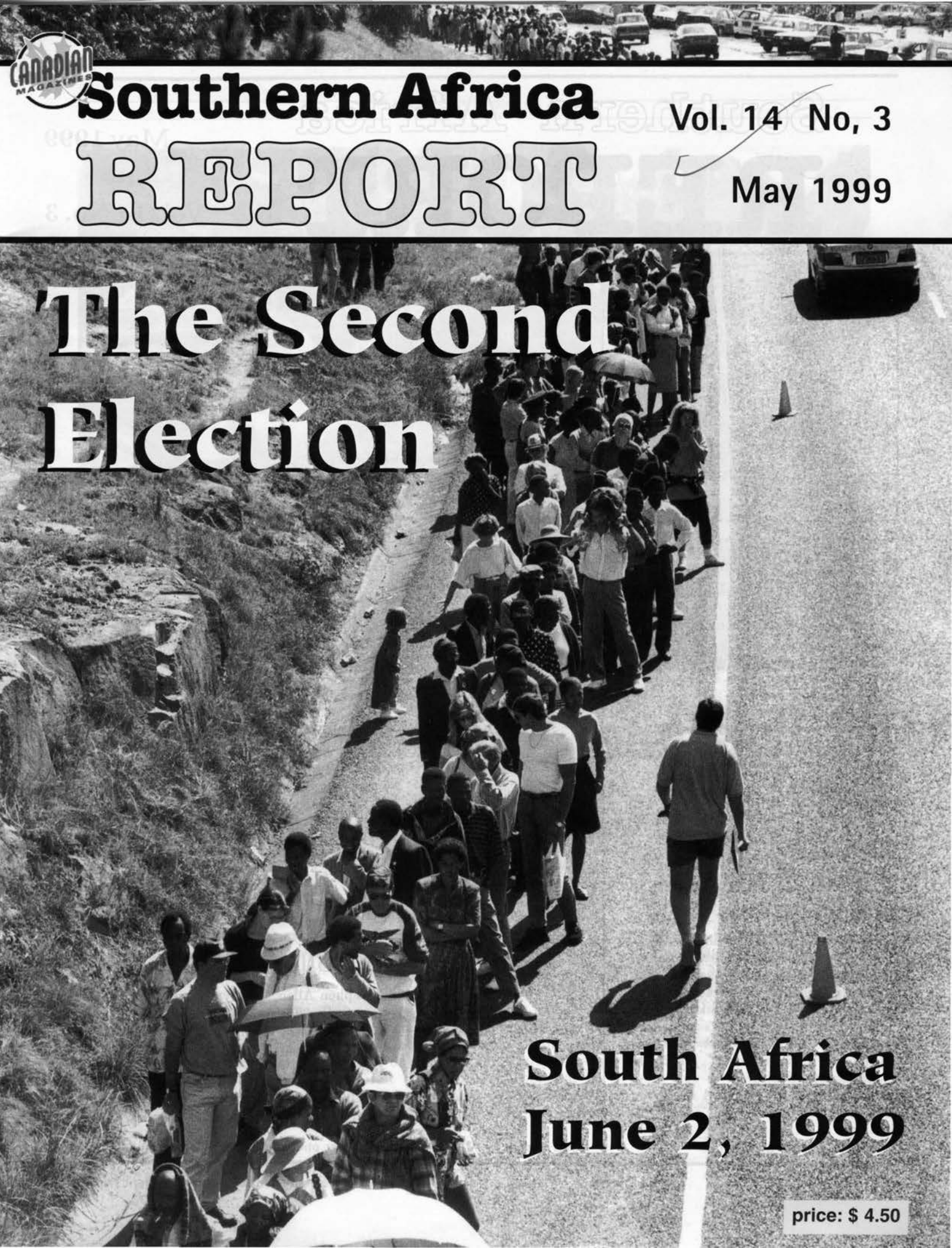
Southern Africa
REPORT
Vol. 14 No, 3
May 1999

The Second Election



South Africa June 2, 1999

price: $ 4.50

Southern Africa REPORT

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Vol. 14 No. 3

Southern Africa REPORT

is produced quarterly by a collective of TCLSAC, the Toronto Committee for Links between Southern Africa & Canada

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Submissions, suggestions and help in production are welcome and invited

ISSN 0820-5582

Member: Canadian Magazine Publishers Association

Indexed in: Canadian Index; Canadian Business & Current Affairs

Subscriptions

Southern Africa Report subscription & TCLSAC membership rates:

SUBSCRIPTION:

Individual (per year)	$18.00
Institution (per year)	$40.00

MEMBERSHIP: (includes subscription)

Regular	$35.00
Unemployed Student Senior	$18.00
Sustainer	over $100.00

Overseas add $10.00

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Our thanks to CVSTUDIO for electronic image processing

Cover design by Art Work

Cover photo by Gisèle Wulfsohn – Impact Visuals

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement No. 569607

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The first multi-racial elections - 1994

"Parliamentary Cretinism"

Some of you folks out there may remember the name V. I. Lenin. "Parliamentary cretinism" – this was his phrase for epitomizing the institutions of "bourgeois democracy." Multi-party elections, parliamentarism: these he saw as serving primarily to divert the attention of the mass of the population and to preempt their pressing forward with demands for genuine empowerment and equality.

Here Lenin echoed the critique of his mentor, Karl Marx. In his political writings ("On the Jewish Question," for example) Marx expressed the fear that the abstract or formal equality represented by the granting of purely political rights might come to substitute for the no less important substance of social and economic equality. By disarming the workers and making them feel more represented than they actually were they would be less likely to mobilize themselves to confront the bastions of capital where true power lay.

Of course, once in power many self-proclaimed Marxists used such plausible critiques of emerging liberal democratic practices elsewhere as merely an excuse for having no democracy at all, substituting instead the dictatorship of the state and of the vanguard party. As a result the democratic political institutions of effective socialist practice remain largely to be discovered. Moreover, any renewed socialist democracy would probably have to involve, among other things, elections, genuinely representative institutions, political rights – even if these latter were now to be repositioned on a new social and economic basis.

In the meantime, however, what we have in most parts of the world that can lay any claim at all to being democratic is "bourgeois democracy," settings in which money and power speak more loudly than votes, whatever their formal constitutions may say. And this is all the more true of a world in which the presumed imperatives of globalization (read: global capital) are ar-

gued to preempt the possibility of any independent decision-making on major questions of socio-economic choice in every territorial jurisdiction throughout the world.

What does this mean for southern Africa, not least for South Africa itself as it moves towards its second full-franchise election in June of this year? Inevitably, we must hesitate to qualify our enthusiasm for what has been achieved in South Africa. Who could have imagined a decade ago that 1994 would witness the successful (and, in the end, surprisingly peaceful) transition from apartheid to a freely-elected ANC government under the presidency of Nelson Mandela? And what of those doomsayers who prophesied trouble for the further consolidation of parliamentary democracy in the wake of the transition? Isn't the holding of the "Second Election" in 1999 an equally impressive achievement?

The answer, as various articles in the present issue suggest, must be a resolute yes ... and no. True, some kind of racial reconciliation has been achieved and other possible sources of tension (for example, in KwaZulu-Natal) have at least been contained. And South Africa is a far more open society than ever it was under the despicable apartheid system. But whatever happened to efforts to democratize the social and economic structures of South Africa, still so redolent of the extreme polarization of rich and poor, in really meaningful ways?

Read for yourself. Carolyn Bassett views the election through the prism of the trade union movement – so important in providing the foot-soldiers for ensuring the ANC's electoral success in 1994 and again this time – and argues that labour's interests are far more likely to be further side-tracked than advanced through the current workings of the electoral process. Indeed, Gerhard Maré suggests (in his article on pre-electoral developments in KwaZulu-Natal) that Thabo Mbeki – presumptive President of South Africa in the wake of the ANC's likely victory – seems much more preoccupied with swinging a (morally dicey) deal with the venomous Gatsha Buthelezi and his IFP than reaffirming and/or advancing a genuinely popular agenda.

More generally, Roger Southall tracks the dizzying round of "electoral prostitution" that has carried opportunist politicians from one party to another in search of a better positioning on the party rolls that determine the prospects of personal electoral success under the PR (proportional representation) system that exists in South Africa. And Shireen Hassim also sees PR, and the extensive powers it gives to top party leaders in drawing up the lists, as one of the factors constraining women's efforts to advance a strong gender agenda in the last parliament. And yet, significantly, she sees the drying up of a powerful women's movement *outside* parliament as having been even more important in undermining such efforts inside. Parliamentary cretinism indeed, if this is so.

Small wonder, under such circumstances, that many ordinary (and still desperately impoverished) South Africans have begun to lose interest in a "democratic" process that does not really touch their lives. The registration process has failed to enroll large numbers and predictions are that no overwhelming proportion of those who are registered will bother to vote.

Perhaps some will see in this and other trends the benign "normalization" of South African politics, merely bringing South Africa into line with the spiritless democratic politics of all too many western countries these days. And isn't this far better, in any case, than any and all of the various overt authoritarianisms that are on offer, in Africa and elsewhere?

No doubt. And yet it's hard to believe that, under South African circumstances, such "depoliticization" can really hold much promise for the country in the long run. Where will the effective political pressure to stem global capitalist imposition and "non-racial" ruling-class formation come from in South Africa if not from below? Somehow, somewhere, within the ANC or without, the voice of the marginalized in that society will eventually have to make itself heard more effectively.

Do other articles in this issue offer more promise? Not that by Larry Swatuk on Botswana certainly, an account that registers the self-destructive path taken by opposition leaders who once seemed to offer the rudiments of a progressive alternative to those ensconced in power in that country.

But what of Zimbabwe in this respect? South Africans do not like to draw parallels between Mugabe's malign political dispensation and that of Nelson Mandela. And it is true there are real differences. Still, such differences can probably be overstated. Consider the progressive Zimbabwean, recently emigrated to South Africa, who was asked to compare the two experiences. Highlighting what he saw to be the post-liberation scramble for power and perks in each case, he emphasized the similarities, noting only a difference in scale and significance. "Zimbabwe was the trailer," he said wryly. "South Africa is the movie."

What precedent, then, in another current, but quite different, Zimbabwean development, one chronicled in this issue by Patrick Bond? For Bond finds promise in the possible emergence there of a new left-oppositional party under the sponsorship of the trade unions and other popular organizations: "What is crucial," Bond has written, "is that the opposition's political orientation is potentially both post-nationalist and post-neoliberal, perhaps for the first time in African history." A real alternative in the region to parliamentary cretinism? Let us see.

SAR

Electoral Illusion

COSATU and the ANC

BY CAROLYN BASSETT

Carolyn Bassett is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Political Science at Toronto's York University. She spent time in South Africa in 1996 and 1997 conducting research for her dissertation on trade unions and the transition.

Reports of the imminent demise of the ANC-SACP-COSATU Alliance, it would appear, have been greatly exaggerated. Quite the opposite seems to be the case. For the past year, the trade union federation has called on workers to vote for the ANC and highlighted achievements under ANC governance. COSATU's resources and organizational capacity are now turned towards supporting the ANC electoral campaign. The slogan for May Day 1999 was "Workers mobilizing for a decisive ANC victory in the election."

It is a striking state of affairs, given the tensions that have strained the Alliance over the past five years. While clearly there have been gains during the period of majority rule, the expectations of workers nonetheless have been seriously disappointed and frustrated by the ANC-in-government. Only a serious commitment to the Alliance on the part of key COSATU leaders and the absence of legitimate political alternatives have kept it together. But even if the Alliance has survived its strains, there cannot possibly be the same optimism on the part of organized workers in the run-up to these elections as there was during the period before the historic 1994 elections. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that COSATU's approach to the 1999 elections is so similar to that of 1994.

COSATU's elections strategy

COSATU's support for the ANC's election bid will again go far beyond statements of support. COSATU has dedicated a number of leaders, staff and shop-stewards to the ANC's electoral bid and even pledged that all COSATU and affiliate leaders would be made available to the ANC. General Secretary Mbhazima (Sam) Shilowa has been designated to coordinate the COSATU elections strategy on a full time basis. Union staff have been deployed to support the ANC campaign on the ground, especially in Natal, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape where they will attempt to counter the strength of Inkatha, the National Party and the United Democratic Movement respectively.

Smoothing the way for COSATU to support the ANC in the elections was the recently released ANC Electoral Manifesto. COSATU's Executive "resolutely embraced" the document, claiming that it "undoubtedly maintains the historic bias of the ANC to workers and the poor," and "creates the necessary socio-economic and political conditions for increased delivery of a better life for all of our people." The Manifesto, it is worth noting, avoids mentioning by name the government's *Growth, Employment and Redistribution* strategy (GEAR) – the source of many of the ANC-COSATU tensions – although it does reiterate several of GEAR's major objectives.

COSATU's electoral strategy shares a number of other similarities with the 1994 electoral campaign. Once again, a large number of senior COSATU leaders will be leaving for Parliament. The belief that having ex-unionists in Parliament means having allies in Parliament also seems to have survived. In a February 1998 interview in the *South African Labour Bulletin*, Shilowa argued that, "although the ANC has the interest of workers at heart, it also represents other interests. If these other interests release people to go into government and we don't, we could find ourselves in a losing position."

Being "inside and outside the state" by placing sympathetic representatives into Parliament did not prove terribly effective during the past five years, however. There was not even a "labour caucus" established in the first Parliament, and some comrades have actually been accused of betraying the interests of workers. ANC Members of Parliament and particularly Cabinet Ministers have a formal obligation only to advancing the policies of the ANC. They have no obligation to support COSATU's program and would be constrained from doing so if the two were seen to be in conflict. Those who go to Parliament in 1999 will serve under similar conditions to those who went in 1994.

Moreover, COSATU again will lose a large swathe of its most senior and experienced leadership to Parliament, to government, and to the provincial legislatures. Therefore the loss of capacity in COSATU and the affiliates that followed the personnel drain in 1994 appears destined to recur in 1999. It bears noting that those who were "redeployed" to Parliament or to govern-

ment departments after 1994 seldom returned to the union movement.

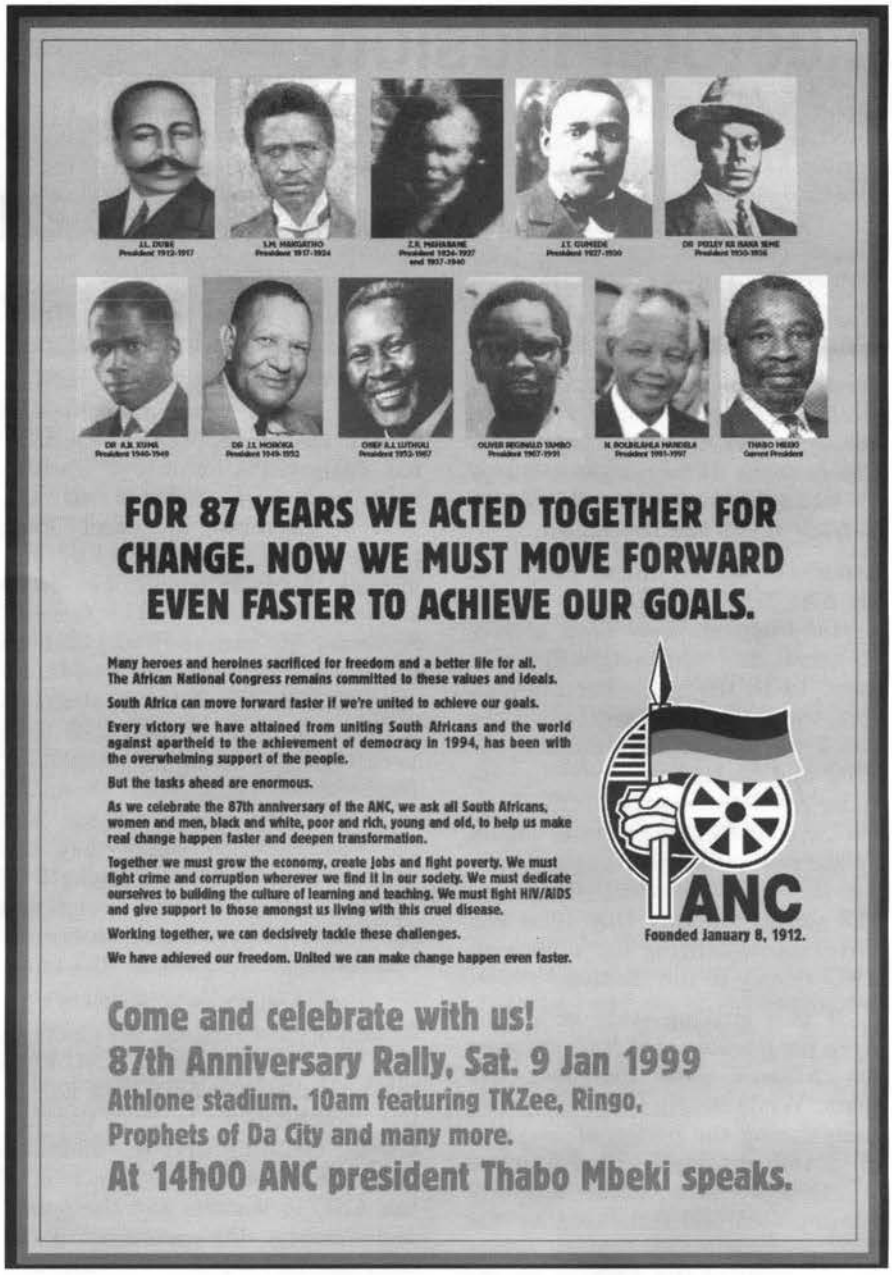
Despite the disappointments of the first five years of ANC rule, COSATU's Executive Committee states firmly in a pre-election pamphlet that "the question workers should ask themselves is – do you believe that any other political organization will deliver better or more than the ANC has done in the last five years?" So just how surprising is it that COSATU has chosen to support the ANC in so similar a manner as last time? A little recent history may help to answer this question.

Macro-economic shock

On April 27 1994, COSATU members had every reason to believe that "their" government would improve the lot of workers and their families and communities. The ANC's electoral platform (the *Reconstruction and Development Programme*, or RDP) had, after all, been developed in cooperation with COSATU.

Yet even early on there were clear signs that workers would not be as well served by the new government as they and their leadership had anticipated. COSATU and key affiliates objected to a number of government policy initiatives – tariff reduction, high interest rates, privatization, public sector lay-offs, the failure to make centralized bargaining compulsory. More generally, there were indications that it was to business leaders and opinion makers, not workers, that the government looked for support and legitimacy. Creating an attractive investment climate (even if also in the "interests of workers" in a capitalist context insofar as it led to jobs) trumped worker demands for democratization and redress whenever the two were judged to diverge.

Still, the most dramatic sign that COSATU's expectations would not be met was the June 1996 announcement of the government's neo-liberal strategy, GEAR, made without prior consultation with its Alliance partners. The announcement severely tested the relationship between the ANC, particularly the Cabinet, and COSATU.



ANC

At first COSATU signalled its intention to debate the economic strategy but ANC ministers quickly made it clear that GEAR was government policy and "non-negotiable." Meanwhile, a close examination of its main tenets raised serious concerns about GEAR's content as well as the process of arriving at it. Such concerns led regional activists to push COSATU's Executive Committee to publicly oppose large sections of the program. By November 1996, things seemed to point towards the possibility of a decisive rupture.

In an effort to try to reassert some influence over ANC policy, yet avoid an open rift, the COSATU Executive produced a *Draft Pro-*

gramme for the Alliance that criticized both content and process in the development of GEAR. The *Draft Programme* proposed a new accord to bind Alliance members to a common agenda. The substance of that agenda, as suggested by COSATU, centred on state provision of basic goods and services, social transfers, and land distribution that would also create jobs, raise income (including the social wage) and redistribute wealth. More extensive state regulation of the private sector would also translate into job creation and income distribution, it was argued.

A COSATU-SACP meeting in December 1996 agreed that major policies had to be made or at least debated within Alliance structures rather than solely in the Cabinet. On this basis, the ANC was brought into a series of discussions that culminated in an Alliance Summit in August 1997.

The Summit and after

Of course, there were potential benefits in meeting to discuss policy and process with other Alliance partners for the ANC as well. It was an opportunity to remind the SACP and COSATU of the importance of smoothing over differences in the run-up to the COSATU Congress, the ANC Conference and the 1999 elections. The ANC leadership did not want the party's commitment to the GEAR program to be debated extensively on the floor of the ANC Conference, nor to come to a vote, if that was likely to lead to an irreconcilable rift. Some within the ANC leadership also saw the meeting as an good chance to "educate" COSATU and SACP critics on the merits of GEAR.

It was clear, in any case, that by the time the ANC, SACP and COSATU delegates met in late August 1997 the COSATU leadership itself felt a stronger commitment to the Alliance than it did in pushing a new policy agenda in the ANC. In fact, the meeting resolved little by way of policy disagreements, although all three partners committed themselves to work towards consolidating a common Alliance platform at their forthcoming national conferences and congresses. Thus the August 1997 meeting cleared the way for the upcoming COSATU Congress (September 1997) and the ANC Conference (December 1997) to present a common commitment to the Alliance, yet without a consensus on the ANC's economic programme.

In order to facilitate this renewed commitment to the Alliance, there was some appearance of movement on GEAR, in the form of the statement that "any macroeconomic policy is not cast in stone." The Alliance partners agreed to strengthen internal policy and communications structures as well. But even with agreement reached on a process whereby disagreements over GEAR and other economic policies could be discussed within the Alliance, there was little indication of a rapprochement over the content of the policies.

On the one hand, the compromise position on the government's macro-economic programme allowed the status quo – GEAR – to continue for the foreseeable future. Yet the meeting also had revealed extensive disagreements among COSATU, the SACP and the ANC on the goal of socialism, the relationship between the state and capital, the limitations of the international context, and the role of "mass mobilization." After outlining a number of quite specific areas of fundamental disagreement about the implications of the GEAR's strict deficit reduction targets, high interest rates, options for financing the South African deficit, and a relatively liberal tariff and foreign exchange regime, the most that COSATU and other GEAR critics could get was an agreement that "[w]here Fiscal and Monetary policy undermine the RDP, it needs to be reviewed."

At the September 1997 COSATU Congress, GEAR continued to be unpopular. In his speech to the assembly, President John Gomomo described it as "the reverse gear of our society," and delegates sang *COSATU Asifuni Gear* (COSATU does not want GEAR) as President Nelson Mandela departed from the Congress after giving a speech that defended the program's content (albeit conceding that the process of introducing it had been inappropriate).

COSATU's opposition to GEAR was not strong enough to lead the COSATU membership to make its participation in the Alliance conditional on the ANC dropping the program, however. Two resolutions that might have led to this outcome were defeated at the Congress. Instead, the trade union federation decided to try quietly to encourage the ANC to reform GEAR.

As a result, in the months between the COSATU Congress and the ANC Conference, there was much back-room dealing to hammer out a more solid compromise position. But the only visible outcome was the ANC's economic policy report to the December 1997 Conference which emphasized the congruence between RDP and GEAR aims. GEAR, it suggested, was "the initiative to give effect to the realization of the RDP by the maintenance of macro balances"! Delegates unanimously approved the resolution that: "[t]he Conference endorses the basic objective of macro-economic stability and the GEAR provides the basis for achieving such stability," adding that "like other policies it will be monitored and adjusted as required by analysis through the policy processes adopted in this conference and in the Alliance Summit." Of course, this avoided the risky proposition of forcing a vote on the GEAR program itself.

Whatever expectations the COSATU membership may have had that some type of a deal had been struck that would begin to

move the government away from the GEAR program, the COSATU Executive was forced to conclude in May 1998 that "this strategy is being implemented [o]n all fronts." COSATU then re-committed itself to mobilizing its members and other communities to resist GEAR, as had been agreed at the September 1997 COSATU Congress.

This background merely makes it all the more striking that criticisms of GEAR and ANC policies became more muted as COSATU began, in ways outlined above, to prepare for the June 1999 elections, in favour of a highlighting of the achievements under the first five years of ANC government. "Workers have no intention of abandoning the only vehicle for real transformation – the ANC – in this election," announced the report from a February 1999 Executive meeting. "We seek instead to strengthen the ANC so as to continue in this historic path of transformation of the workplace."

What's in it for COSATU?

We return then to the question with which we began: given the serious disagreements over the government's economic program, why has COSATU made such a strong commitment to unconditionally supporting the ANC in the 1999 elections? The fact is, of course, that once senior COSATU leaders had made the decision to work through Alliance structures to reform the ANC from within, there were few alternatives left open to the trade union movement.

The bigger question, then, is why COSATU has chosen to stick with the Alliance despite obvious policy disagreements with the ANC? The easy answer might be that there is no mandate to do otherwise. Under the COSATU Constitution, a policy decision of the magnitude of breaking the Alliance would have to be passed by the majority of delegates at a major policy conference like a Congress. The proposal would need to come from one of the affiliated trade unions in the form of a resolution and be supported by a second affiliate. As unionists noted in September 1997, no affiliate had proposed such a resolution (although some noted that the deadline for submitting resolutions came before the ANC-COSATU disagreements over GEAR and the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill became quite so pronounced). The last time COSATU's membership in the Alliance had been formally discussed by the federation was at the September 1993 COSATU Special Congress (when the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa did indeed propose that the Alliance be discontinued in its existing form after the 1994 elections!)

Some have suggested that there was a certain amount of support for putting forward such a resolution again in 1999, but there was little interest on the part of the senior COSATU and affiliate office-bearers in allowing such a debate on the floor of the meeting. It is clear that important actors within COSATU, and particularly in the executive, did not support a break with the ANC. It is not irrelevant, perhaps, to point out that many senior COSATU office bearers and leaders in the affiliates also hold executive positions within the ANC and the SACP. These senior representatives are particularly likely to consider the fates of the three organizations to be intertwined. Indeed, as noted earlier, a large number senior COSATU leaders will again be leaving the organization to go to Parliament. This list includes, remarkably, four of COSATU's six office bearers – President John Gomomo, General Secretary Mbhazima (Sam) Shilowa, First Vice President Connie September and National Treasurer Ronald Mofokeng – as well as the regional secretaries of Wits and KwaZulu Natal, and the chairpersons of the Western Cape and Eastern Cape.

There are also some pragmatic organizational reasons why there was little real drive behind sentiments that might have wanted to see the Alliance break apart. For one thing, there is no other obvious party to support. The (New) National Party is closely associated with the apartheid past and with a neo-liberal present. The Democratic Party is dominated by whites and closely associated with an even more strident neo-liberalism. Inkatha has mainly regional support and a very tense history with COSATU, and the United Democratic Movement is widely seen as being comprised of opportunist thugs.

Would a more plausible alternative to the Alliance be for COSATU and the SACP to team up to offer a left alternative to the ANC? There has been some movement in this direction with the pledge at the COSATU Congress to build the SACP and to provide the party with some financial resources. But it seems clear that the SACP itself is unwilling to break with the Alliance, while many of the middle-rank unionists who would support leaving the ANC do not see the SACP as a natural ally. Another alternative, and one supported by some unionists, has been the idea of forming a new workers party. There has been little sign yet of discussions that might initiate such an alternative, however.

By mid-1997 it was too late to organize a workers party in any case. In fact, it likely would take workers a number of years to get a party up and running and against enormous odds – few financial resources, mass media hostility, and divisions among COSATU members and leaders on the merits of the proposal. Moreover, a recent survey conducted by the Sociology of Work Programme at the University of the Witwatersrand indicates that rank and file COSATU workers remain supportive of the ANC and of the Alliance based on its historic role in the popular struggle: there may be, in short, little grass-roots pressure to break with the Alliance. Meanwhile, with such a break, COSATU would lose its privileged access to the state,

something that at least the senior players in the organization seem unwilling to risk.

There remain signs, of course, that there is fairly widespread disillusionment with the ANC that may manifest itself in other ways instead. Some South African contacts have reported that despite the considerable financial and personnel resources COSATU and its affiliates have put behind the ANC electoral campaign, trade union activists have not invested a lot of energy into it. Elections structures are weak, they suggest, and have all but collapsed in some areas. Despite the campaign to encourage workers and their families and communities to obtain the proper identity document and to register to vote, the numbers to date have been disappointing. While there is little wide-spread enthusiasm for alternatives to the ANC there are growing indications of a more generalized depoliticization at the base and turn-out on election day may actually be very poor.

Benefits for the ANC?

For its part, the ANC has had some interest in making conciliatory gestures towards COSATU and the affiliates once they began to seriously plan for the 1999 elections. Although there has been growing criticism of COSATU and affiliates by ANC leaders, there has been little desire for a messy public split.

Moreover, in the current campaign the ANC will again rely on the organizational capacity of the COSATU affiliates to ensure their victory, just as they did in 1994. The ANC simply does not have the machinery in place to sustain an effective election campaign, with some key observers even arguing, more generally, that the ANC has been having considerable difficulty with any kind of mobilizing activity at the grass-roots. Making use of COSATU's infrastructure will simplify matters for the ANC considerably. As a result, from early 1998 representatives of the ANC's Elections Department began to court shop-stewards and regional organizers to support the ANC's electoral campaign by arranging visits by ANC political candidates to factories, pension pick-up points, and other places where large numbers of the ANC's expected constituency would be present.

Some of these early meetings were fraught with tension and hostility from affiliate leaders, and the need to court COSATU may have played a part in the "elections budget" in 1999 and other recent conciliatory moves by the ANC. The ANC

Eric Miller – Impact Visuals

Voter registration in Mitchells Plain, Cape Town, March 1999

Henner Frankenfeld – PictureNET Africa

COSATU strike, June 1997, pressed for improvements in the Basic Conditions of Employment Bill

Election Manifesto further evokes traditional South African working class demands and reiterates the ANC commitment to implementing the RDP. This *Manifesto* also emphasizes improvements in basic human and worker rights since 1994, and pledges to further improve working conditions and to create jobs. And the *Manifesto* commits the ANC to improving access to housing, social security, health care, transportation, education and other basic needs for South Africa's poor and working-class communities.

After June 2 1999

Whatever the eventual substance of such promises, we have seen that, for a range of possible reasons, COSATU as an organization has gone into these elections strongly touting the ANC – to the point of downplaying significantly the extent to which its policy aspirations were not met during the past five years. Yet although the ANC *Election Manifesto* commits the party to further protecting worker rights, it is not clear that things are likely to improve in this respect once the new mandate has been secured. Indeed, a recent news-story even suggests that the government has indicated "that in its new term it will ease up on the newly introduced and restrictive labour legislation, one of the business community's main bugbears, [thus] demonstrating its confidence that trade union militancy has peaked" (*Southscan*, April 16 1999). This squares with other statements by key ANC leaders indicating government acceptance of the argument that recently won labour rights jeopardize job creation and its apparent willingness to battle COSATU head-on over such issues once the elections are over.

Do such straws in the wind make COSATU's choices over the past two years – unconditional electoral support for the ANC and the reassertion of a common agenda under Alliance control – all the more troubling? Perhaps, but COSATU has also continued to reaffirm that it will not be bound by ANC policies or positions but rather by its own program. Here much may depend on the character of the new COSATU executive to be elected in August 1999 (already there are rumours that Assistant General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi, who was at the forefront of the COSATU anti-GEAR campaign, will be challenged by a more moderate candidate for the General Secretary position). Still, given the continuing existence of significant underlying disagreements about the imperatives of South African economic transformation and despite the efforts on the part of both the ANC and COSATU to forge common ground, it can be expected that tensions between the two organizations will re-emerge soon after the elections.

SAR

Makin' Nice with Buthelezi

BY GERHARD MARÉ

Gerhard Maré, a sociologist teaching at the University of Natal, Durban, is author of Brothers Born of Warrior Blood: Politics and Ethnicity in South Africa *and is co-author of* An Appetite For Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and the Politics of "Loyal Resistance".

In January 1999, ANC president and South African president-to-be, Thabo Mbeki, called for a new morality in the country. He attacked ANC members who were more interested in self-advancement than in representing any constituency. A month later, at his final opening of parliament, president Nelson Mandela included a similar call in his "state of the nation address," asking for an "RDP [Reconstruction and Development Programme] of the soul." It seems odd, therefore, that, in the midst of carrying out this worthy crusade (and of preparing to take Mandela's office in the forthcoming election), Thabo Mbeki should also be pushing so hard for further, and rather dramatic, terms of rapprochement with the far from savory leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

RDP of the soul

We will return to the Buthelezi case in a moment. Let us first agree, however, that the calls for moral renewal are, in and of themselves, extremely appropriate. This is a country where the transition from liberation struggle to economic empowerment has been rapid for many – both through shady means, and through the extension of control and shareholding in some of the largest companies to a new elite of black capitalists including Ntatho Motlana, Cyril Ramaphosa and Mzi Khumalo. At its worst, such developments have reflected not only a shallowness of commitment to ideals other than prize seats on the gravy train but have also created or maintained a climate in which thugs, corrupt politicians, torturers and other remnants of the old order, white and black, have been able to continue with their nefarious activities. Generally, it has allowed many to get away scot-free with the crimes of the past, even if they now lie relatively low.

Calls for a moral and responsible society require prioritizing, of course. They also demand that action be taken to give effect to the calls. And there have been some positive achievements. The

Eric Miller – Impact Visuals

KwaZulu-Natal, 1994; A woman mourns during funeral of ANC youths killed in attack in the runup to the elections

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), now having completed its report and winding down its activities in evaluating amnesty, was largely successful in revealing the grossly abused ethical standards during the apartheid years and in allowing, for the first time, victims a voice that was listened to. The second elections within a democratic South Africa that are coming up in June remind us that the institutionalization of democracy is continuing (even if after two periods of registration pitifully few eligible South Africans had bothered to register). The government's Heath Commission, given powers to uncover corruption and recover pilfered moneys, is visible and effective. There are other smaller areas of social life in which such steps towards creating an accountable society have been and are being taken, sometimes against great odds.

Yet the ideal of a responsible society – be it in the domain of the home (where violence against women is extensive), on the roads (where fatalities caused by taxi wars and reckless driving make travel a dangerous venture), and in boardrooms and the government – does indeed demand urgent and even more searching attention.

Buthelezi?

We return, then, to the wooing of Buthelezi. The latter has served without break since 1975 as head, first of Inkatha and now of the IFP, has been minister of home affairs in the remnants of the government of national unity established in 1994 (one that initially included the National Party as well). It now seems that he will be given some even more prominent position, strongly rumoured to be that of deputy-president, after the upcoming elections.

It will be remembered that the IFP won a mere 10% of the vote in 1994, and is predicted to lose the only province that it controls, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) (although predictions of Buthelezi's demise, and that of his party, have been made before and should be treated with extreme caution). Yet in spite of being named in the TRC report as carrying responsibility for "gross violations of human rights," Buthelezi has escaped with scarcely a blemish and with apparent absolution from the ANC itself. His position as elder statesperson (a firmly held self-perception as well) is acknowledged through the number of times that he has served as acting-state president in the frequent absence of both Mandela and Mbeki: it was Buthelezi, for example, who gave the order for the invasion of Lesotho last year (South Africa there acting as part of a SADC force to "protect democracy" against civil unrest, but also, it has been argued, in order to safeguard South Africa's recently-completed first phase of a hydro-electric scheme in the water-rich mountain kingdom).

Now, hardly a day goes by without the face of one of Buthelezi's top lieutenants appearing on TV or in newspapers, presented as respectable politicians or business people even though a decade ago they were closely associated with horrendous acts of violence. Oscar Dhlomo, Inkatha secretary-general for many years (including those of greatest violence), is now one of the richest people in the country, a man undoubtedly privy to, if not part of, the schemes that made Inkatha an important player in apartheid's violent struggle to maintain racism and racial privilege. Dhlomo has never been called to account, and exited from Inkatha at an opportune moment before the final transition and before the TRC. He and many others have simply defied or ignored the storm and survived – often as members of various provincial parliaments or the central parliament, such as warlords David Ntombela and Mandla Shababala, and the notorious prince Gideon Zulu. Their interests have probably been well served by the argument, ceded to by both the apartheid regime and, apparently, the ANC government, that it was best not to pick up the gauntlet of defiance and violence threatened by Buthelezi so frequently when he did not get his own way, before, during and since the transition.

On offer

What is the substance of the new offer to Buthelezi and why is it being made? What, in turn, does Buthelezi himself have to offer? These questions emerge in tandem with other problematic events that are part of the confusion of the current pre-election period. For example, KZN premier, Ben Ngubane, is shifted upwards into a national cabinet position that he had, in fact, previously occupied; accusations and counter-accusations of assassination attempts and plans, and of gun running, are flung back and forth between the provincial ANC and the IFP; notorious Richmond warlord (and ex-ANC strongman until his expulsion) Sifiso Nkabinde is recently assassinated while serving as secretary-general of the United Democratic Movement (UDM), thereby sparking a

further outbreak of general violence and several murders in KZN; defections from parties, including the IFP, occur with increasing regularity, claimed to be made on principled grounds, but more often informed, it would seem, by more mercenary motives as parties draw up their proportional-representation lists in preparation for the elections.

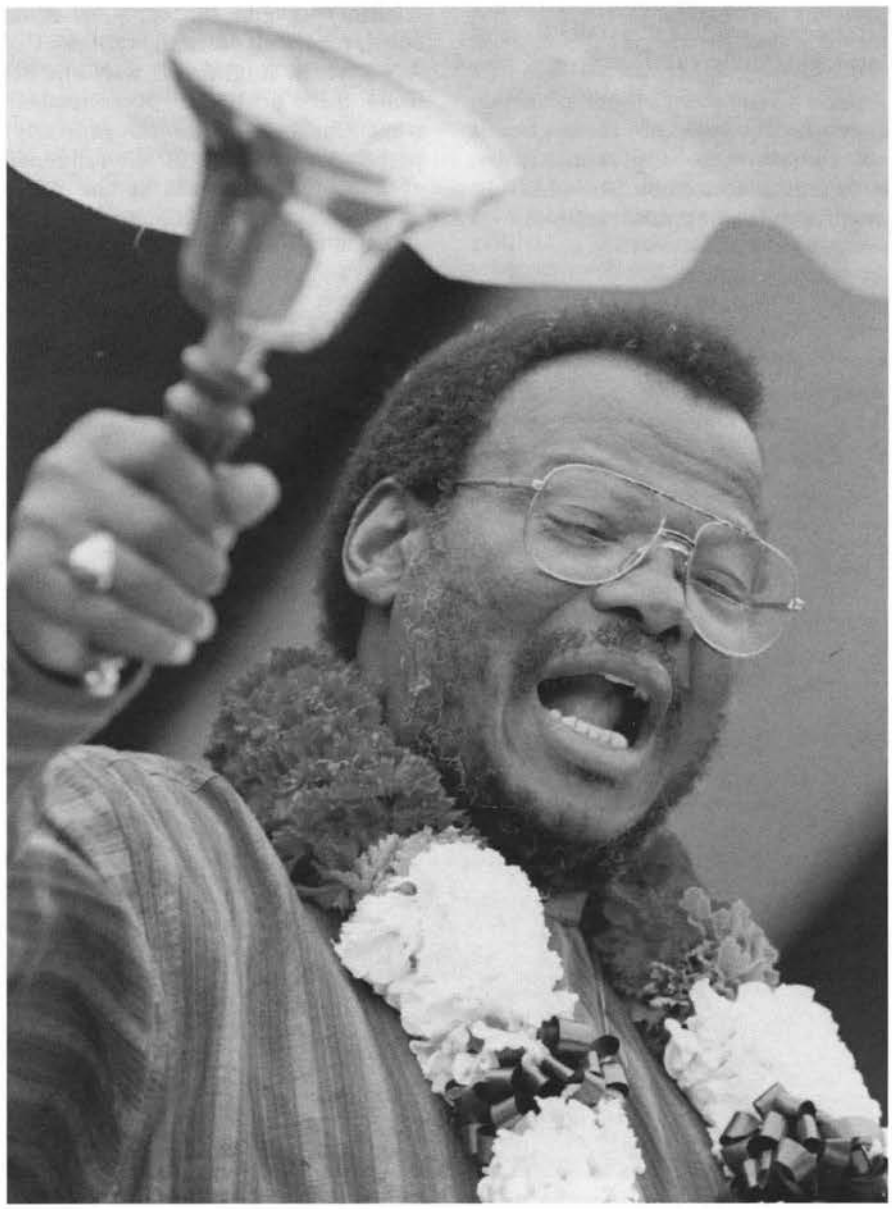
What is most apparent from all this is that democracy is a precarious practice and a fragile commitment in South Africa. And here I am only referring to democracy in a rather narrow sense, as simply the formal political processes established for citizens to elect representatives and approve of policies. After the joyous celebrations that were part of the first elections in 1994, it seemed that participation could be expected from (and even demanded by!) those who had struggled for just that political right for so long. Now, five years later, fewer than half of the potential electorate had bothered to register nationally during the first two periods made available.

Once again, however, it is in the KZN province that the fragility of the new democracy is most apparent. Here the heavy hand of Buthelezi is visible, in his leaving little to local initiative. People are equally susceptible, at the very local level, to the heavy hand (with gun!) of the warlords – just as they were during the 1980s. True, years of violence have made the desire for revenge on all sides a force in its own right, thus reinforcing a downward spiral of social and political decay difficult to reverse in a setting where poverty and insecurity, conflict and disruption, leave little chance of development or stability. And yet the IFP's particularly active and provocative role in all of this at the provincial level cannot be doubted.

How, to repeat, does this square with the close relationship that has developed with the ANC at national level? How can it be even suggested that Buthelezi might be made a deputy president under Thabo Mbeki later this year? How can he be permitted to escape responsibility for the violence committed by his followers and his integration into apartheid structures during the fading years of National Party rule? Why has the pre-election tension merely increased even with Buthelezi already in place as a "national unity" partner?

The ANC's stake

Buthelezi's "worth" to the ANC, or at least to certain factions within the organization, rests on several claims. First is the claim that his incorporation at the top would bring an end to the tension and violence between followers of the two organizations that has cost the lives of more than 15,000 people since the mid-1980s. Here it bears noting that the belief that violence in the province will subside after any such further recognition of Buthelezi and that yet another leadership pact will bring the sporadic violence to a halt, has repeatedly been shown to be a chimera. For years, for

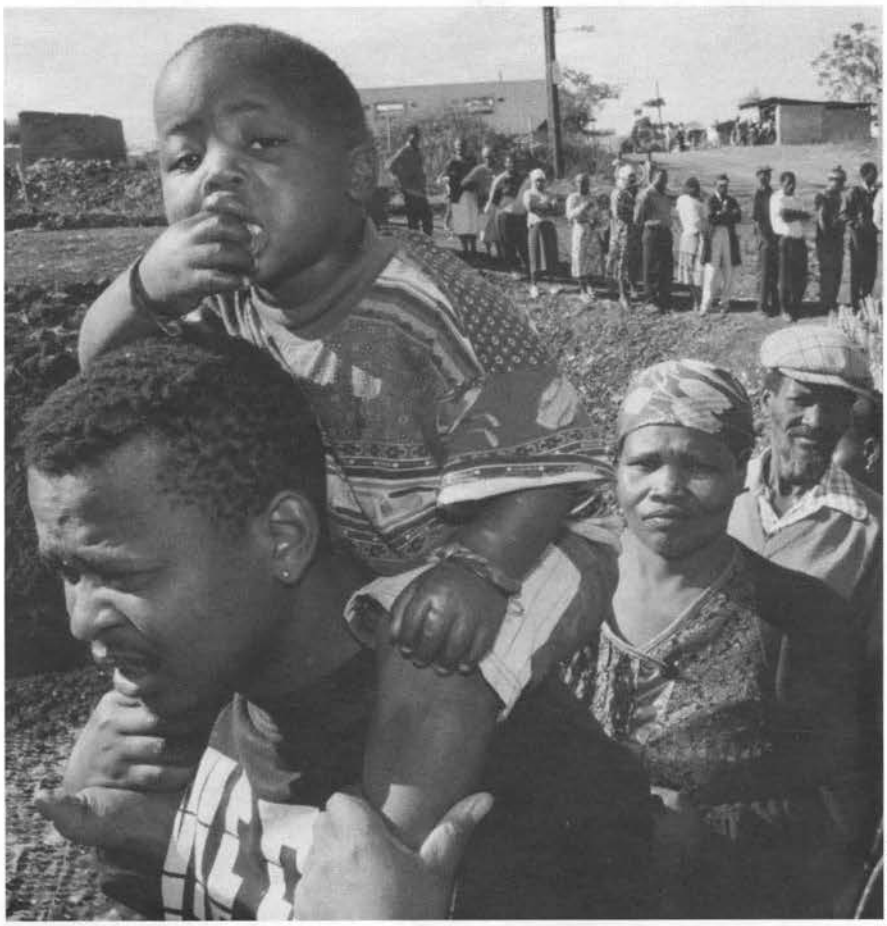


João Silva – PictureNET Africa

example, the ANC operated with the naive and ahistorical belief that if the Zulu king, Goodwill, could be wooed from Inkatha, then Inkatha as Zulu traditionalist organization would collapse and the violence would end. No such thing happened. Violence has to be addressed at several levels, most importantly at the local, grassroots level. Here, as noted earlier, complex histories of antagonism, revenge and manipulation come to the fore. Calls for peace at highly publicized events may serve the politicians' purposes but hardly filter down to affect the daily lives of local, especially rural, people.

Are there other, more plausible claims? A second claim might be that, more opportunistically, it would strengthen the ANC's obvious quest to consolidate its own political position, including pursuit of the elusive two-thirds majority in parliament. Here fusion is not of the essence: if Buthelezi as leader of the IFP is further integrated into government structures, even if not into the governing party, it seems sure, it is argued, that the IFP would support the ANC on most issues.

Third, Buthelezi has not been averse to playing the "race" card over the years and would certainly support the "Africanist" (pro-black African) agenda that is present as one prominent strand within the ANC which might well welcome allies for its position. It is unclear what this would mean precisely: perhaps a lessening of the influence of non-black Africans in the ANC and less attention, too, to the concerns of variously-defined minorities (thus helping qualify a preoccupation that informed much of Mandela's actions and pronouncements with his strong, albeit inconsistent, reconciliation stance). More predictable in terms of class politics would be the IFP's contribution to a further narrowing of the definition of "black economic empowerment" to a practice that aimed at creating a class of large-scale capitalists from within black ranks (and thus further facilitating the downplaying of any notion of some more widespread redistribution to those who need it most).



Eric Miller – Impact Visuals

Voter election queue in KwaZulu-Natal in local government elections 1995

A final factor may have to do with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the argument, increasingly heard in some circles, that it is not really possible to grant amnesty to people in the ANC for deeds committed during the struggle years without also doing the same for Buthelezi and others in the IFP. Certainly, the ANC has no wish to take a route that would somehow equate deeds committed against apartheid with deeds committed in defence of that system: on several occasions already the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its five-volume Report have come under fire from Mbeki for suggesting that there is a level at which gross violations are simply that, no matter who committed them. Of course, Buthelezi has consistently gone further, refusing to accept the TRC process and calling it a witch-hunt against Inkatha. But as the ANC has moved from a position of support for the TRC process to a much more ambiguous relationship (including rejection of a large part of the TRC's final report) it seems that, ironically, the leaderships of the two movements are coming closer together in their rejection of a process that allocates blame, albeit carefully qualified, to them as well as to apartheid criminals.

Buthelezi's stake

From the IFP, or, rather, Buthelezi's side, it is imperative that he be in-

corporated not least because his very considerable ego demands it. In his own best case scenario, recognition would be accorded him as individual: now, as he has claimed, the most senior politician with Mandela's retirement, a Zulu prince and "traditional prime minister" of the country's largest ethnic group, and the leader of a political party that also struggled against apartheid. Clearly, each of these elements would be difficult to swallow for many within the ANC – even though at present their voices have been largely silent. At the very least, however, Buthelezi would stake his claim to be recognized on the basis that he is a political leader with significant independent mass support (and not just the ethnic support he drew on principally in the 1970s and 1980s while the ANC was banned). This is the argument that he has consistently used against both the apartheid state and the ANC government. Of course, to validate this latter claim (the more desirable option for him and the IFP members who also wish to retain seats in and the perks of parliament which they could not do so straightforwardly if there was simple fusion of the two parties) he and his party will have to win the elections in the province again, as well as improve their national standing.

Here, in the need to gain votes before striking any further deals with the ANC, we have a probable answer to the mystery of the sacking of KZN premier Ben Ngubane (as has been the case when such action has been taken by the ANC in the provinces that it controls, the moving of Ngubane was also termed "redeployment"). Ngubane, during his short term in office, proved himself to be a provincial premier interested in the economic development of the province. For this reason he based himself in the port city of Durban, the economic heart of the province, and within easy commuting distance from one of the two capitals of KZN, Pietermaritzburg (the other being Ulundi, the previous bantustan capital, and symbol of the IFP's grassroots strength). He had good relations with the business community and not just with those elements of it who continued to support the IFP.

The man who replaced Ngubane immediately displayed his colours. Lionel Mtshali, one of three IFP cabinet ministers in the national government (that of Science, Technology, Arts and Culture) laid down his basic agenda in his first speech. He advocated greater powers and extended recognition to the amakhosi ("traditional leaders") within local government on the grounds that the chieftainship was "an institution that distinguishes us as people of Africa from Western communities." This was an essential first step in the "mobilization" of rural voters along quasi-traditional lines for the next election, much as had been IFP practice in the past. Additionally, he proposed demanding increased powers and greater political autonomy for the province, especially in the area of policing; and he expressed commitment to a shift of the capital to Ulundi in rural northern KZN, where he would also base himself, a proposal that appeals to the traders and other small-business practitioners who have always been strong Inkatha supporters. (There was also immediate speculation that he would support the bid for a casino license in the province by Inkatha supporter and honorary Zulu, English zoo keeper and eccentric conservative John Aspinall.)

Mtshali is certainly the kind of political figure who reflects the wishes of the central power in the IFP, Buthelezi, and one who can be expected to advance the immediate interests of the IFP, no matter how narrowly these might be defined. Indeed, he has often been accused of using his national ministerial office to do just that – thus recycling his role from the negotiations period of the early-1990s when he had been a vocal proponent of the extremely obstructionist line pursued by the IFP. This is a line that continues to appeal to those who feel more at ease with an Inkatha government at the provincial level, whether for economic or political reasons, than with the centralizing tendencies of the ANC.

If the IFP could pull off both electoral victory, which the Mtshali-line is aimed at ensuring, as well as greater central influence through the incorporation of its leader Buthelezi, then it would have succeeded in shaping the closer relationship with the ANC in its favour. If it does not – by losing the province to the ANC for example – Buthelezi's face will still be saved: he would have a senior position (though perhaps, under such circumstances, more of a ceremonial one) despite his party having been consigned to a relatively minor role in national politics. Provincial cooperation with a ruling ANC government would probably continue. But, regrettably, the activation of even more extensive warlordism (local "strong men" controlling access to land, economic opportunities, and security in exchange for the political acquiescence of communities) in the province would also be possible, drawing active support from various interests who might not consider themselves to be well-served by ANC politicians.

* * *

Whatever the specific unfolding of the presently fluid political situation, the developments we have traced – the continued wooing of Buthelezi – reflect a rewriting of the past. It is difficult to see how this process – it can only be described as an instance of political immorality – squares with other laudable and necessary attempts to address economic corruption and society-wide moral collapse. Once again, it seems, power and the powerful will decide what elements of the past can be quietly forgotten, swept under the carpet of "necessity," while new alliances are cemented.

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Electoral Prostitution

BY ROGER SOUTHALL

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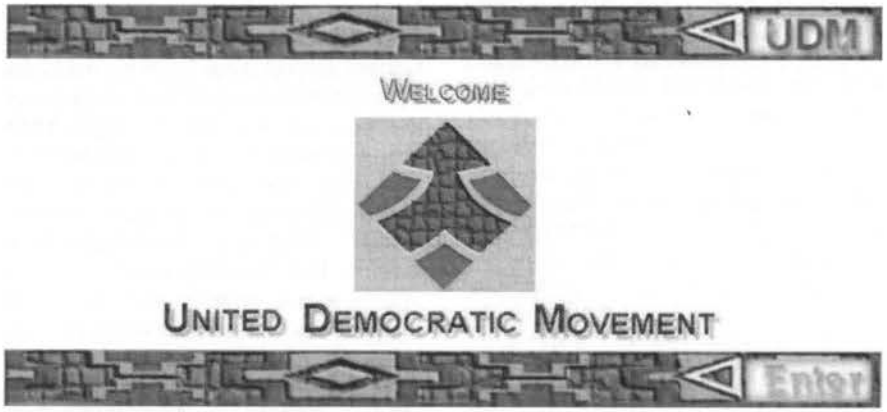
Strictly speaking, prostitution concerns sale of sexual services for money or other benefit, but of course we use the term in other contexts. Why, then, "electoral prostitution"? For the simple reason that what we are faced with in South Africa in the run up to the 1999 election is the extremely unsavoury picture of a considerable number of politicians effectively selling themselves to the highest bidder. And the parties are responding by offering places on their national and provincial electoral lists to politicians who are deemed likely to pull in the votes. The ANC has even come up with its own word to denote its purchase strategy: it has gone in search of "magnets" deemed to have popular appeal.

There are few observers so naive as to believe that politicians anywhere engage in politics purely for reasons of principle. And thank heavens for that, we may say, as we don't want to have to deal with politicians driven only by an ideology or a belief which we oppose: it's better to be confronted by pragmatic right-wingers than principled fascists guided by notions of achieving a racially pure utopia. Even so, we also like to think that political parties and the politicians who represent them stand for something more than material self-gain. After all, democracy is meant to be a free market of ideas! And in the particular context of South African politics, most progressives would like to think, at the very least, that past commitments to the liberation struggle mean that the contemporary ANC is devoted to some sort of popular project designed to improve the life-prospects of the majority and that the Democratic Party (DP), if you like, remains committed to the defense of human rights against abuse by those who hold power. But what is happening in the run-up to the 1999 election suggests that any idea that politicians should be devoted to political principle is being seriously devalued in the parties' scramble for votes.



The impact of PR

In part the problem may lie with the list system associated with proportional representation (PR). There were, of course, sound reasons why the Interim Constitution which inaugurated South Africa's democratic transition replaced the Westminster-style, plurality electoral system with PR for the election of the National Assembly and the nine provincial assemblies. In keeping with the spirit of compromise, the key players recognized the need to ensure the proper political representation of minorities if the transitional settlement was to be adequately inclusive of opposites.

In contrast, staying with the plurality system would have led to the probable over-representation of the big battalions, or led to the African National Congress (ANC) sweeping to victory in all but a relative handful of constituencies. Not only would the enfranchisement of the African majority and the merger of the previously separate White, Coloured and Indian voters' rolls have properly required a fresh constituency boundary delimitation (whose end product would itself have likely become caught up in the negotiation process), but there would also have been the likely need for the authorities to embark upon a time-consuming process of registering the electorate. In contrast, the adoption of proportional representation in its simplest form allowed the 1994 election to proceed within just five months of the final agreement of the constitution. Would-be voters were merely required to demonstrate their eligibility before they regis-

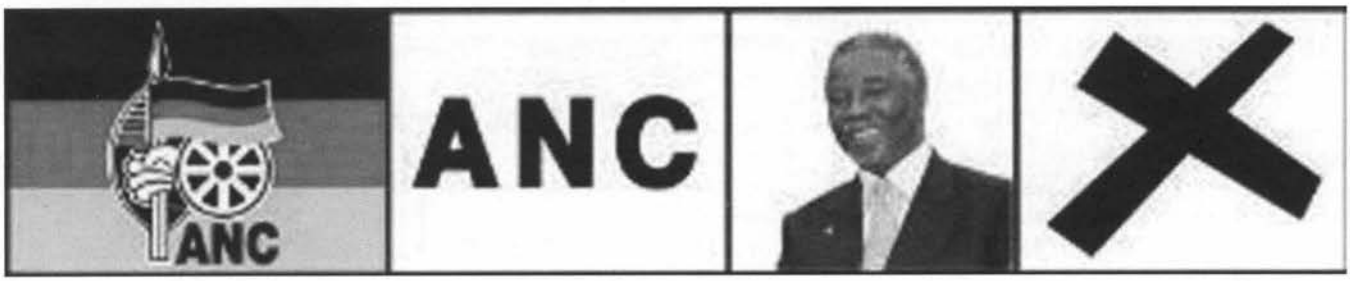
tered their two votes, one for their favoured party at the national level, one for their favoured party at the provincial level. They could vote at whatever polling station they chose throughout the country. The system was rough and ready, but it proved workable on the day. Moreover, the performance in parliament of the smaller parties who would not have been there otherwise has generally justified their presence.

At the same time, there is no doubt that the switch to PR has also come at some cost. The major problems have been entirely predictable, totally in keeping with the classic faults of undiluted list systems as outlined by any basic text on electoral systems. First, party managers – who have the final say in drawing up the party lists of candidates – have been empowered at the expense of the party rank and file. And second, MPs have been freed of accountability to voters in individual constituencies.

Third, the parties have been liberated from the risks and opportunities of having to face by-elections when MPs die or opt to leave parliament. Instead, the party composition of parliament has remained the same, and the affected parties have simply replaced departing MPs. Parliament has thus been serving as a kind of revolving door, with replacements – probably as many as a hundred over the five years – taking the seats of MPs who have left. This in turn has allowed for the insidious insertion of the word "deployment" into the South African political lexicon. In particular, the ANC has taken to it with alacrity: for reasons of skill scarcity or political convenience, an ANC Deployment Committee is most active in allocating personnel: switching "cadres" from the civil service to parliament, from provincial assemblies to parliament, from one job to another: this has its own very extensive implications for the construction of an accountable, democratic politics.

Electoral fluidity

Finally – the main theme here – the PR system has also had important implications for what I have termed "electoral prostitution," the list system offering an ideal mechanism for use by party managers in recruiting the "magnets" referred to above. This occurs at a time when the party scene in South Africa is, as we approach the election, extremely fluid. The ANC is now a dominant party, assured of a massive (perhaps two-thirds) majority at the national level, but engaged in serious battles to win the two provinces (Western Cape and Kwazulu-Natal) in which it failed to obtain a popular majority in 1994; stripped of its powers of state patronage, the (now New) NP (NNP) is bleeding support to left and right and, in the eyes of many, is entering a period of terminal decline. After vigorous performances nationally and provincially, the DP seems set to be the particular beneficiary of the drain of votes from the NNP; the IFP seems to have given up all real pretence at being a national party and is concentrating on consolidating its ethnically-mobilized vote in Kwazulu-Natal; and amongst the other competitors, there are two notable new parties, Bantu Holomisa's United Democratic Movement (UDM) and Louis Luyt's Freedom Alliance (FA), which are bidding for votes for the first time. One outcome of this has been the marked increase in the sale of political flesh.



Such is the scale of movement nationally and provincially that this article is not going to attempt to codify all the inter-party movement that is going on. That will be a project best undertaken after the election when all the dust has settled. However, what will usefully bear reproduction is a summary prepared early in April by Alan Fine in *Business Day* (1 April 1999) and presented here as an accompanying box. From this (by-now-out-of-date) summary, we see that the ANC and the DP are the principal beneficiaries of the defections.

The only question about the ANC's second election victory is, of course, its extent – whilst polls also predict that the DP is likely to at least triple its 1.7 per cent share of the vote it obtained in 1994. It is clearly beginning to capture a large slice of the vote in the white suburbs, even if it is having little luck elsewhere. Meanwhile, the NNP is so clearly heading for a diminished performance that quite a few of its rats are deserting its sinking ship, heading for firmer footing. The DP has been receiving them with open arms. Meanwhile, the IFP – also reckoned to perform worse than in 1994 – is only exporting flesh in one direction (outwards).

These movements were in fact anticipated by the creation of the UDM by Bantu Holomisa and Roelf Meyer. In 1997, Holomisa, it will be recalled, was somewhat abruptly ejected from the ANC for not toeing the party line, and Meyer had given up on attempting to reform the NP from within. This particular combination in the UDM was therefore directed at using their particular personal symbolisms to create a viable opposition party, capable of eventually challenging the ANC, which was drawn from both black and white camps. In short, apart from appealing to those not already politically committed, the UDM was launched with the intention of pulling politicians away from the established parties. And similarly, Louis Luyt – the former Rugby supremo – is promoting his FA as an umbrella under which all opposition forces should gather to pose a collective challenge to ANC "oppression."

The latest opinion polls suggest that it is unlikely that the UDM will achieve its ambition of replacing the NNP as the second largest party in parliament, although it is quite likely to become the official opposition in the Eastern Cape. Meanwhile, Louis Luyt might have been better to confine his very considerable ego to the business and sporting fields. The FA may capture white right wing support from the NNP and the IFP, but it is actually competing with the Freedom Front (FF) amongst a very small segment of the electorate – although it may benefit from Luyt's very considerable financial resources to do a little better than is generally expected. However, what is of particular interest here is the unprincipled opportunism which seems to dictate the dynamic of all these various inter-party movements.

Inter-Party Movement immediately prior to the 1999 Election

DP to ANC	Bukelwa Mbulawa	MP
IFP to ANC	Dumisani Khuzwayo	
NNP to ANC	Patrick McKenzie	MEC
	David Chuenyane	MP
	John Gogotya	MP
PAC to ANC	Malcolm Dyani	MP
ANC to DP	Daron Manyashe	Councillor
IFP to DP	Belinda Barrett	MPL
NNP to DP	Nick Koornhof	MEC
	Pauline Cupido	MPL
	Glen Carelse	MPL
	Tertius Delport	MPL
	Chris Wyngaard	MPL
	Donald Lee	MP
	Bill Stubbe	Councillor
FF to DP	Carl Werth	High Commiss'r
	Philip de Wet	Councillor
	Wickus Theron	Councillor
ADCP to FA	Theunis Botha	MPL
IFP to FA	Kieren O'Malley	MP
NNP to FA	Sakkei Blanche	MP
	Thys Terblanche	Councillor
	Kraai van Niekerk	Former Minister
DP to NNP	William Mnisi	MPL
ANC to PAC	Desmond Strydom	Councillor
NNP to UDM	Sam de Beer	Former NNP Gauteng leader
	Gerhard Koornhof	MPL
IFP to UDM	Sipo Mzimela	MP

Paula Bronstein – Impact Visuals

Stealing winners

What the political parties want to do is to steal vote-winners from their opponents' teams and to project the symbolism of their opponents as being in disarray. Take, for instance, the ANC's capture of Bukelwa Mbulawa from the DP and Patrick McKenzie from the NNP. Mbulawa was the DP's only black MP, and her defection sent out the clear symbolic message that the DP was for whites only. Meanwhile, McKenzie – whom the ANC was recently attempting to have expelled from the Western Cape legislature on grounds of having lied to a standing committee – is seen as a "magnet" to attract the Coloured vote in that province, and a clear indication of that party's forthcoming demise. The UDM's recruitment of Sam de Beer was correctly seen as a huge embarrassment to the NNP in Guateng, whilst Mzimela's crossing from the IFP was seen as signifying ANC inroads into KwaZulu-Natal.

Meanwhile, what the politicians usually want is a continued salary. Your party doing badly in the polls? Why not jump ship? But look before you leap, because what you really need is an electable position on a recipient party's list. Again, Mbulawa and McKenzie are key examples. They spent considerable time playing footsie with the ANC before they made the leap. You may rest assured that along with Malcolm Dyani they have bargained themselves electable places on the ANC's final national list. Likewise, William Mnisi's defection to the NNP was postulated upon his likely poor performance in competition for a high place on the DP's national list. The NNP was happy to accommodate anybody reasonable with a black face. In contrast, Tertius Delport's defection from the NNP to the DP is a gamble which may not have come off. He came in only fifth on the DP's provincial list for the National Assembly in recent party elections, a placing likely to deny him election – although Mbulewa's defection to the ANC will have moved him up a peg. And so it goes on. After the election, we will clearly need a systematic analysis of the motivations for defections, and the success or failure that defectors have enjoyed. But for the moment we can usefully ruminate on some of the likely consequences of all this for the nature of South African politics.

First and foremost, politicians who are vulnerable to defeat are being encouraged to sell their wares to the highest bidder. Of course, when they move, they usually do so by reference to their former party having abandoned the noble principles for which they once stood. The usual line is that the party defector has waged an up-hill battle to turn the party around, but at the end of the day has realized he/she is faced by hopeless odds. Meanwhile, he/she has recognized that his/her new party has itself come to embody those principles to which he/she as a politician has always remained firm.

Take Bukelwa Mbulawa for example. She commented upon her departure from the DP that she had become disenchanted with its commitment to transformation and that it was no longer the party of Helen Suzman or Mollie Blackburn.

Perhaps so. But Mbulawa's lament might have been more convincing had she stood down from parliament previously, without having negotiated a continuance of salary (both she and McKenzie took up ANC vacancies in the National Assembly). Overall, the search for job security or job gain by party defectors has become so evident a characteristic of the present scene that it is likely to encourage yet further cynicism about the motivation and role of all politicians, few of whom are apparently held in general esteem. Meanwhile, we may question how happy electoral prostitutes will be in their new parties. Unless they have very peculiar qualities to offer, it is unlikely that they will achieve high position or trust.

The second consequence of electoral prostitution is that in their enthusiasm to attract "magnets," parties themselves abandon any pretence to principle. In liberal democratic politics, most political parties are open to all comers, and there is no ideological barrier to entry. But under the plurality system, MPs who have crossed the floor from one party to another at least have to win a party nomination at constituency level. However, under the list system as it is presently operating in South Africa, the party managers are in some cases intervening into internal party democratic processes to secure electable positions for their new recruits. So, for instance, the ANC as the newly dominant party is becoming a home for some politicians like McKenzie who were deemed "sell-outs" during the liberation struggle. But even though we might query Mbulawa's motivation, we may well choose to endorse her judgment of the DP, as under the leadership of Tony Leon it seems to have swung significantly to the right in its bid to capture the NNP's white vote. The DP's attempted absorption of what it apparently appears to deem the NNP's most "magnet"-like politicians – some of whom actually held office under apartheid government – does indeed appear to be a sad departure from liberal tradition.

Which way forward?

Political parties clearly want to maximize their vote, and as the rules stand, perhaps they are sensible to encourage worthwhile opponents to prostitute themselves.† Nonetheless, there is a real issue here concerning accountability – both of parties and of politicians. The present spate of defections from one party to another has helped reinforce the sense of many voters that politicians need to be made to answer more directly for their actions. Many whites quite openly lament the loss of their "constituency" MPs, and interestingly, two successive surveys of COSATU workers' political attitudes in 1994 and 1998 indicate that they, too, feel strongly that individual politicians should be strictly "mandated" and required to report back regularly to those who elected them. But if MPs and MPLs don't have constituencies, how can they? Since there can be no suggestion that South Africa should abandon the principle of proportionality, so fundamental to the political settlement of opposites, what is needed, perhaps, is some clear thinking – after the election – about how the electoral and parliamentary system might be amended. Here one possible suggestion (amongst many) might be that 200 out of the 400 MPs be elected from multi-member constituencies carved out of the provinces.

Electoral prostitution cannot all be put down to the workings of PR, of course. We have stressed the apparent waning of principle in contemporary South African politics as a factor, and this is a problem that is, self-evidently, not easily amenable to redress by mere constitutional ingenuity. We have also argued that PR has served South Africa well in many ways, not least by ensuring the representation of minorities. And yet there is a problem here: one senses that the quality of South African democracy might be well served after the election by a careful examination of the operation of the present electoral system and the practices that it is encouraging. For the present set-up is unsatisfactory. Amongst other things, it is encouraging prostitution rather than principle, favouring parties which are best placed to offer patronage, and thereby undermining the practice of South African democracy.

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† *Note, too, an additional reason why this party swapping is occurring most vigorously at election time. The constitution requires that MPs who resign from their political parties are required also to resign from parliament. They cannot "cross the floor" and the party which they leave is entitled to replace them. Party numbers in parliament stay constant. There are costs to this: the consequences of the revolving door to parliament are likely to become dangerous to democracy if MPs and MPLs continue to leave the national assembles and provincial assemblies at the rate which has occurred since 1994. It disrupts continuity, depletes the cohorts of experienced representatives, and thereby reduces the chance of the legislatures holding national and provincial governments to account. Yet, as Alan Fine (Business Day 1 April 1999) points out, the bar against floor-crossing is defensible. On the whole, the large bulk of voters vote for a party and not an individual, and if MPs or MPLs were allowed to cross the floor without immediate penalty, the will of the electorate could be sabotaged. Recall, in this respect, the capacity of governments in Africa to establish parliamentary dictatorships via the expedient of enticing opposition MPs into their ranks.*

Gendering Parliament

Eric Miller – Impact Visuals

BY SHIREEN HASSIM

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One of the most notable features of the government elected in the first South African democratic elections was the significant number of women elected – nearly 25% of all MPs. This was due largely to the use of a quota for women candidates on the ANC list, and the influence this had on the compilation of other party lists (*see box 1*). In terms of formal representation of women, South Africa resembles more established democracies. This achievement was underscored by the ANC's choice of feminist activists Frene Ginwala and Baleka Kgotsitsile as Speaker and Deputy Speaker respectively. Conspiratorial theories about marginalising these strong women notwithstanding, women undoubtedly succeeded in creating a presence in the legislature. In the Cabinet, 4 out of 27 Ministers and 8 out of 14 Deputy Ministers are women. However, as women activists have long pointed out, representation is only a means to an end – that of gender equality. Has representation translated into real gains for women, particularly the high number of poor women in South Africa? Has gender equality been advanced through government policies and legislation? And what avenues can be pursued to ensure that those women who are elected into Parliament use their power to address the interests of women members of their parties?

Representation: of whom and for what?

Representation is a complex issue. On the one hand, it may be argued that citizens should be entirely free to choose their MPs, regardless of whether the candidate chosen 'resembles' them in any way. By implication, a fully 'free and fair' election would focus on the ability of citizens to exercise their right to vote (access to information, freedom from intimidation, etc), rather than on the identities of the candidates. Indeed, a classically liberal position would regard the identities of candidates to be non-material, as the public sphere is viewed as the space in which all are equal. This ideological position underpins the Democratic Party's rejection of the quota as the mechanism for increasing women's representation in the legislature. The Inkatha Freedom Party also rejected a quota, but

nevertheless achieved female representation of 23.3% of its total elected MPs. The ANC, after substantial debate in its ranks, accepted the need for a quota as a short-term strategy. The party argues that the systematic barriers to the political participation of women have to be actively addressed. ANC feminists have pointed out that 'normal' processes of candidate selection are biased against women for a variety of reasons, ranging from social and cultural barriers, to resistance within political parties to the leadership of women. The adoption of the 30% quota was a mechanism for overcoming these barriers.

The use of the quota was facilitated by the electoral system adopted for the first elections. Proportional Representation (PR) with List is a system that greatly improves women's chances of being elected, as it allows progressive party leadership to overcome traditional resistances to women's election. This is especially important in rural communities, where the resistance of the chiefs to women's empowerment has been particularly difficult to challenge. On the other hand, PR systems are regarded as problematic from the point of view of accountability, as primary loyalty is seen to lie with the political party, rather than with voters. In effect, PR is seen to promote representation but not accountability. This assumption of an antagonistic tension in the electoral system needs to be interrogated by feminists in South Africa. It is not clear that constituency-based systems are able to avoid the problems of party hierarchies and loyalties overriding constituents' views. Nor is it certain that MPs elected directly by constituents will always be accessible to their supporters for the duration of their term in office. In South Africa, the introduction of a constituency-based electoral system is likely to produce divisive politics of ethnic and racial interests, given that the apartheid geography of racial segregation has not yet been dismantled. The electoral system will be under review after the 1999 election, and it is important that women in political parties, the legislature and women's organisations place gender parity as an important value to be considered when deciding whether a change is necessary.

The dilemma of whom it is that women will represent once they are elected remains, even with the most favourable electoral system. Obviously, not all women politicians seek to advance gender equality, or choose to interact with women's organisations. But many women activists did enter Parliament in 1994 committed to representing different constituencies of women. However, women MPs in South Africa, like all MPs, are elected on the basis of their party affiliation, rather than on a constituency basis. Political parties not only have a broad range of interests that they aim to represent (i.e. to get as many votes as possible), they also have internal systems of accountability and loyalty. This puts women MPs who see their primary accountability as being to women in a quandary. On the one hand, they are under some pressure from women's organisations to act as their interlocutors in Parliament, taking up issues on their behalf. On the other hand, as party representatives they are also required to consider other constituencies which may have conflicting needs (note e.g. the tension between chiefs and feminists within the ANC). Political party agendas are set at the highest levels of the party, to which women MPs may have access but over which they generally have relatively little influence. In fact, speaking 'for women' may hinder the chances of women MPs advancing within the party. Accountability to the parties in terms of voting positions on specific pieces of legislation – an area in which activist women MPs might seek to ensure gender sensitivity – is strictly enforced by party whips.

Box 1 Women MPs in the National Legislature by Party Affiliation, 1994

Political party	No. of women MPs	Women % total party MPs
ANC	90	36
NNP	9	11
IFP	10	23
FF	0	0
DP	1	14
PAC	1	20
ACDC	0	0

In the first democratic Parliament, a number of routes were pursued to try and break through this dilemma. Within the ANC, a Parliamentary Women's Caucus was formed to deal specifically with the advancement of gender-sensitive policies and legislation within the majority party. This group has been highly successful in identifying legislative priorities for women, and in building support for legislation such as the Domestic Violence Bill, which might otherwise have languished in lengthy bureaucratic procedures. Another route was to constitute an informal multiparty Parliamentary Women's Group (PWG). The PWG aimed at providing a strong women's caucus in Parliament from which to promote anti-discrimination legislation and to act as the link between women in Parliament and civil society. Finally, a Joint Committee on Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women (JCIQLSW) was established as one of fifty parliamentary committees. Internal party structures such as the Women's Caucus are vital to ensure that gender-sensitive interventions in legislation are made early enough to be incorporated before they are tabled before the House and voting takes place. They also can play a vital role in refining the understandings of gender within the party. Unfortunately, only the ANC has such a structure. The PWG has had mixed fortunes as a multiparty caucus. Inevitably, its ini-

tial work revolved around making Parliament a women-friendly institution, and the linkages with civil society were harder to pursue.

Transforming Parliament has also been the task of the Women's Empowerment Unit in the Speakers' Forum. This is a vital long-term task to ensure that women are both effective and accountable parliamentarians. The fundamental problem with a structure such as the PWG is that the common ground between women MPs is narrow. Indeed, as activists and feminist theorists have long pointed out, women are not a homogeneous constituency. Even where women MPs are committed to broad principles of gender equality, their definitions of what this means, their strategies for achieving equality, and the constituencies of women they represent, may be vastly different. It is significant that the driving force behind legislative reform to eliminate gender discrimination has been the ANC Women's Caucus, rather than the multiparty forum, reflecting the different weight given to gender equality by different political parties. Differences in party ideologies cannot simply be overcome by broad commitments to gender equality. Indeed, robust debate between women MPs from different parties should be welcomed. Contestation over which areas of inequality should be addressed in policy, the specific content of policies, and how the national budget should be allocated will get us further towards actually implementing political principles than an approach which rests on maintaining the lowest common denominators around which women unite.

The most successful parliamentary structure for women has been the JCIQLSW. This committee has consulted with women's organisations in civil society, advocated for legislation to eradicate gender inequalities and acted as a point of concentrated energy with regard to gender activism within Parliament. One of its most notable achievements has been its sponsorship, jointly with civil society, of the Women's Budget Initiative. This project has addressed the key determinant of government implementation of its commitment to gender equality: the budgetary allocations to gender. It has disaggregated the budget votes of all the ministries, analyzed spending on women (both direct and indirect) and opened access to the Department of Finance. This lays the groundwork for the next Parliament to consider precisely how women's needs can be addressed through resource allocation in key areas. Collectively, women in the first Parliament made significant progress in addressing gender discriminatory legislation (*see box 2*).

The key to assessing whether representation has translated into real benefits for women, or simply into creating a new elite of women in government, is to ex-

Box 2 Policy and Legislative Changes to End Discrimination against Women

A number of significant policy and legislative changes have been made to end discrimination against women. These include, among others:

- Parliament's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) has provided an invaluable tool for pressuring government to act on its commitments to gender equality.
- Free health services have been provided for pregnant women and children under the age of six.
- The discriminatory tax burden on married women has been repealed. A single rate of income tax is now applied to all people, regardless of gender and marital status.
- The Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1996 provides women with access to abortion under significantly broader and more favourable conditions than previously.
- The Domestic Violence Act of 1998 provides protection for people who are in domestic relationships, regardless of the specific nature of the relationship (i.e. whether marital, homosexual or family relationships).
- The position of mothers dependent on maintenance from former partners is substantially improved as a result of the Maintenance Act of 1998.

The Centre for Applied Legal Studies conducted an audit of gender discriminatory legislation in August 1998, on behalf of the Commission on Gender Equality. The audit identified the following areas, among others, in which legislative changes need to be made:

- Although customary unions and polygamous relationships have been legally recognised since 1998, women continue to suffer inequities in these non-civil unions. In terms of civil unions, changes to the Marriage Act of 1961 are under review by the South African Law Commission.
- Equality legislation needs to ensure that gender equity is explicitly recognised. For example, forms of gender discrimination in terms of pay equity should be unpacked.
- Skills development legislation needs to ensure that women are explicitly targeted.
- Domestic and farm workers remain among the most vulnerable sectors of the workforce. Protective legislation is required. The Department of Labour is currently investigating minimum wage regulations in these sectors.
- Comprehensive reforms in the area of criminal law relating to sexual violence are required.
- Legislation governing housing access and tenure needs to take into account the implications of customary and social practices.

In general, the audit points out that direct discrimination in legislation is relatively easy to target and change. More difficult to deal with are the forms of indirect and systemic discrimination which adversely affect women. Many of these forms of discrimination can only be adequately dealt with through appropriate policy formulation and resource allocation. The work of women MPs in portfolio committees and within their parties is vital to this process.

amine the extent to which principles of gender equality, and mechanisms for reducing inequalities, are integrated into government policies and delivery. From this perspective, the picture looks less rosy. The ANC's Reconstruction and Development Programme attempted to 'mainstream' gender, and developed a draft Women's National Empowerment Policy in consultation with women's organisations. The policy shift away from the RDP to GEAR has removed the enabling discursive environment in which claims for gender equality could be pressed. The Office on the Status of Women, whose responsibility is to develop the draft Women's National Empowerment Policy into a fully fledged plan for mainstreaming gender, has yet to present any policy for public comment. In the absence of direction from this body, civil servants staffing gender desks in government departments have tended to focus on internal issues of gender representivity in the bureaucracy. Nevertheless, significant gains which are worth noting are the child and maternal health policies of the Department of Health under gender activist Minister Nkosazana Zuma, and the reform of maintenance procedures in the Department of Justice, championed by its Deputy Minister Manto Tshabalala.

Accountable to whom?

The foregoing discussion presumes that there are constituencies of women to whom women MPs can be accountable. Certainly, women's organisations in South Africa were highly articulate and visible during the period of constitutional negotiations. However, since 1994 there has been a general decline of grassroots women's organisations, due partly to a leadership vacuum created by the movement of activists into government, and partly by the difficulties of re-defining programmes and objectives in the context of the new democracy. The decline of the Women's National Coalition has been particularly noticeable, given the leadership role this organization played in the early 1990s. In its place, a number of women's lobbying and advocacy groups have been active in engaging with various policy-making processes. The notion of a range of constituencies of women therefore continues to find political resonance. Concerns about the accountability of elected women officials to grassroots constituencies have been voiced at a number of forums of women's organisations and NGOs.

Given the history of women's struggles in South Africa, accountability of women MPs has to be understood as both formal (to political parties) and moral (to the cause of gender equality). In both cases, women constituencies are vital. To ensure formal accountability, women within political parties have to become significantly more organised – both so that women MPs may be even more effective within the legislative arena and so that there are internal party mechanisms for holding them accountable to women members and not just party leadership. The tasks of building constituencies and representing constituencies are somewhat separate. Women's sections of political parties (of which women MPs should ideally be active members) need to articulate the interests of women supporters of their parties, and ensure that these are addressed within the party's broad political platforms and electoral manifestos. In other words, they need to build a constituency of women in the party and of party supporters. Their ability to claim constituencies is crucial to their success within the party, as electoral politics favours vote-catchers. In addition, they have to groom women leaders, and support them for internal party election. They also have to function as one among many conduits between women in Parliament and grassroots women. Without active women's sections within parties, women MPs can be left adrift, overburdened with the multiple tasks of committee work, party responsibilities and gender activism and with no clear political direction (vis-à-vis gender) to their work. The primary task of women MPs should be to define areas of intervention in the legislature, support and report to women in the party: to represent, not to build, constituencies.

At the second level, the moral pressures that have historically emerged need to continue to act as a guiding force for women MPs. The first cohort of women in Parliament bore this responsibility well: many made enormous efforts to consult with civil society, and to share information and build strategies collectively, despite the pressures of being pioneers. However, the relative demobilisation of the women's movement since 1994 will result in fewer women on party lists who have long and deep connections to women's organisations. Without the moral and political pressure from outside Parliament, there is always the danger that women MPs are unable (or increasingly unwilling) to adequately represent the various interests of women. Certainly, the strengthening of the women's movement is an important part of this project. Equally, it has to be recognised that gender activists within Parliament are a part of this women's movement, and not separate from it.

Women's gains in and through parliamentary representation are an important facet of the long term battle to recognize women as agents in political processes, and to provide voices for women in the various arenas of public decision-making. It is important, however, to maintain a critical tension between MPs and government bureaucrats – male and female – who claim to be speaking on behalf of women and the constituencies in whose name these claims are made. Without strong mechanisms for upholding accountability, the danger always exists that representation carries little power to advance the agenda of gender equality.

SAR

Zimbabwe: A Post Neoliberal Politics

BY PATRICK BOND

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Morgan Tsvangirai, the spirited Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) leader, is on the verge of getting a mandate from his several hundred thousand workers to launch a new political party to contest the parliamentary general election next year. He will, at the same time, have to manoeuvre the potholed terrain of oppositional civil society politics, no small task. Does this initiative have the potential, nonetheless, to be Africa's first post-nationalist, post-neoliberal opening?

Exit Mugabe?

It is an exciting time to pose the question. For after serving as the country's leader since 1980, the seventy-five year old Robert Mugabe may finally be preparing an exit route from active politics for himself, according to leading political sources cited in the *Financial Gazette*.

If such reports are true, they suggest Mugabe would remain at State House until the 2002 presidential elections and, more importantly, retain the leadership of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) – known as ZANU PF – until 2004, by which time a successor would have been broken in. However, since Mugabe acts as a kind of superglue in a party that is extremely fractured along regional and ethnic lines, finding a consensus replacement amidst myriad homeboy-feuds in a context of ongoing patronage-based bickering may be impossible once he himself has acquired lame-duck status at a formal ZANU PF congress later this year.

There is no question amongst the vast majority of Zimbabweans that Mugabe must go. Political scientist Masipula Sithole recently reminded his *Financial Gazette* readers of other African nationalists who have represented a variety of exit options: Mengistu/Mobutu – booted out; Kaunda/Banda – elected out; Nyerere/Mandela – retired gracefully (leaving a handpicked successor) but still influence matters where necessary; Moi – divide and conquer the opposition, and tough out the bad patches.

On a good day, if reports from ZANU PF headquarters are correct, Mugabe can appear as a Nyerere, albeit one who is hanging on just a wee bit too long. However, on a bad day – of which are many – Mugabe's irrational and paranoid leadership style, combined with swirl of patronage politics and the character of the country's divided petit-bourgeois opposition, reminds one more of Kenya's ongoing political rut.

Still, with the economy facing unprecedented inflationary pressures and recession simultaneously, with journalists detained and tortured, and with Zimbabwean troops dying more frequently in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (fighting a deeply unpopular war mainly on behalf, it would appear, of political and army leaders' investment interests), the urgency of change has become ever more palpable this year.

Enter Tsvangirai

Thus, in late February, Tsvangirai and ZCTU president Gibson Sibanda attracted 400 representatives of thirty national civic organizations to the "National Working Peoples' Convention" (NWPC) in Harare. The convention was quite vague on questions of political-economic ideology, but resolved to form "a mass political movement for change" which will, said Tsvangirai, "transform into a political party led by an elected, cohesive team whose mandate will be to organize the party and focus on important national issues without being distracted by personality clashes."

But personality clashes are indeed exploding everywhere in Zimbabwe. Given that the 1970s liberation movement was marred terribly by petit-bourgeois infighting and that immature squabbling has continued within the ruling party since then, the lessons for progressive oppositional forces should be evident. Unfortunately, however, distracting echoes of such clashes emerged once again amongst ZANU PF's opponents in the immediate wake of the National Working Peoples' Convention.

It is worth pausing to review the debate amongst such opponents, particularly by placing it in the context of the on-going struggle over the question of constitutional reform. One reason for doing so is that a reformed constitution could lead to delaying the general election (currently scheduled for early in 2000) and possibly even a merger of that poll with the presidential election (due in 2002). More important, however, is the fact that the class character of the constitutional reform debate seems likely to have an on-going impact on the simultaneous attempt to form a new party and political programme that might hope for the support, active and effective, of workers and poor Zimbabweans.

Constitutional conundrums

For most of this century, Zimbabwe has been dominated by messianic, all-powerful rulers – Huggins and Smith in white Rhodesia and Mugabe since – each of whom established excessive concentrations of presidential power and demon-

strated impressive capacity for demagogy. Precisely this problem motivated the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) of civil society organizations in 1998.

The NCA aims to throw out the 1979 Lancaster House Constitution and write one more amenable to decentralized power, entrenched political-civil rights, and free elections. Tsvangirai is chair of this initiative, and a cross-section of powerful opposition interests and vocal public intellectuals are NCA members.

But how is this NCA initiative likely to intersect with the more recent emergence of the National Working Peoples' Convention and the possibility of a new political party that springs from it? Or, put differently, how can the leading forces in civil society who are driving both these processes retain mass credibility – which the NCA apparently enjoys – while there emerge, as there must, transparent ambitions to contest political power. (Tsvangirai and Sibanda, for example, have promised to leave their ZCTU positions when a formal labour-backed party emerges.) In this sense, is the move towards the formation of a progressive political party premature?

Laudably, Tsvangirai is moving slowly and carefully, ensuring that he brings along as many of his own structures as possible: March and April witnessed a void of explicit progress on the new party front, for example. Nonetheless, a bruising debate between a half dozen eloquent public intellectuals did break out, leading to some serious splintering of the NCA, partly over questions of process and partly over content.

To take process first, there is emerging concern over the logistics of the NCA campaign to rewrite the constitution, and a question of whether this can be done prior to the 2000 election, not least because of the recently-announced presidential commission of inquiry headed by Minister Eddison Zvobgo. Zvobgo appears anxious to co-opt select civil society leaders onto his own advisory group, and hence divide the opposition, draining the NCA of momentum.

In response, the NCA quickly resolved not to have anything to do with Zvobgo's commission, on grounds that it is dominated by ZANU PF and that its findings can be vetoed or amended at will by Mugabe. The dispute led to the mid-April expulsion from the NCA of a conservative journalist, Lupi Mushayakarara, who accepted Zvobgo's invitation shortly after blasting Tsvangirai for his working-class bias.

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches also resigned its NCA membership in April, though Catholic church interests remain firmly in place in part through aggressive human rights defender Michael Auret of the Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace (notable for publicizing the government's 1980s mass murder of Ndebele people). Influence from the classically-liberal Legal Resources Foundation (through David Coltart) is also important.

This lineup led Jonathan Moyo – an eclectic public intellectual who left Zimbabwe for the Ford Foundation's Nairobi office in the early 1990s and who is now based at Wits University in Johannesburg – to ask the NCA: "What sort of class interests do you represent? The NCA speaks as if it's unaware of its own class interests."

Civil society ... and politics

Consider Zimbabwe's weak civil society, and in particular the lack of NCA membership from rural organizations and the peasantry, as well as the ranks of 1970s national liberation movement vets (still a force not to be discounted), says Moyo, and it is clear that far more work is required to establish a united citizens' front in advance of giving the appearance of merely being a stalking-horse for some early bid for political power. (Uganda's non-partisan Citizen Coalition for Constitutional Change would be a better model for Zimbabwe, he suggests.)

In this context, Moyo writes scathingly about Tsvangirai's latest, more overt, move (via the NWPC) towards the political arena: "How can people who have been calling for constitutional reform as 'civil society' suddenly make a U-turn in favour of forming a political party? While Zimbabwe has been short of all-embracing civil society groups, it has not been short of political parties. Forming political parties under the present circumstances in Zimbabwe is the business of scoundrels whose visions, if they have any, do not transcend the smell of State House, however distant."

Interestingly, however, and notwithstanding his harsh tone, Moyo also concedes in private discussion that "the time is right for a labour-based party, taking advantage of the increasing mess in which the government finds itself." Such are the dilemmas facing would-be progressive politicians in Zimbabwe!

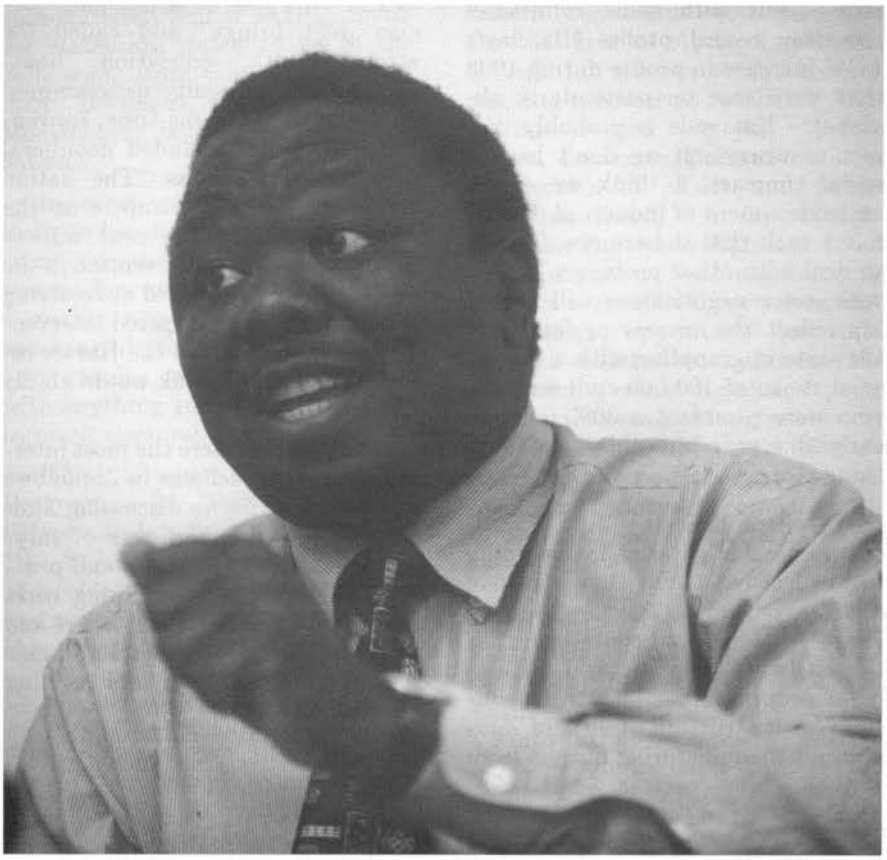
A political party?

It may well be true that such a new party initiative should better have been mounted in the early 1990s, at a time when ZANU PF still claimed the left ground while imposing classical neoliberal economic policies. (At that time, the ZCTU moved instead from a militant stance against structural adjustment, which it took between 1989 and 1992, to a more accommodating one – as witnessed both in its 1996 "Beyond Esap" economic policy document and in its then-unheeded calls for a social contract with big business and big government.)

Now, amidst the welter of confusing debate around attempts to establish a level political playing field through constitutional reform, there is a danger that workers are coming to the party idea too late. How can they seek to clarify and defend

both their own self-interests and the vision of a Zimbabwe transformed along social and economic lines to meet the needs of the vast majority of poor Zimbabweans, when the competition, competing petit-bourgeois and even bourgeois voices, will now, no doubt, help pull even Tsvangirai rightwards?

The problem of contradictory class agendas within civil society is a real one, then. Thus, University of Zimbabwe law professor Welshman Ncube acknowledges the need for the NCA to draw aboard more sectors of society, and so, in mid-April the NCA proposed a People's Constitutional Convention to be held in late May. Explained Ncube, "within the NCA we have been acutely conscious of our fallibility . . . The insistence of the NCA on an all-stakeholders' conference is premised on the principle or notion that the NCA does not and cannot represent all the stakeholders and hence the need for an all-parties/stake-holders' conference."



Sasa Kralj – iAfrika Photos/Impact Visuals

Morgan Tsvangurai

Yet this may not be sufficient, Moyo contends, and here is where process problems lead to potential divides over the content of constitutional reform (but also of the mounting of an alternative politics more generally): "A critical assessment of the rhetoric of NCA mouthpieces like David Coltart, John Makumbe (an outspoken UZ political scientist), Mike Auret and Welshman Ncube leaves a clear impression that while they are offended by ZANU PF's fifteen or so amendments to the Lancaster House Constitution, they are silent about the manifest and very serious shortcomings of the Lancaster constitutional framework which entrenched the economic interests of some powerful racial and business groups in this country."

Moyo continues, "Given that the leading groups in the NCA are churches and some hidden business interests with donor support, what kind of rights does the NCA really want to write into the new constitution? If there is any logic to the saying that he who pays the piper names the tune, is the NCA not facing a clear and present danger of being a mindless megaphone in defense of the pursuit and further entrenchment of the interests of narrow-minded church, racial and business groups?"

Specifically, Catholic church ownership of land has not made the bishops particularly forward-thinking about rural social relations. Nor has the NCA been the anticipated site of discussion over more thorough-going socio-economic rights (to housing, healthcare, water, food, and the like, such as those enjoyed on paper, but not yet in practice, in the South African constitution), ideas once propounded by Ncube and the leftist NCA lawyer Tendai Biti, but which have recently been submerged.

The constitutional process debate remains rarefied, therefore, and threatens to divert, even overshadow, fresh political perspectives that would be more sensitive to problems framed by the daily grind of survival that faces the vast majority of Zimbabweans. Are not such perspectives, in any case, a more likely basis for dislodging Mugabe's regime in coming elections, not to mention their potential impact on the broadening of democratic practice through civil society-based, street-level protest?

"People seem to pin all their hopes on a new and democratic constitution as a solution to all the ills bedeviling this country," complains sociologist Rudo Gaidzanwa. "Somehow, this belief in the legal processes has given people relief from having to ponder their pasts and futures. Those people who are members of disadvantaged groups should be suitably wary of legal and

judicial processes for these processes have not had much impact in extending justice for women, for ethnic minorities, for small worker plaintiffs in the labour courts and processes, for people with disabilities, etc."

A 21st century programme?

Which raises for all observers the thorniest issue of all: what programmatic way forward? Is it not the case that, with a tough worker-peasant ideology and concrete programme of action, a ZCTU-backed party could answer such a question at the level of mass politics and thus emerge, from the welter of micro-parties that now dance on the right of the political spectrum (not to mention the many and diverse factions within the ruling party itself), as the most formidable opponent ZANU PF and its de facto one-party state has ever faced?

There are, of course, temptations to do otherwise, temptations that also come from other quarters than does the siren-song of undue (if, up to a point, appropriate) preoccupation with the constitution. Should the ZCTU rejoin, for example, the tripartite (and eminently corporatist) National Economic Consultative Forum that it quit at the end of February when it became clear Mugabe would not rescind his late-1998 ban on strikes? For if it does, it basically signs on to the rescinding of price controls, to further trade liberalization, to deepened privatization, to wage restraints, and to a variety of other private sector agenda items, with virtually no chance of putting worker issues on the table from a position of strength.

In recent weeks, the ZCTU has heard extremely inviting noises tempting it to do so (albeit no concrete concessions, such as the lifting of the stayaway ban) from senior government minister Nathan Shamuyarira, Labour Minister Florence Chitauro (who was formerly a ZCTU vice president), and the president of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, Kumbirayi Katsande. Thus, Katsande was quoted in the *Financial Gazette* as arguing that "it was crucial that the three parties agreed on a social contract before the end of June this year and before the onset of this year's wage negotiations, which are expected to be some of the toughest the country has experienced."

With inflation now breaching 50% – but with some companies reporting record profits (Barclay's 181% increase in profits during 1998 that were seen as particularly obscene) – Katsande is probably correct to worry, "If we don't have a social contract, I think we create an environment of industrial disharmony such that it becomes difficult to deal with other problems." (Private sector negotiations will probably reflect the success or failure of the state in grappling with a threatened strike of 180,000 civil servants who were promised a 30% increase early this year but didn't get anything close.)

In all of this, the ZCTU leaders' political orientation is now going to be decisive. Will they continue along a path laid out in "Beyond Esap," with its fatal concession that the early 1990s structural adjustment programme – largely responsible for destruction of 40% of Zimbabwe's manufacturing output from 1991-95 – was "necessary but insufficient"? Or can the workers' leaders and soon-to-be political party put forward to society a convincing case for "genuine development," as it has been termed?

Perhaps a promising portent in this respect can be found in one the NWPC's main resolutions:

National policies should emphasize the mobilization and organization of national resources to meet people's basic needs for food security, shelter, clean water, health and education. Resources such as land, skills, capital and technology should be distributed equitably ... Land should be redistributed in a manner that is driven by the people through democratic, transparent and gender-sensitive processes, with clear criteria and mechanisms for accountability. The land policy should aim at sustainable agricultural development and rural industrialization to create job opportunities in the rural areas.

Other resolutions covered civil and political rights, and also attacked "the loss of sovereignty foreign debt brings" and called for strong health, education, housing and gender-equity programmes. And yet, at the same time, convention resolutions included neoliberal formulations such as "The nation should be made to compete on the global market in the next millennium" and "State intervention in the market should be aimed at resolving market failures by targeted intervention" – both of which the Harare office of the World Bank would gladly endorse.

Still, this is where the most interesting political debates in Zimbabwe must come to lie: in discussing Zimbabwe's actual experiences of varying development rhetorics and practices since 1980; determining what actually happened (when, where and to whom, and disaggregated by gender) at a detailed level; and deciding the way forward.

It won't be easy to sustain such debates amidst oppositional protests that target (correctly but often quite narrowly) the degenerating situation in the sphere of freedom of speech and of association, the rise of corruption, Mugabe's bloody-minded involvement in the D. R. Congo war, and various other urgent problems that confront the Zimbabwe body politic. But the ZCTU leaders' historic opportunity to open an honest public policy discourse over what could indeed be achieved in the way of genuine development and true political liberation is, if seized upon effectively, the only real way forward towards social progress.

SAR

Botswana: The Opposition Implodes

BY LARRY A. SWATUK

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1999 may well be dubbed "the year of the election" in Southern Africa: approximately half of SADC's member states are slated to go to the polls some time this year: among them, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

In every case, the incumbent looks to be an easy winner; and, in every case, the return of incumbents seems due more to the lack of a viable opposition and less to any tangible voter satisfaction with government, or, for that matter, with anything government has done to merit electoral victory.

This is particularly so in Botswana. In "Botswana: What Clinton Didn't See" (*SAR* Vol. 13 No. 3), I highlighted a panoply of problems besetting the country and suggested that perhaps the only thing that would shake Botswana out of its diamond-induced stupor would be a BNF victory in 1999. Given the rather surprising turn of events during the past ten months, however, fewer statements appear more fanciful. Any opposition victory appears more unlikely today.

Changing fortunes

Make no mistake, the BDP remains a party that governs by autopilot; despite half-hearted claims that "Botswana must go hi-tech," and promises that more creative policies are in the hopper, it is clear that government remains content with a diamond-driven economy supplemented by Lomé-guaranteed beef exports. In power for 33 years, complacency on the part of government and apathy on the part of the electorate characterize the general political mood.

As is the case with many oligarchies through history, infighting borne of stasis in its hierarchy threatened to unravel the BDP through most of 1997 and the first part of 1998. Two events seem to have served to restore the status quo, however. On the first of April, Lieutenant General Ian Khama became a card-carrying member of the BDP. And, as one report put it, "Before sunset, he was appointed minister of presidential affairs and public administration." A few months later the Botswana National Front split into two factions following violence at its annual party congress. Botswana's "opposition" has since played a round of musical chairs, the result being one new political party – the Botswana Congress Party (BCP) – and a five party alliance called BAM (the Botswana Alliance Movement) which has come together in order to contest elections slated for sometime around October 1999.

The "new" BDP?

The BDP commissioned a well-known South African professor, Lawrence Schlemmer, to undertake a study exploring ways to reinvigorate the ruling party and make it more relevant for the post-Masire era. Schlemmer's recommendations boiled down to this: if the party wants to retain power, it should reflect the demographics and interests of Botswana society. It should seek therefore to recruit younger people in general, more women in particular, and to focus its attention on issues of human welfare, not simply macro-economic stability and healthy rates of GNP growth.

The act of commissioning such a study reflected real BDP fears that they faced for the first time the possibility of electoral defeat. The BDP's secretary general, Daniel Kwelagobe, admitted as much at the party's National Council meeting last November: "A united and cohesive opposition would have proven formidable in the general elections on account of the constant growth in popularity it had been experiencing." This possibility must also be set within the context of what President Mogae termed "the dark chapter of factions and infighting," characterised most clearly by the party's inability to elect a central committee at its last congress. As a compromise, a list was drawn up from the two feuding factions.

Far from recruiting youth and women into positions of power, however, the recent BDP primaries reflected a return to the status quo. And as for the end of factional infighting, the 1999 party congress set for July will tell that tale. Mogae's decision to bring Ian Khama into the picture seems a brilliant move in this regard. It is now clear that Khama was brought in from outside the BDP to put an end to feuding between the Kwelagobe and Merafhe factions. Yet, Mogae himself – sometimes referred to as the "reluctant politician" – is untested. He was "catapulted" into power by an out-going Masire concerned to avoid further splits within the party; for this reason, the extent of his support within the party remains unclear.

The magic of "Khama"

What is clear is that part of the BDP's strategy for winning 1999 now involves trading on the revered name of "Khama." Seretse Khama was Botswana's first President and Head of State. His oldest son, Seretse Khama Ian Khama, is paramount chief of the Bangwato, the traditionally dominant group among Botswana's constitutionally-recognised "eight tribes." Ian Khama was, until recently, comman-

der of Botswana's Defence Forces (BDF), and a Brigadier at the tender age of 36. Upon Mogae's elevation to the presidency, Botswana's new President and Head of State made Khama Minister of Presidential Affairs – thereby sidelining Mogae's old rival Ponatshego Kedikilwe – and nominated him for the position of Vice President.

As Vice President and Minister for Presidential Affairs (which includes responsibility for the BDF, the police, communications and the media, and the civil service), Khama assumes a dominant role in the country's political life. Granted, the BDP historically has been strongest in the north; it should be remembered that while Vice President in 1969, Quett Masire was defeated in Kanye South and had to be reappointed by Seretse Khama as one of four Specially Elected Members. In order to qualify for the Vice Presidency, one must be an elected member of parliament. To this end, long-serving MP for Serowe North, Roy Blackbeard, agreed to give up what has long been regarded as a BDP "safe-seat" so that Khama could contest the riding in a by-election. Though Khama won the riding uncontested, the BDP made much of its victory and are sure to trade heavily on the family name in future.

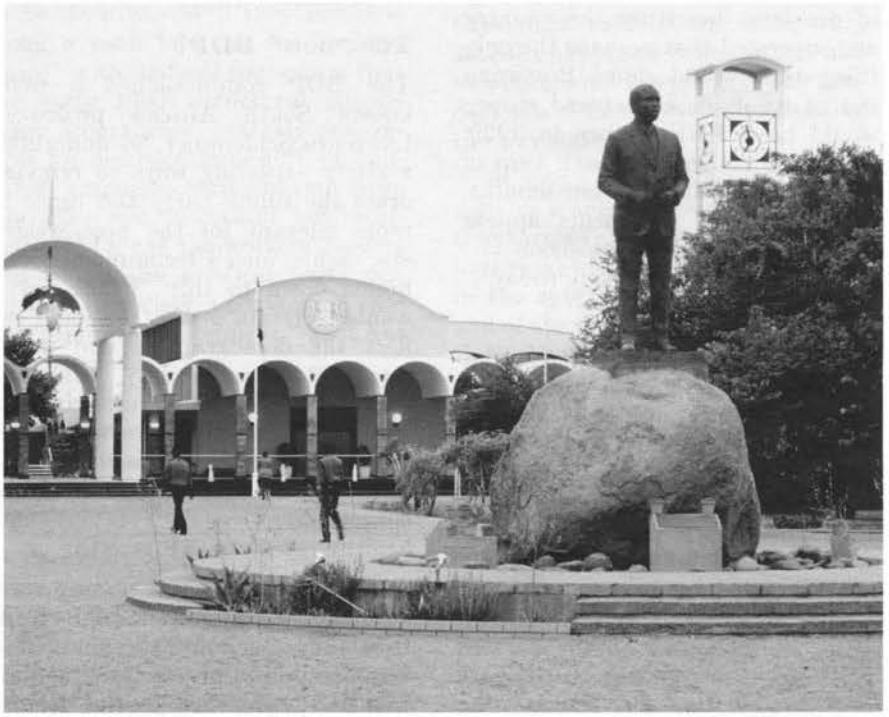
Speculation is rife regarding how the Mogae-Khama team will approach the July party congress. For the first time, the party will elect a Presidential Candidate, for which Mogae appears a shoe-in. However, some observers feel that the party's current chair, Ponatshego Kedikilwe, may also stand as a candidate thereby reigniting a long smoldering rivalry. If he does not, the question then becomes, to what extent will Khama become involved in party politics? For many feel that Khama may challenge Kedikilwe for the position of party chair. With regard to party secretary general, it seems likely that Daniel Kwelagobe will relinquish the position due to ill health. Gaotlehaetse Matlhabaphiri is favoured as his replacement, though some feel that a favoured-son of Khama, Jacob Nkate, may challenge for the position. Nkate is the lone relatively young face in an aging and familiar crowd.

All this jockeying for position seems a long way from the interests of the electorate. With the implosion of the opposition, however, the BDP seems to be saying that until it gets its house in order the interests of Batswana can wait.

Boom goes the BNF

Recognising its growing strength as a catch-all party of aggrieved Batswana, one faction within the BNF central committee sought to remodel itself for the coming elections. Seeking to capitalize on the fact that Batswana between the ages of 18-21 were for the first time eligible to vote, many BNF members felt it was time for a leadership change. Kenneth Koma, BNF founding member and long-time party leader, had already outlasted two Botswana presidents; with Mogae's arrival, the April 1998 BNF party congress seemed a propitious time for Koma to go. Sensing at the time the very real possibility of victory in the 1999 elections, the BNF central committee – ultimately minus Koma and the party treasurer – hoped to make the party more relevant to and reflective of the interests of the electorate. Sensing a "palace coup," Koma trucked in a contingent of stone throwing, stick wielding and chair smashing youths who completely disrupted proceedings. With the meeting in total disarray, Koma declared a state of emergency which he later defended as clearly mandated in the party's constitution. In order to "restore order," and without a trace of irony, Koma suspended the entire central committee, save for the party treasurer.

There ensued a short period in which the BNF was split into two warring "factions": on one side stood the central committee, which included the bulk of BNF members of parliament (eleven of thir-



Don Boroughs – PictureNET Africa

Statue of first President, Sir Seretse Khama, at Gabarone National Assembly

Motlapele Segale – (aids ribbon) PictureNET Africa

Botswana President Festus Mogae

teen); on the other side stood Koma and the party treasurer. Differences, ultimately, were irreconcilable: the sidelined central committee decided to form a new political party – the Botswana Congress Party – and leave the Koma-headed BNF to sort itself out. Beyond the desire for a refurbished image, however, were differences of substance. Michael Dingake, leader of the BCP, noted that the language of socialist revolutionary struggle so closely associated with the BNF had run its course and reflected neither the interests nor beliefs of the party membership. Asked in a questionnaire distributed by the *Midweek Sun* to compare BNF and BCP ideologies, Dingake said:

The BNF ideology as insinuated by the so-called Left is that the relatively better off Batswana are despicable, wicked and what-have-you. [In contrast, the BCP position] is honest, simple and clear. We are all Batswana and entitled to be rich in a rich country. The wealthy who have already made it by hard work and thrift deserve to be applauded and emulated.

Judging from the contents of the BCP's Democratic Development Programme, the new party seems to be one centred on Keynesian economic thinking. Again, according to Dingake,

The poor as far as the BCP is concerned must be assisted by creating opportunities for them to go up the ladder of economic progress ... The weaknesses of the BDP have been arrogance, lack of vision, lack of innovativeness, insensitivity, patronage and mistaking infrastructural development as the essence of human development. The approach of the BCP will be to avoid the pitfalls.

The BCP has identified the following issues for emphasis in the run-up to the election: poverty, HIV/AIDS, the widening income gap, rising unemployment, continuing discrimination against "minor" tribes, crime, and capacity building – issues also highlighted for "action" by both the ruling BDP and BAM.

BAM goes the opposition

While the BCP hit the ground running, the BNF took several months longer to regroup. Conscious of the party's much diminished stature, Koma took what was perhaps the only step possible: he entered into alliance with four other marginal parties, the Independence Freedom Party (IFP), the Botswana People's Party (BPP), the United Action Party (Bosele), and the Botswana Progressive Union (BPU). At the end of January 1999, the leaders of these five political parties met in Palapye and signed an alliance protocol. They also issued a joint communique which stated in part:

We the opposition parties of Botswana have after sober and deep reflection on the current political situation in Botswana resolved to cooperate in order to take over political power and transform our society for the better.

The following weekend BAM held its inaugural rally at Ramotswa, located a short distance outside Gaborone. At the meeting the BCP was lampooned as the "Botswana Criminal Party" by one BAM activist. Such unoriginal verbal "stone throwing" constituted

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Tracking the Transition

A REVIEW BY MARLEA CLARKE

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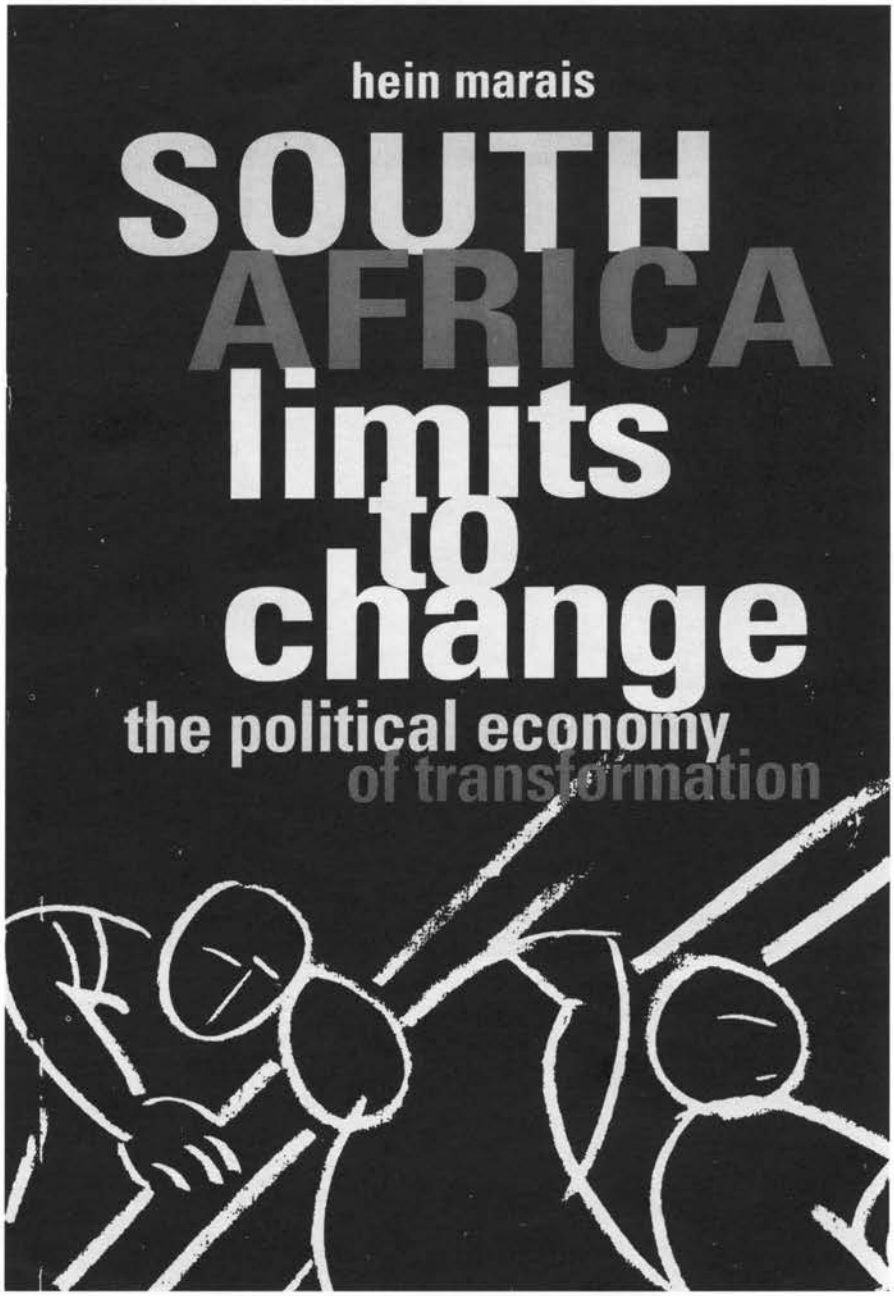
Hein Marais, South Africa: Limits to change. *Cape Town: UCT Press, 1998. 269pp. ISBN 1-919713-13-1*



Official government activities, rallies and various public events marked this year's Freedom Day (April 27) in South Africa. With the election fast approaching, it is not surprising that the ANC and COSATU took advantage of this day to campaign, highlighting the gains that have been made over the past five years and the importance of an ANC victory in this second democratic election. Indeed, given the choices available to voters, the ANC clearly has the most to offer to workers. But is offering "the most" good enough? For despite some achievements in labour legislation and social policies, the ANC in government has also accelerated economic restructuring which serves the interests of foreign capital and big business. Was the government "pushed," by business and the limitations that globalization has imposed, or did they uncritically embrace neoliberal economic policies and the narrow path of liberal democracy? These are some of the questions Hein Marais addresses in his recent book, *South Africa: Limits to Change.*

Given the speed and direction of events that have unfolded in the 1990s in South Africa, it is no surprise that the country has captured the attention of many writers, scholars and political activists. While a wide range of books and articles have focused on the country's transformation, and on assessing the achievements and failures of the early years of the ANC led government, Marais' book remains one of the best. A comprehensive and detailed account of the transition, this book is important reading for anyone interested in understanding post-liberation politics in South Africa. A name familiar to many of our readers, Marais is the former deputy editor of South African periodical *Work in Progress,* co-author of *Popular Movements and the Struggle for Transformation in South Africa* and has been published

widely, both in South Africa and abroad.

The real transition

While the central questions Marais addresses are not necessarily new, this book's approach and analysis depart in significant ways from much of the literature on South Africa's transition. In stark contrast to approaches which focus narrowly on detailing the negotiation process, or on applauding the "successful" transition to democracy, Marais critically assesses this process within broader historical, political and economic contexts. Those who have read this book or indeed any of recent articles Marais has written in South African and Canadian newspapers will need little persuading as to the strengths of his analysis. A result of his own background, both as a journalist and activist in the country for over a decade, Marais brings a depth of knowledge and insight that few other authors have. Yet, this comprehensiveness doesn't make the book a difficult read. The author's clear and smooth writing style allows him to "tell the story" of the transition in an engaging and persuasive manner, covering all the relevant debates, information and literature.

Perhaps most importantly the book raises two key questions: why were the leftward impulses of the ANC and the broader liberation movement tamed and neoliberalism embraced; and, what are the possibilities of progressive social change in South Africa and elsewhere, given the current neoliberal global context? To answer these questions, Marais traces the history of the liberation struggle, identifying key factors that framed, or influenced, decisions made throughout the struggle – decisions that later influenced policy choices made by the ANC-led government.

Specific chapters on the country's economy, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the ANC's economic policy begin to provide answers to such questions. In these, Marais convincingly debunks the argument that the ANC simply "saw the light" or chose this growth strategy based on pragmatic concerns. He also dismisses the popular accusation that the ANC simply "sold out." This latter view, he argues, is based on the assumption that there was ever ideological unanimity within the party. Marais' detailed historical account of the liberation movement reveals that unanimity did not, and does not, exist.

Critiquing these views, Marais argues that the move away from the more Keynesian economic policies of "growth through redistribution" to the embrace of more narrow market-based reforms was a much more contested and complicated process. Several factors contributed to this shift. First, while general positions were held and articulated by the party, the ANC simply failed to develop for itself a coherent economic strategy. Indeed, economic policy received little attention within the ANC during negotiations and in the years prior to the period of transition itself. This failure was linked in turn to a number of general weaknesses in the liberation movement: the historical privileging of the political over the economic; political strategies that continued to accept the two stage theory of revolution; the petit bourgeois character of the ANC; inadequate conceptions of societal change; and the nature of the relationship between the internal movement and the ANC in exile.

A second but related issue he points to is the negotiations process itself. Organizational and ideological weakness within the ANC, when coupled with the party's abovementioned failure to develop an economic strategy, meant that more progressive approaches to economic development were lost (or defeated) when the debate moved from the ideological to the technical terrain. He argues that the ANC (including those within the party's Department of Economic Policy) and its left allies were ill equipped to engage in debates on technical grounds and therefore business and more conservative figures within the ANC successfully "steered" economic policy along a more orthodox path. An equally important effect of this more technical nature of the debate was that concrete decisions about economic strategy were allowed to be defined outside the party's broader social and political objectives, thus marginalizing activists and progressive thinkers from negotiations around economic policy. As a result, by the time the more left-oriented MERG report was produced in 1993, the direction of economic policy had already been pretty much determined.

Analyzing the shift

For anyone unconvinced that a shift has taken place – from a more popular-driven socio-economic development strategy to a more exclusively market-driven approach – Marais provides a detailed analysis of the government's current macroeconomic strategy, GEAR. Outlining key features of the strategy (growth; job creation; trade, taxes and financial controls), his key chapter on the subject reveals the strategy's contradictions, problems, and neoliberal orientation. Such a detailed assessment is a welcome addition to existing left critiques of GEAR. Indeed, most left critiques of GEAR rely on rhetoric, or on merely listing central features of the economic strategy that can be shown to correspond to IMF imposed adjustments or similar market driven reforms, as proof of the government's uncritical acceptance of neoliberalism. Marais' chapter, in contrast, provides one of the clearest, more comprehensive analyses of GEAR available. In discussing the ANC's shift, Marais is also careful not to glorify the RDP and merely call for its revival. Instead, he outlines some of the weaknesses of that document too, and begins to sketch a way to go beyond the RDP in order for a more

transformative project to be consolidated.

This harsh and rigorous critique of the ANC (and the SACP) seems to suggest that we (South Africans and those outside the country who were part of the anti-apartheid movement) shouldn't be surprised that this move away from socio-economic transformation has taken place. Indeed, we shouldn't have expected anything more from the ANC. So, this seems to suggest, if "blame" for the adoption of a neoliberal development strategy to guide the country's transition must be placed anywhere, it should be placed firmly with the ANC.

And yet, as Marais' later chapters indicate, it's not quite so simple as that. His detailed chapter on globalization indicates that it was not merely internal events that shaped the transition. Changes in the world economy, South Africa's marginal position in world trade, and the consolidation of neoliberal policies and governing practices elsewhere in the world are not insignificant factors. For Marais does take seriously the process of globalization and questions whether any country, especially any in the third world, has sufficient power at a national level to withstand global capitalism's homogenizing influences.

In sum, while he identifies the weaknesses within the ANC and rigorously critiques the government's economic strategy, Marais argues that the failure to advance an alternative development model cannot be completely separated from an analysis of the processes and pressures of globalization. Indeed, his discussion of regional influences and global processes which contribute to shaping South Africa's transition is one of the book's great strengths. Unlike most other accounts of the country, Marais takes seriously the changing regional and global context, presenting a wealth of data on global trends.

Weighing the factors

What he seems to conclude is that globalization severely complicates but does not preclude efforts by countries like South Africa to implement economic strategies that run counter to the dominant world order. Fair enough. And yet it is here that we find the one major weakness in his presentation. For he just doesn't take this analysis quite far enough, his argument getting a little muddled precisely when it moves from a more general focus on the new world order and the overbearing weight of globalization processes throughout the world to a focus on the quite specific case of South Africa itself.

Thus, on the one hand, he suggests that South Africa had much more room for manoeuvre than other countries in the developing world, citing, among other things, the lack of major loans from the IMF and World Bank which implies that multilateral lending institutions have had less leverage than in many other countries. On the other hand, this is contrasted with a discussion of globalization which suggests that governments around the world, especially those in the third world, have little choice but to accept the logic of global competitiveness and adapt their economies to the demands of an increasingly global economy.

Or, to take another example: in outlining the kind of political mobilization and strategy necessary to advance an alternative development strategy, Marais seems to set aside his strong critique of the party's internal weaknesses and petit-bourgeois tendencies. Instead he highlights the important role the party must play in reconfiguring a popular movement on the basis of an explicitly transformative perspective. Yet in this formulation Marais seems to "bail out" the ANC, now implying that external factors have been the more decisive in the shift to neoliberalism!

It is true, of course, that globalization remains a force, one important point of reference for framing the question of just how likely it is that the ANC can build and advance an alternative project in the coming years. Nonetheless, in assessing the book as a whole, there is a certain lack of precision in defining the relative weight to be assigned to diverse determinations, which, if they are not contradictory, need to be more carefully assessed. In the absence of such increased clarity as to where (and to what extent) the problem lies, the last chapter in particular – on "the way forward" – is just not as convincing at it might otherwise have been.

Marais' difficulty in bringing together the two pieces – the changing world order on the one hand and the shaping of national-level decision-making on the other – also means that some more specific processes are also left unproblematized. He doesn't adequately develop his argument around the limitations that globalization has imposed on the transition, for example. After a thorough and detailed discussion of the processes and key factors of globalization, Marais simply sets the global context aside. Apart from a few brief references to pressures from "foreign experts" (such as economists from the IMF), the discussion of the shift in the ANC's economic policy makes almost no reference to external pressures, or to how the specific broader world order conditions local structures and politics.

There were, in fact, a number of interesting international exchanges and relationships which may have contributed to policy development. For example, exchange visits in the early 1990s between South African (including ANC officials) and American economists and the visit of American economist to the ANC conference on anti-trust policies aren't addressed. Nor was the 1992 World Bank sponsored two week intensive training program for South African economists on the 'management of economics in transition' mentioned. What impact

did these interactions have on the development of ANC policy?

And, equally important, what precisely has been the impact of capital itself? Marais never really concretizes its presence and role in the decision-making process. While suggesting that business was able to defeat the ANC during negotiations when the debate moved from an ideological to a technical level, for example, he seems almost to imply that this was due mainly to the ideological vacuum that existed within the party. No reference is made to firms, such as those in the mining sector, which were important domestic political actors once they had disentangled themselves from the National Party. Further, the investments, activities and interests of mining and other sectors (such as finance) can't be separated from broader processes of globalization. In other words, globalization isn't something which is just being "done" to South Africa. It is a process of capitalist restructuring in which South Africa, South African capital in particular, is an active participant.

* * *

In sum, Marais provides many of the components of a coherent and rigorous analysis of the complex process of politico-economic change in South Africa, not least the terms for developing a critical perspective on the role of the ANC and of the policy choices it has made during South Africa's ongoing transition. The chief weakness of his book is that in exploring how the local political economy is constituted in relationship to local dynamics, he doesn't go quite far enough in analyzing these processes in relation to the global order. He concludes that globalization "complicates" the transition, but leaves the tough questions of how, and to what extent, globalization does this only half answered. And yet it is precisely the issues of how globalization complicates the transition, how the global context shapes (and is in turn, shaped by) the dynamics of national politics, and what obstacles it might still present to the realization of humane and developmental outcomes that needs more analysis and discussion.

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Botswana: The Opposition Implodes

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much of the weekend rally's activities. BAM was officially launched at the National Stadium on 12 February with more style and amid much hoopla. And while Koma stated that "Batswana have grown to the realization that narrow party allegiance, at the expense of issues and principles, is not a sustainable practice," one wonders how far this alliance extends beyond a mere marriage of convenience.

Beyond slinging mud and rhetoric, BAM's strategy seems to be that of mapping party-specific regional and local strengths and weaknesses so as not to split votes and allow the BDP to squeeze up the middle. For instance, this has led Patrick van Rensburg to wonder, "Is this an alliance in which [IFP leader] Motsamai Mpho figures that with his 3,142 vote-base, he might get 1,700 'old' BNF votes, out of its 2,912, to beat [BDP incumbent] Bahiti Temane's 4,804 in Maun/Chobe?" An intriguing question, to be sure. However, no one can judge the impact of the BNF/BCP split in such closely contested ridings, of which there are several. In 1994, the BNF polled 102,862 votes overall, as opposed to the BDP's 151,031. In comparison, the BPP polled 11,586, the IFP 7,653 and the BPU among others 4,087. Clearly, the other alliance members are marginal political forces in comparison to the BNF and its petulant offspring, the BCP.

The view from the peanut gallery

At the end of the day, and despite all the talk of invigoration and change, the emergent picture of Botswana's political landscape looks painfully familiar. The BDP appears poised to sleep walk its way to victory once again. The opposition remains split, even more so than it has been for many years; and this time over issues of substance in addition to those of regional and ethnic differences. And with all of this in-fighting, it is not always clear what is left of the Left.

As for the electorate, it is as much confused as it is apathetic. The feared earthquake of the "youth vote" will not happen, at least this time round: more than 60 per cent of those eligible to vote in the forthcoming election have failed to register, with the majority of these being those under 21. So alarming is this trend that the Independent Electoral Commission has decided to stage a supplementary round of voter registration. Indeed, in a country where approximately 42 per cent of the population is aged 15 and under; and only 2.4 per cent above the age of 65, the potential impact to be made by youth on the status quo would seem significant. Yet, to date less than 10,000 of those aged 18-21 have registered to vote.

To be sure, it is early days; one hopes that as the opposition gets itself on track, and that as real issues gain more media and party political attention, that those Batswana registered to vote will help ensure that this year's election amounts to something more than "more of the same." Yet given recent trends, and in yet another year of relatively good rains, the drought for Botswana's political opposition appears likely to continue.

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No Further Comment Necessary!

"We've been through some really bad movements of people in places like Africa and others, but this [Yugoslavia] is supposed to be an area that has a European veneer of civilization to it."

Lloyd Axeworthy,
Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade,
interviewed for "The House", CBC Radio, 3 April, 1999,
the topic being events in Yugoslavia

footnote: Ghandi when asked what he thought of Western civilization replied: "it would be a good idea"

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