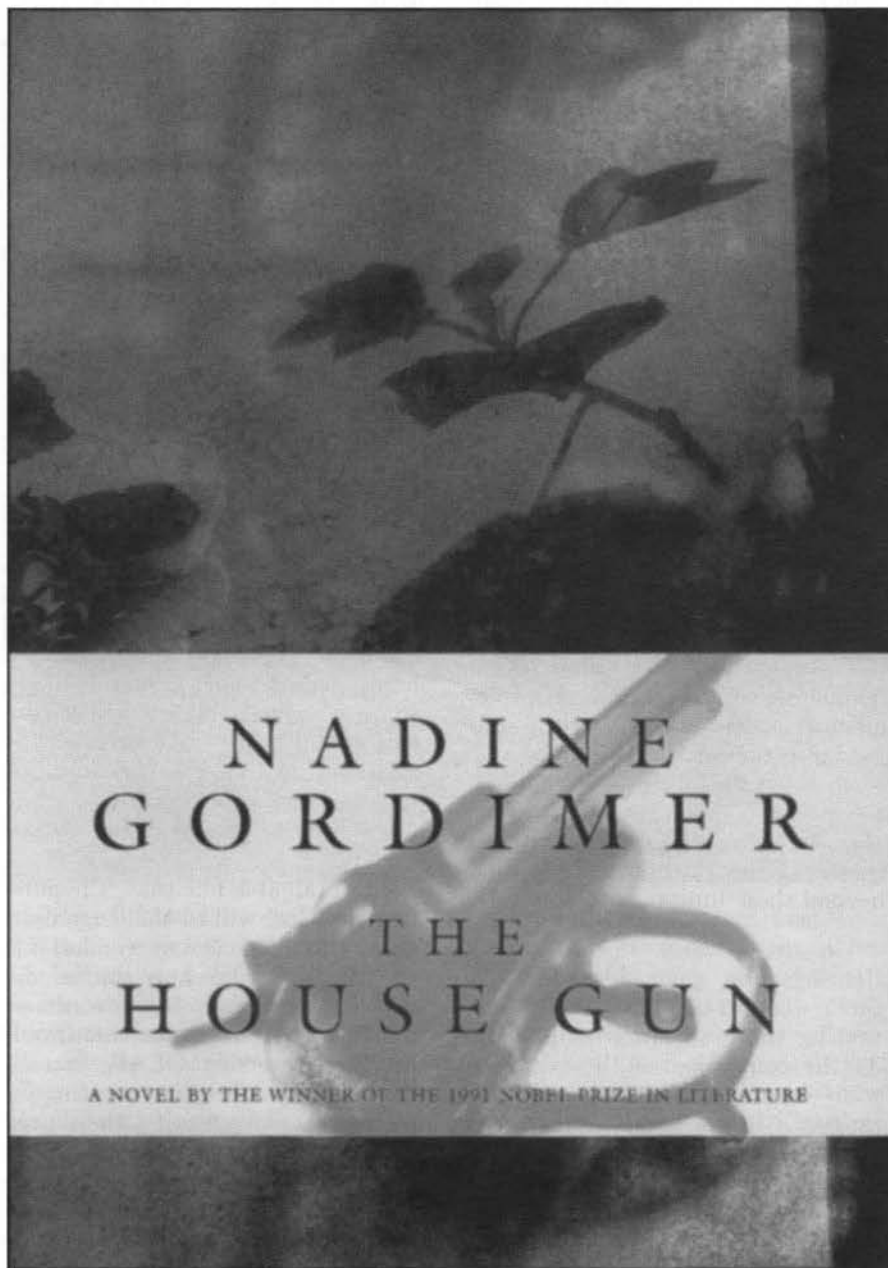
In the Poverty and Inequality Hearings the poor identified for themselves a range of obstacles preventing the eradication of poverty. At the conclusion of these nationwide hearings the convenors arranged a list of responsibilities for politicians, government officials, the private sector and civil society in order to ensure that the fight to end poverty becomes the nation's priority.

In the education sector this must involve an increase in the allocation of resources to poorer schools, a revisiting of the school funding model and the elimination of the waste evidenced in the high salaries of functionaries and exorbitant consultancy costs. It is also vital to institute strict financial and administrative mechanisms in order to prevent corruption and increase accountability. Simultaneously, it is necessary

to provide resources for the effective training of educators, governing body members and officials with responsibilities at all levels of the system. Obviously, it is not a question of merely throwing money at the problem. It is also necessary to augment the information systems with reliable data in order to make informed policy decisions. (For example, at present few provinces can give precise figures as to the number of teachers in their provinces, and yet we are told, the teachers who resist retrenchment say that there is an excess of teachers!)

More generally, it became evident that school reforms cannot be successful unless there is a concomitant attempt to uplift the impoverished socio-economic status of the communities most schools are located in. For many the social cost of privileging deficit reduction above the goal of providing quality education and other basic needs is too high. In any case, the assumption that resources are just not available needs to be questioned. It can be argued instead that this is indeed obtainable but that it requires firm political will to challenge dominant interests. Small wonder that the Hearings convenors suggested a broad programme for government officials and politicians that would include: reversing GEAR; increasing social spending and meeting basic needs; renegotiating the Apartheid debt; and treating the poor and their concerns with far more respect and dignity. Would such a programme of creating the resources for genuine equality not also have to involve such things as cutting down on the unnecessary annual expenditure of R10 billion on defense, and reducing tax concessions to big business? And isn't it just a little too glib - and, under present circumstances in South Africa, much too callous - merely to brand such preoccupations as "ultra-leftist," implying in that way that they have been dealt with?

SAR



The House Gun

A REVIEW BY LOIS BROWNE

Lois Browne, a Toronto based writer, is a member of the SAR editorial collective.

Nadine Gordimer. The House Gun. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1988. 294pp. ISBN 0-374-17307-9

Apartheid in South Africa is officially over, but the violence that underpinned the white regime for nearly 50 years lives on. Today, however, it is as likely to ravage the lives of middle-class whites as any other citizen.

Nadine Gordimer's *The House Gun*, a story of a white, middle-class family changed forever by violence, doesn't attempt to create an allegory of life in South Africa today. But in her unfolding of this private tragedy, all the themes of anger, guilt, truth and reconciliation that dominate the public scene are just as centrally located.

The family are the Lindgards. Harald and Claudia Lindgard are 'liberal' whites - he a senior insurance executive involved in the housing sector, she a doctor who for years has worked one day a week at a clinic that provides the only health services available to poor blacks. Their only child is 20-something Duncan, an architect, involved in a volatile relationship with a suicidal young woman, Natalie.

One unremarkable evening, a messenger comes to turn Harald and Claudia's calm, protected life inside out. The messenger is from Duncan's household where he lives communally with a handful of young white and black men. Among the things they share is a gun that was "always somewhere about, no use having it for protection if when the time came no one would remember where it was safely stashed away." Duncan, they are told, has been arrested for using that gun to murder one of his housemates.

Although a murder is at the heart of the story, there is no who-dun-it mystery. There is never any doubt that Duncan pulled the trigger. There is not even a mystery about Duncan's motive, although that reveals itself more slowly. But there is a mystery for the Lindgards who cannot understand how it is that their intelligent and caring

son can be brought to kill another human being.

Overnight, Harald and Claudia become consumed by this question.

During the pre-trial period, Harald and Claudia seek the truth in their memories. They examine the choices they made for their son, hoping to identify what combination of influences and events made him a killer. They sent him to a boarding school where a school mate subsequently killed himself. Was their reaction – a lunch and assurances of their love and support – inadequate? They didn't advise him to flee his country to avoid two-years of military service. He didn't see combat, but was his training as a soldier a contributing factor?

But as Harald and Claudia turn over the past, other choices they have made also surface, posing much larger questions of guilt. As an insurance executive, Harald had accepted without questioning that housing for blacks was no business of his. Their housing was the responsibility of the government, and Harald's sympathies for the victims of the injustices he knew existed led him to do no more than vote against a "government that could have done more." Claudia, who "worked at clinics to staunch the wounds racism gashed" never risked her own safety "by offering asylum when she had deduced they were activists on the run from the police, nor by acting as the kind of conduit between revolutionaries her to-and-fro in communities would have made possible."

In their inaction and refusal to take responsibility, they have been complicit in creating a society where people "breathed violence along with cigarette smoke."

In the midst of their pain and confusion, the Lindgards find a temporary refuge in the Motsamai family. Hamilton Motsamai becomes their son's Senior Counsel after he is recommended to the Lindgards,

by a knowledgeable white friend of Harald's, as "eminently capable" of saving Duncan from a lengthy prison sentence or worse.

Ironically, the Lindgards find comfort and support among people who owe them the least. Motsamai becomes the friend and lawyer who supports Duncan and his parents through a harrowing and unfamiliar process. In his discussions with the jailed Duncan, he plays "father when father cannot" and for Harald and Claudia he is the "man who brings from the Other Side the understanding of people in trouble ..." In a visit to his home, Harald and Claudia meet Motsamai's family – a working-class brother-in-law, someone's sister, a professor friend, his wife and children. They display a vitality and awareness of the world around them that is in sharp contrast to the Lindgard's much more homogeneous and bland lives.

In the same manner, Khulu Dladla, Duncan's gay black housemate, becomes Harald and Claudia's proxy son who conveys messages to them from Duncan that Duncan can't bring himself to relate.

The relationships between black South Africans and the Lindgards suggest that Gordimer sees the salvation of the country depending on what they can reconcile to. When Afrikaners appear, and there are only two Afrikaner characters in the book, there is a sense of an irrelevant people who have little to contribute to the future. Motsamai sums them up in commenting on the job of warder. The 'chaps' who fill the job of warder understand nothing, he says, and the job itself is "sheltered employment for retarded sons of the Boere."

Society seeks the truth of Duncan's crime in the courtroom. Although Duncan is guilty, the circumstances of the killing raise doubt of his intent and, therefore, of whether he will come out of prison a middle-aged man or a relatively young one. Motsamai argues that it was unen-

urable provocation and the proximity of the gun, lying on a nearby table through carelessness and coincidence, that drove Duncan to kill. Duncan's future depends on whether or not the judges believe that he did not intend to kill his friend.

It is Motsamai, whose people have suffered the most under apartheid, who reminds the court that incarceration is not meant to punish but to rehabilitate. It should not be used to identify a scapegoat for society's ills, he says, a scapegoat "whose punishment therefore must be harsh and heavy enough to deal with collective guilt."

In the end, the truth is established. Duncan has been sentenced. But the issues of truth and guilt are not put to rest. Duncan has committed a horrible crime, and he will pay. But his sentence has been tempered by understanding and mercy from the court and he will not pay with his life. But there is no sense of a chapter closing.

Harald hears in the public debate over abolishing the death penalty that there are many for whom execution is "the only reconciliation there is ..." Eventually Duncan will leave prison, but Harald knows that Duncan "shall have this will to his death surrounding him as long as he lives."

In that grim view Gordimer invites a comparison. If one unplanned death, carried out in a moment of tumultuous emotion, can evoke such a determination not to forgive, what must be the result of apartheid's routine torture and murders of tens of thousands over the years? The state may be able to suspend punishment but only the individual can forgive. Each South African must make their own peace with their country's history. And because it is an individual choice, South Africa will always contain in it those who will never agree to be reconciled.



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The organisers are planning to reinstate the graduate student workshop next year and to integrate it into the conference rather than to hold it as a separate event. There will be roundtables on subjects of special interest to students, such as preparing manuscripts and theses for publication, and opportunities to present their research-in-progress, thesis proposals or other work for interdisciplinary comment and assessment by specialists in their fields.

The Fraser Taylor Prize will be awarded for the best paper presented by a graduate student at the conference. To be eligible for consideration, papers must be complete, including notes and be of near publishable quality.

Students may elect to offer either a full paper for presentation in a regular session or a shorter work for presentation at a research-in-progress session. The latter will not be eligible for consideration for the Fraser Taylor Prize.

Travel Subsidy

Limited travel funds are available for graduate students. Eligibility criteria are the following:

1. CAAS membership. Students receiving travel monies who are not already members of CAAS will be asked to join at registration.
2. Paper or research-in-progress proposal and abstract submitted by the deadline, January 29, 1999.
3. Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities dues paid.
4. Two copies of the paper or research-in-progress proposal submitted at registration.
5. Original travel receipts, excluding meal expenses, to be sent to the CAAS secretariat by **June 30, 1999** (Students billing CAAS for accommodation will be reimbursed on the basis of shared residence accommodation)

For further information, please contact:

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