

# Southern Africa REPORT

Vol. 5 No. 4

February 1990

## Namibia: The Next Phase

MAR - 9 1990



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### SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa in the 1990s  
by Tom Lodge

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### MOZAMBIQUE

Debating the Terms  
of Solidarity

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### CANADA

Forging the Agenda:  
Anti-Apartheid Movement  
Debates

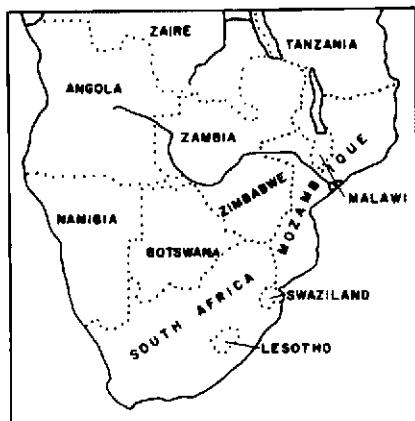
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## Southern Africa REPORT

is produced 5 times a year by a volunteer collective of the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa (TCLSAC)

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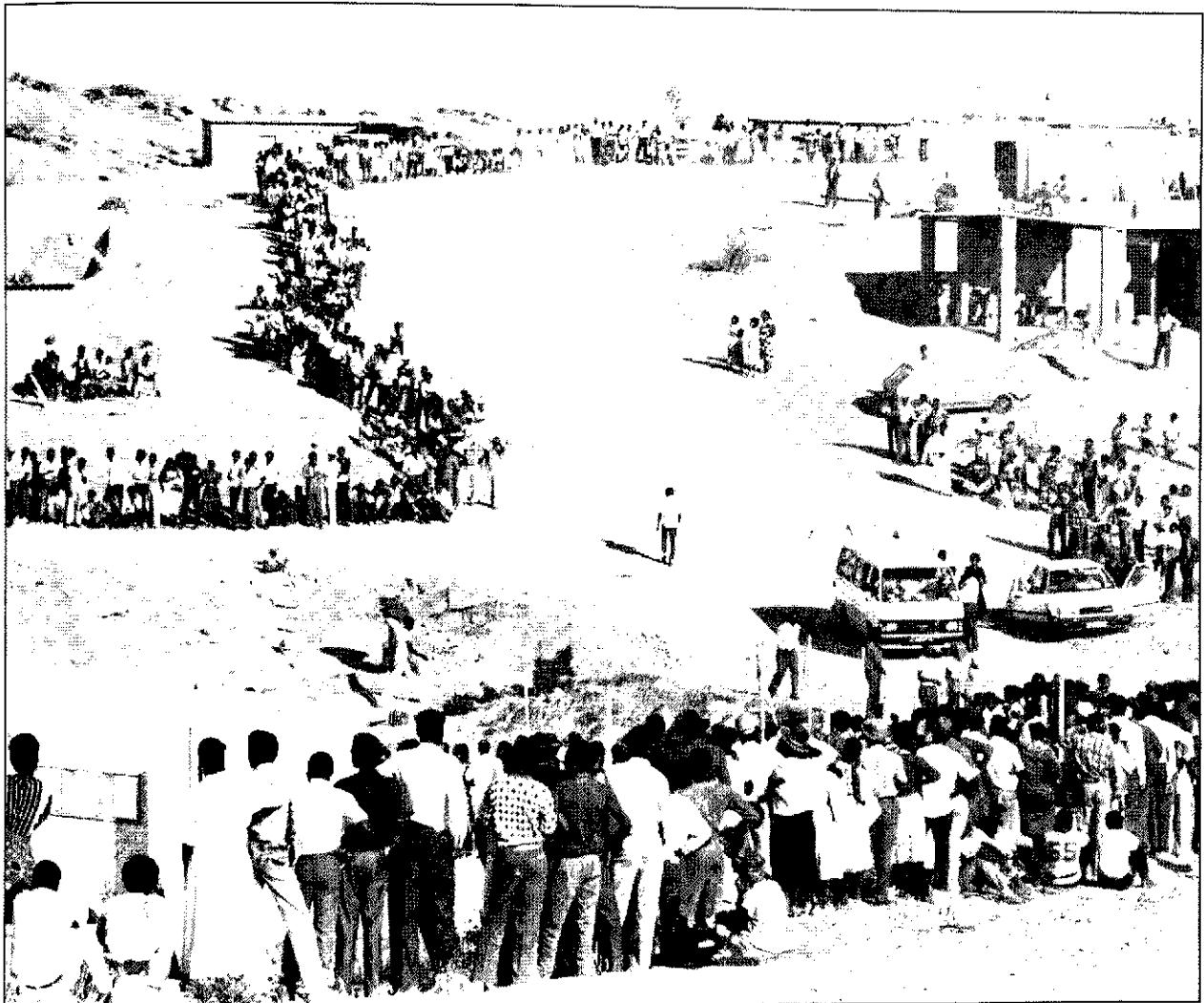
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*Lining up to vote on Namibian election day*

## One More to Go

Namibia: its elections, its constitution, its prospects. That was to have been the main focus of this issue. And so it remains. Yet even as we go to press that story is in turn overwhelmed by developments inside South Africa. Of course, this has been the case with Namibia itself for most of this century. No surprise, then, that the most obvious conclusion of much of our reportage on Namibia in this issue - written in

advance of the events of February 2 - is the degree to which Namibia's future course seems dependent upon outcomes in South Africa. That the likely course of events in South Africa is now even more immediately problematic than might have been hoped or imagined when we first began to put together the present issue does not alter this basic fact.

The difficult economic terrain upon which a new SWAPO gov-

ernment must operate is well documented in our article, "Now For the Hard Part." Other articles touch upon the problematic character of SWAPO itself. While a worthy victor in the political/military struggle with South Africa over its country's fate, this movement is not without warts of its own (as Gerald Caplan's lead article suggests). How determinant will these latter weaknesses prove to be in the continu-

## editorial

ing struggle by Namibians to wrest a democratic and economically transformed future from the grim history fate has dealt them up to now? The constitution-making process described by Jennifer Lindsay in this issue seems likely to be seen as a positive one, as diverse voices and interests have indeed been accommodated. But will the SWAPO leadership also find itself comfortable with less savoury kinds of "pragmatism" when the difficult task of advancing the economic interests of the country's impoverished against the claims of vested interests - South African, "multinational," and those of the locally privileged white community - comes to the fore in an independent Namibia?

Time alone will tell. Concerned observers and activists will want to monitor events there carefully. No doubt there will be plenty of room for agonizing debate about how best to forge links with a Namibia that risks falling far short of the fondest hopes for it. As *SAR* readers know, this kind of debate already swirls around differing interpretations of the implications of recent developments in Mozambique. This is, in fact, a debate we seek to deepen in the current issue, featuring as we do a series of pertinent responses from various correspondents to the controversial articles on the subject by Judith Marshall and Otto Roesch in our last issue. Yet no-one seems inclined to write Mozambique off as just another neo-colonial country, whatever the depressing consequences of its forced conformity to the dictates of the IMF and World Bank and of other such gauleiters of the global marketplace. No more can we turn our backs on Namibia. It will be important to monitor the many concrete decisions that will ultimately come to define the substance of that country's project. But there is every reason to discuss ways in which a great deal more of our resources can be directed towards a country that is far too likely to be forgotten in the shuffle now that the

messy business of its anomalous status *vis-à-vis* the UN is safely disposed of. Such, at any rate, is the convincing case that John Graham makes in the last of our Namibia-related articles in this issue.

\* \* \*

What, then, of South Africa? Even a full-fledged "Stop-Press" would not permit us to do justice to the drama of the moment that the first days of February have witnessed. Of course, the impact of the events - the unbanning of the ANC and other related initiatives - can as easily be overestimated as underestimated. The Emergency remains in place, and nothing has been defined by the government as to either the substance of the political outcome it has in mind or the process of reaching that outcome. Indeed, the very maximum outcome the government might be thought to countenance - some kind of mumbo-jumbo about "group-rights" (and, as subtext, defense of white privilege) - is so distant from the minimal demand for genuine democracy ("one-person, one vote in a united South Africa") of the ANC/Mass Democratic Movement that it is almost as though nothing at all has happened. Yet something has happened nonetheless, something we will seek to define more clearly, with others, in the coming months, and in future issues. Here we must rest content with a useful piece by Tom Lodge, written a week or two prior to de Klerk's pronouncements, on the broader context within which the latter's speech and subsequent politics must be set.

Even in advance of the fullest possible appraisal of the kind of moment that 1990 has come to represent for the anti-apartheid movement, one thing remains clear: this is no time to slacken any of the pressure, domestic or international, that can be brought to bear on the South African government. To its credit, the Mulroney government has at least said as much in the

wake of de Klerk's speech, although there are reasons to fear the kind of "reasonableness" regarding "realistic outcomes" in South Africa that Clark and others may soon begin to counsel. In the meantime, the anti-apartheid movement outside South Africa - in Canada and elsewhere - must now add a new layer of complexity to the already difficult task of defining a relevant and effective practice for itself in the 1990s. Here, too, we seek in the present issue to advance a debate begun in previous issues. Thus the discussion of the state of the Canadian anti-apartheid movement, opened up so provocatively by Pierre François in our last issue, is continued here in similarly provocative ways: a sharp retort to François from CUSO's John Van Mossel, Don Kossick's gritty reflections from the Prairies, and scepticism from Toronto-based activists about such matters as Joe de Clark and the possibly undue prominence of Ottawa-based, government-dependent NGOs in the anti-apartheid network.

\* \* \*

Not that we need to be too dour. There is clearly cause for celebration, for de Klerk's concessions, however muted and grudging they still may be, represent victories won by the South Africa people and by ourselves. The future suddenly seems open in new ways in South Africa and there is a range of possible outcomes that are full of promise not only for South Africa but for the entire southern African region. But there are many dangers as well; the best of futures is still one that must be wrested from a recalcitrant environment by the further application of energy, imagination and courage. Even as we write, South Africans who pursue a democratic and progressive future are debating their new strategies, their next moves. It behooves us to monitor and interpret sympathetically their efforts, even as we sharpen our own anti-apartheid tools to meet the challenges ahead.

# Elections and After: Gerald Caplan on Namibia

Gerald Caplan is former Federal Secretary of the New Democratic Party and is now a media commentator on Canadian public affairs. In November he observed the Namibian elections as a part of a delegation sponsored by the Canadian Council for International Co-operation.

Here are two statistically-rooted paradoxes. An incredible 97% of the registered electorate voted in the Namibian elections in November, yet some progressive observers insist on underlining the obstacles that existed to deter people from casting their ballots. And an impressive 57% of them voted for SWAPO in a ten-party race, yet many view these results as being close to a moral defeat for SWAPO. In Canada, a 75% turnout is par for a federal election, 66% for a provincial vote, and between 25% and 33% for local elections. Similarly, in Canada's three-party system, no party has ever come remotely close to winning 57% of the votes; Mulroney won 50% in his sweeping 1984 victory, and Pierre Trudeau never approached that percentage. How, then, do we explain the curious reactions in the Namibian context?

As to the first, it was the judgment of our group that in fact Namibians turned out to vote in such huge numbers in spite of, and in the face of, the constraints inherent in the electoral system. When Angola and Cuba made their deal with South Africa to determine the future

of Namibia, they did Namibians few favours. In essence, the agreement left South Africa ultimately in control of the election process while the UN would merely supervise it.

The result, as should now be well understood, was a hundred different means to test Namibians' determination to vote. The number of polling stations were all too few and sometimes located far from African townships, often in such hostile envi-

ronments as magistrates' courts. A cumbersome voting procedure and insufficient election staffing left literally tens of thousands of people baking in the sun for hours upon end without food, drink or toilets, often losing a day or more of work. Many of the women carried children on their backs. Yet people came, they stayed, and they voted - almost every eligible soul in the nation. It was a people's triumph, almost a cliche come true, a people de-



*In Opuwo, a DTA party worker shows a voter where to make her mark on the ballot*

Impact Visuals

terminated to exercise their new rights against whatever odds and whatever impediments.

But they didn't all vote for SWAPO; 43% of them voted against SWAPO. SWAPO itself confidently expected at least three-quarters of the vote; some partisans, who denied it later, expected even more. After all, they reckoned, there'd have been no election at all without SWAPO, without the bloody 25 year war that SWAPO had led and fought. It's true it was Angola's defeat of the South African forces that finally brought Pretoria to the negotiating table. But who could doubt that SWAPO's struggle had taken its toll on South African morale and resources. SWAPO were the conquering heroes; they were all there was, surely, for a self-respecting Namibian nationalist to support. And who would refuse to give them at least the two-thirds support they needed to control the new Constituent Assembly?

Who but the people? SWAPO was out of touch. They minimized both the effects of decades of apartheid and the effects of some of their own blunders. In the end, they were scuttled from both sides.

Apartheid undermined them in two ways. First, South Africa had, over the decades, deliberately and methodically moved to heighten and exacerbate ethnic tensions among Namibians. Divide and rule had been a routine European strategy for colonial domination; apartheid simply raised the device to a fine art form, both within South Africa and in its little colony of Namibia. SWAPO remained a substantially Ovambo movement, with most other groups feeling more or less outsiders. Apartheid played on these tensions like a bow on a violin, and in the end only a virtually monolithic SWAPO vote from the populous Ovambo area gave SWAPO its decisive electoral margin.

Apartheid also produced fear, a fear that the presence of UN observers and the promise of even-

tual freedom was by no means sufficient to reassure many intimidated Namibians. All their lives they'd been brutalized by whites; why should voting day be any different? And, in fact, in those parts of Namibia, especially in the east and south, where Afrikaanerdom still held Africans in its thrall, the results demonstrated little electoral support for SWAPO. These whites were people who believed as a matter of unshakable faith that SWAPO rule equalled violent, communistic domination, and they were not about to allow "their" farm workers or house servants to subvert their interests. True enough: the ballot booths were solid wood and the ballot boxes were good solid Canadian metal, so that literally no one could see how you voted. But watching Africans in those areas vote, you understood their instinctive confidence that their masters would immediately know exactly what mark they placed on that ballot paper. Few of them put it beside SWAPO.

But on top of apartheid's blows came SWAPO's own serious deficiencies. Ovambo domination was real. Male domination was real. Flexibility was not the keynote. Arrogance was not uncommon. Two stories, from a sympathetic and knowledgeable observer, more than suffice to make the point. During the liberation struggle, when the Rehoboth district offered to ally its local organization to SWAPO, SWAPO demanded the locals completely integrate themselves within the larger movement; they refused, and Rehoboth voted overwhelmingly against SWAPO. In another non-Ovambo district, the local chief sent his own nephew as his emissary to SWAPO outside the country. The young man was soon accused of being a spy, tortured and killed; the chief and the entire district voted against SWAPO.

The issue of the SWAPO detainees was also real. While the magnitude of these acts is unclear, their seriousness is indis-

putable. Even during the week of voting and counting, the most senior SWAPO leaders continued to insist to us either that all the horror stories were merely South African propaganda or, quite contradictorily, that only South African spies were ever detained and punished. Unquestionably there was some validity to both these assertions but we had great difficulty accepting SWAPO's sidestepping of responsibility for what went on – so did large numbers of non-Ovambo Namibians because, as it happens, most of those detained, disappeared and tortured were non-Ovambo. Instead of coming clean, instead of actively encouraging the UN or the Red Cross to pursue the detainee issue to its bitter end, thereby offering profound reassurance to the rest of the country, SWAPO leaders stonewalled, believing they would sweep the elections anyway. Again, they were out of touch, signally a failure to appreciate the distrust their own actions had engendered.

Yet in victory SWAPO indicated a genuine interest in reconciliation – a consequence perhaps of their disappointing showing. Now the question is how ready is SWAPO to assume the reins of power given the enormous difficulties ahead. Formal independence or not, no new nation can be less economically independent than Namibia. A Bantustan by any other name remains a Bantustan. South African leverage is total; the potential for radical development strategies seems commensurately limited. There is much reason for modest expectations.

On the other hand, it is a step. Any step forward, however halting, surely must be welcomed. Another chip in the South African empire has been nicked away. And that is the real significance of Namibia's move towards independence. For not until South Africa itself has been liberated can Namibia, or any other part of Southern Africa, look forward with real optimism to a better future.

# Constituting a Nation

BY JENNY LINDSAY

*As Southern Africa REPORT goes to press Namibia's Constituent Assembly has just announced March 21, 1990 as the country's independence day. Jenny Lindsay, research fellow at Leeds University, has been in Namibia studying the transition period and files this report.*

When seventy-two elected representatives of the Namibian people met for the first time in the Tintenpalast, Windhoek's main government building on November 29th, it was, as *The Namibian* said, "an historic day." The new assembly, the first true expression of Namibia's popular will, was empowered to lay the foundations for a new independent country. Under the terms of the Constituent Assembly Proclamation, legislated by the South African administration, the assembly was specifically directed to:

- a: draw up a constitution for South West Africa/Namibia;
- b: adopt that constitution as a whole by a two-thirds majority of its total membership, the result of such vote being subject to the scrutiny of members representing all registered parties in the Assembly;
- c: declare South West Africa/Namibia to be an independent State on a date to be determined by it and on which date the constitution adopted in terms of paragraph (b) shall come into force;
- d: establish, subject to provisions of that constitution, a government for the independent State aforesaid.

Although working with a clear majority of 57 per cent of the vote cast, SWAPO could not push through a constitution of its own choosing because it lacked the necessary two-thirds majority. SWAPO's main rival, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) managed to capture 21 seats in the election. The United Democratic Front (UDF)



earned four and the Aksie Christelik Nasionale (ACN) won three. Three other parties – the Federal Convention of Namibia (FCN), the National Patriotic Front (NPF), the Namibian National Front (NNP) – obtained one seat each. Because of this mixed political configuration in the Assembly, the big question at the outset of the constitutional process was whether or not SWAPO's opposition would adopt delaying tactics to modify SWAPO policies or prove accommodating in order to hasten the independence process. Areas of expected disagreement with other parties focused on the powers to be invested in the executive arm of government, protection of human rights

and efforts on the part of whites and tribal representatives to protect "group" interests and property.

The Assembly's proceedings opened in an atmosphere of goodwill and reconciliation with a prayer from SWAPO's Pastor Zephania Kameeta. Hage Geingob, formerly director of the United Nations Institute of Namibia in Lusaka, was elected chairperson. Outside the Tintenpalast where members of the Parent's Committee were demonstrating, the mood was more tense. The Parent's Committee claims to represent SWAPO detainees past and present. At one point during the Assembly's first morning, UDF member Justus Garoeb claimed that the elections were not "free and fair" because hundreds of Namibians still detained by SWAPO had not participated in the electoral process; he suggested that the Assembly should take upon itself all the unresolved problems of the election, such as the fate of the SWAPO detainees. However this plea seems to have been little more than a token protest to placate the ex-detainee Patriotic Unity movement (PUM) elements of the UDF alliance. Garoeb went on to say that the UDF would be cooperative in the "spirit of reconciliation." So in spite of a shaky start SWAPO, as a majority party, managed to take control of the Assembly.

SWAPO then moved on to take the opposition by surprise with the proposal by Theo Ben Gurirab that the 1982 Constitutional principles be incorporated into Namibia's new constitution. The principles negotiated by the Western Contact Group lay down the ground rules for a multi-party democracy with regular elections by secret ballot, an independent judiciary and a declaration of fundamental human rights. The proposal was adopted unanimously by the Assembly and DTA leader

Dirk Mudge got up to shake Ben Gurirab's hand.

This astute move on the part of SWAPO cleared the way for early independence and in spite of much trepidation beforehand, agreement came much more quickly than anybody dared hope, all parties anxious, it would seem, to get rid of the South Africans and get on with the business of running their own country. Even DTA collaborators in the previous interim Multi-Party Conference government showed signs of being tired of dancing as South African puppets. And although there were early misgivings about possible interference by the South African government during the final transition period, Louis Pianaar has in fact pursued a "hands off" policy with respect to the Assembly. This was especially clear in his noticeable absence from the opening session.

Although all seven parties in the Assembly formally presented their own constitutional proposals, it was unanimously agreed to use SWAPO's as the "working document" and as a "basis for deliberations." The Assembly's standing committee, appointed on the first day of proceedings, was given the task of sorting out areas of agreement and disagreement. Although the meetings of the Assembly have been open, the most important work has been carried out behind closed doors. This means discussions leading to the final agreed constitution can only be guessed at or gleaned from reports of committee members. The *Windhoek Observer* has drawn attention to the secret nature of the constitutional negotiations and suggested the closed doors "seem to be in the interests of the political parties who would rather not be seen 'wheeling and dealing' with the interests of their voters." In particular the *Observer* sees such secrecy being in SWAPO's interest: "The majority party initiated the move to refer the constitutional negotiations to committee, thereby ensuring the secrecy of the discussions - and so far the majority party seems

to have succeeded in having most things more or less its way."

However, as the *Observer* itself suggests, the Assembly may simply have been trying to "create an atmosphere of peaceful and amicable progress, thereby stimulating national reconciliation." And as a DTA member also said, the referral to the Standing Committee indicated a desire for speed and efficiency rather than for secrecy. Indeed, when introducing his motion to refer discussion to committee, SWAPO's Nahas Angula said "a working atmosphere, free from political posturing or media show is a prerequisite to achieving the positive results which the people of Namibia expect from us."

When the Standing Committee reported back, it identified broad agreement among the parties on a number of issues, which would be subject to only minor amendments and discussions: the preamble; general provisions to the constitution; citizenship; fundamental rights; the electoral system; procedure to amend the constitution; environment; language; definition of the territory; education and local government; and/or regional councils.

Thus, SWAPO abandoned the ideal of single member constituencies and agreed to proportional representation with candidate lists, as used in the November election and preferred by all the other parties. All parties also agreed that Namibian territory included Walvis Bay and the offshore islands currently claimed and controlled by South Africa and that the southern boundary should run through the centre of the Orange river. All parties also agreed that English should be the official language with provision for other languages in education and local government where required.

The Standing Committee identified other issues for further discussion, but "in respect of which no material dispute was found to exist." These involved the operation

of "state organs, including *inter alia*, the police, defence force, prisons and ombudsman, but excluding the role of the President as part of the executive; the economic system and its institutions; land reform; State succession and transitional provisions."

Finally, and most significantly, the Standing Committee identified "two important areas for further deliberations, namely *the executive*, and specifically the role of the president within the executive, and *the composition of the legislature*." Any disagreement on these latter two points have now been resolved and a draft constitution has been decided upon, but it is worth noting the areas of disagreement, particularly the concern felt about the role of a strong executive president. Many commentators were disturbed by the original SWAPO constitutional proposals which allowed for broad powers of preventative detention without trial, power to impose a state of emergency and suspension of all rights during such an emergency. SWAPO also wanted a very strong president with little accountability to the legislature.

Revised drafts designed to correct some of the weaknesses in the original surfaced almost immediately among SWAPO members and there is no doubt that questions of accountability and human rights have been central to discussion in the Standing Committee. It was around these issues that changes occurred in the final document, partly in response to pressure from other parties and the international community, but also in response to the internal concerns of SWAPO members.

The draft constitution has been received by the press with cautious approval. *The Namibian* offered approving comment for two key features of the document: provisions providing for the abolition of the death penalty and reduction of the Cabinet's role in financial and business activities to reduce corruption. Human rights clauses have also been



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#### *SWAPO member monitoring voting at a polling station in Windhoek*

much improved, in line with the recommendations made by Amnesty International.

So far the Assembly has acquitted itself well. However, reminders that the Assembly must remain accountable to the public continue. The National Union of Namibian Workers has called for the draft constitution to be made open to public comment. The International Press Institute has also criticized Article 61 which "might certainly be used to censor public information thus violating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." And international lawyers have still to comment on the provisions protecting human rights.

Some of the local and international concern reflects unease about the way the constitutional bargaining has gone on behind closed doors. Gwen Lister, editor of *The Namib-*

*ian* which went ahead and published a copy of the draft constitution, has urged the importance of public accountability at this important juncture in Namibian history.

"The tendency to closet themselves behind closed doors of a Standing Committee and debate the most delicate and yet nationally important issues in that forum, is not entirely satisfactory; even if the argument is used that more progress is made in this manner than in public debate where posturing may become a problem. The people have a right to know where respective parties stand on different issues - whether it be the death penalty or the right to strike. *The Namibian* may not have endeared itself to certain sections of the political leadership by publishing earlier this week, the draft constitution - a move which was con-

demned by various members of the Standing Committee. And yet those same leaders must realize that while they *have* received the mandate of the people of Namibia, it does not release them from their accountability, and the people's right to know."

The less than open constitutional process may confirm some of the worries of local and external opinion about SWAPO's undemocratic methods of work, although it is too early for the final verdict. It also remains to be seen, after careful examination of the final document and in the beginnings of its implementation, how many concessions have been made to those members of the Assembly who want property rights and racial or ethnic group interests entrenched in the constitution beyond the minimal formula already set out in the 1982 constitutional principles.

# Now for the Hard Part: Prospects for a New Namibia

*This article has been prepared by the SAR Editorial Working Group drawing on background papers sent to us by Victoria Brittain of the *Guardian* newspaper (UK) and Colin Stoneman of the University of York (UK). We are most grateful to these authors for their assistance.*

South Africa brought to the bargaining table, to accede, ultimately, to Namibia's political independence. An electoral victory for the country's principal liberation movement (despite the substantial obstacles placed in its way) and now, apparently, the relatively smooth articulation of a new and democratic constitutional dispensation. Dramatic enough accomplishments for the Namibian people, one might have thought. And yet in terms of the consolidation of that independence as true liberation - defined as substantial freedom from external dictate and as some guarantee of an on-going improvement in the lot of the ordinary Namibian - at least as much again remains to be achieved. In many decisive ways, it will be with independence that "the hard part" begins!

For Namibia will come to independence possessed of an almost quintessentially colonial economy, one that has been organized above all to respond to the needs of the metropole. Moreover, these traits have been reinforced by the fact that, for some decades, the South African government has worked overtime to integrate this erstwhile German colony tightly into the South African economy. The result: very limited room for manoeuvre for the new Namibian government.

## Some hard facts

The mining sector dominates the economy, making up 73% of its exports and fully one quarter of Namibia's gross national product. Fishing and the breeding of cattle and karakul sheep, together with subsistence agriculture, are the only other productive activities. As one observer has noted, the country "has been, in economic terms, virtually South Africa's sixth province; little effort has been made to develop industrial activities, to process minerals domestically or even to promote food production by small-holder irrigation schemes, despite favourable conditions for the latter in certain regions."

South African and transnational firms dominate the mining industry, with Rio Tinto Zinc, which controls the uranium mine at Rössing, and the Anglo-American Corporation, most prominent in Namibia via its diamond-producing subsidiary, de Beers, being the most important actors in the private-sector. Small wonder, perhaps, that as early as a year ago (February, 1989) SWAPO President, Sam Nujoma, had made himself available for a secret meeting in London, a meeting requested by de Beers officials in order to discuss the future. There, as elsewhere, SWAPO reiterated that it had no intention of nationalizing the mining companies; it would content itself merely with a more favourable division of the proceeds and a raising of taxes.

In retrospect such a meeting can be seen as the opening round of an eleventh hour attempt to domesticate and deradicalize a future SWAPO government, a government that might otherwise have been expected to be profoundly hostile to

such multinationals. After all, in 1974 the UN's Security Council had issued as its decree #1 a ban on any company "prospecting or extracting, using or selling, exporting or distributing the natural resources, animal or mineral, to be found within the boundaries of Namibia." Not only had this remained a dead letter, but many companies proceeded to engage in a particularly rapacious superexploitation of such resources. It has been estimated that, for an extended period, at least 20% of the gross national product was being exported and only a very small proportion being reinvested. Moreover, as several official commissions pointed out, firms operating in such sectors as diamond-mining and fishing found ways to avoid almost all taxes and duties in carrying out their activities.

## A legacy of dependence

More of a benefit to a future Namibia might be such developments as the putting into place of infrastructure like roads, railways, communications and electrical lines. But for the most part such transport network as was created merely linked Namibia more tightly to South Africa; considerable international assistance will be necessary if new and more promising links are to be forged with countries like Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Moreover, as is well known, South Africa remains - despite various UN resolutions to the contrary - in possession of the country's main potential port of Walvis Bay.

As for imports, 90% come from South Africa, a difficult parameter of the situation for a SWAPO government to transform, although no more difficult than the challenge that will confront the government in the agricultural sphere. There 60% of the land belongs to whites and no less than 40% of the farms engaged in the raising of cattle and karakul are in the hands of absentee landlords. And, finally, there is the debt, estimated at \$750 million rands and



Impact Visuals

*Mahimba people awaiting transport back to their village after voting at Opuwo*

accumulated as part of the expensive militarization of the colony by the South Africans. This represents an enormous handicap for the future government and while there are numerous jurists who say that, in light of international law and by virtue of the illegality of Namibia's prior occupation, this could readily be repudiated, it remains to be seen whether a new government will be assertive enough to do so.

Of course, the vast transfer of resources that South Africa has been systematically engaged in in recent years should be made good by in-

ternational aid. Whether this will happen remains to be seen. In the meantime, SWAPO seems to be bending over backwards to avoid a capital flight or an abandoning of the country by the white farmers, businessmen and skilled functionaries, seeking in this way to avoid some of the problems that beset Mozambique and Angola in their first years of independence. The future of the South African rand as the established currency in Namibia is also of interest as is the question of its possible continuation within the South African dominated Southern African Customs Union.

#### **Whither SWAPO?**

Will an independent Namibian government feel compelled to move so slowly and judiciously on this delicate terrain that it will risk undertaking no genuine transformation of its socio-economic structure at all? Some have identified this as having been the fate of Zimbabwe, a country which, in fact, began its independent existence with far more room for manoeuvre than Namibia. Indeed, one self-satisfied South African professor already has suggested that a formally independent but substantially dependent Nami-

bia will serve South Africa most genially as "a well camouflaged link to Africa and the rest of the world"! And there are some observers who are sufficiently sceptical about the inherent radicalism of SWAPO as to suggest there will be all too little resistance within the movement to a relatively comfortable and "pragmatic" accommodation with the economic *status quo ante*.

Even in fairly narrowly-defined terms there are challenges to be met quickly. As already noted, many of Namibia's disadvantages derive from its almost total integration with South Africa, whose industries, as economist Colin Stoneman has argued, "use it as a captive market for their own inefficient output and a cheap source of supply of inputs. Thus many activities that could have been carried out in Namibia are instead carried out in South Africa, for example diamond-cutting." In Stoneman's opinion, "Namibia does not so much need protection against South Africa as a removal of unfair advantages given to South African producers and an opening to cheaper sources of supply from elsewhere, for which purpose it needs to leave the South African Customs Union (SACU) and in particular the Rand Monetary Area (RMA); this means it has to establish its own reserve bank and currency ... Integration with South Africa is not 'natural', but created, and for political rather than economic reasons. It has forced Namibia to share in the disastrous performance of the South African economy in the 1980s with average -1 per cent annual growth (and -4 per cent per capita). The costs of undoing this unnatural integration would have large compensating economic advantages, not least in replacing links with South Africa by internal links, so reducing the extreme disarticulation of the economy."

Stoneman also regrets Namibia's current over-dependence on the mining of a range of metals that face uncertain markets but sees no short- or medium-run alternative to sustain-

ing and using the mining industry to generate funds for other investment – if indeed this can be carried through by a SWAPO government. Similarly, only quite assertive programmes of land redistribution, the bringing of arable land into crop production and the increased irrigation of areas like Ovamboland can provide any real prospect of agricultural viability for the future. And how to rationalize in the interest both of equitable redistribution and more productive investment the situation of extremely unequal income distribution which now finds the white six per cent of the population preempting over half of domestic income and burning off in extravagant consumerist life-styles a goodly amount of the society's economic surplus?

### The struggle continues

Clearly, in the short-run, much will depend on the reaction of Namibia's privileged whites and the various South African and multinational corporations that now dominate the economy to any SWAPO attempts to reshape the prevailing economic structure, however modestly, in the interests of the vast mass of the Namibian population. Nor should we forget that the South African state has never hesitated to set running destabilizing forces to bring into line the governments of neighbouring states that step out of line; moreover, in Namibia they have had even more opportunity than in other cases to establish precisely the requisite infrastructure (the "Koevoet" special forces, etc.) for such activities should the need arise. A familiar note repeats itself here, one well-known throughout the region: SWAPO's room for manoeuvre must remain limited as long as the apartheid state and economy remains so proximate – and so untransformed. A significant part of an independent Namibia's promise can only be realized once the promise of a democratic South Africa begins to be realized as well.

As hinted, there is also the question of SWAPO itself, not merely

as it seeks to steer its path *vis-à-vis* other political forces in Namibia but also as it defines itself as a political organization in its own right. What class interests will it come, in the end, to represent in an independent Namibia? We have noted some of the pulls that will act upon it to drain away its militancy. How easily, elsewhere in Africa, have many erstwhile freedom-fighters comfortably passed into the ranks of petty-bourgeois functionaries and neo-colonial intermediaries. This may not prove so easy a process in Namibia, however. There is, to begin with, the radicalizing (populist if not socialist) legacy of the struggle itself, something many SWAPO cadres may find it hard to deny, even to themselves. And there is another factor: the existence of a surprisingly militant and well-organized working-class.

Thus, as Brian Wood, has pointed out (*Le Monde Diplomatique*, August, 1989), despite being a much smaller country the number of workers belonging to unions in Namibia is five times greater than was the case in Rhodesia on the eve of its independence in 1979! There is not room here to trace the recent dramatic history of the working class organizations that have so surfaced in Namibia. The most important of these, the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), has in fact been very close to SWAPO. And this is a promising reality, suggesting the existence of a possible countervailing force to the "logic" of pragmatism that multinational corporations (and multinational aid donors?) might seek to engulf SWAPO in. For, on the basis of its past record, there is a strong likelihood the Namibian working class, so mobilized, will continue to advance a class struggle within SWAPO as vigorously as it has heretofore advanced the struggle against the political and economic forces of occupation. In the outcome of such a struggle, too, there lies important seeds of Namibia's future.

# Fickle Funding? Canadian Aid to Namibia

BY JOHN GRAHAM

*John Graham works for OXFAM Canada as Project Officer for Southern Africa.*

Before the axe fell on the CIDA budget in April 1989, rumours at the agency's Montreal headquarters pegged post-independence bilateral aid to Namibia at \$20 million for its first five years as an independent nation. When the dust had settled from the 13% budget cut, those in the know stated flatly that CIDA would have only \$10 million for Namibia.

The originally optimistic hopes for aid to Namibia have received other blows as well, most notably a threat of drastically reduced aid from Western Europe – particularly West Germany – as it bankrolls massive aid to Eastern Europe.

This sobering reality reflects a global trend away from attention to Africa as other areas of the world hog the headlines. Fears that Namibia might be flooded by excessive international aid at independence have given way to a new reality of world indifference.

The need for change in Namibia is palpable. Black Namibians have been more impoverished than blacks in South Africa, with the small white population enjoying an even higher standard of living than their South African counterparts. In addition, about 35% of Namibia's GDP is directly exported as foreign earnings, particularly from the lucrative mining industry.

As a result, the black population in Namibia is the fourth poorest in Africa. Most people live in the over-crowded bantustans of the northern frontier, or in the abominable housing of the townships near Windhoek

and Walvis Bay/Swakopmund. In the last twenty years, 20,000 of these people have died and countless others have been affected by the repression, as well as the grinding poverty, of colonialism. Under those circumstances, independence is naturally equated with overcoming these economic burdens.

But the options for development which the SWAPO government is considering are very limited. To prevent the white population from fleeing, SWAPO will clearly avoid any policies which alienate them, including any significant redistribution of wealth to the impoverished black population. SWAPO has already made it clear that their government would not nationalize private farmers and businesses.

Instead of offering any immediate change for blacks, independence will provide good employment for the well-educated, with gradual Africanization of the public service and businesses, but no massive land redistribution. In the absence of well-financed services such as education and health, and massive development programmes, 95% of the black population will remain economically unaffected by independence.

It is certainly the intention of SWAPO to provide quality education and health services. In the constitution agreement still under discussion at the time of writing, SWAPO insisted on compulsory, free education to be guaranteed to all under the age of 16. However, to finance this ambitious plan, as well as Namibia's other development needs, SWAPO is inheriting a bankrupt and debt-ridden state, dependent on a declining resource base.

As a parting gift to the new

state, South Africa has cut off the normal "subsidy" it provides to Namibia. This subsidy is in fact a small repayment for the resources raped from Namibia. Thus the new government will have an immediate fiscal crisis, with no funds in the kitty and a one billion rand debt accumulated by the South Africans. Although this debt may be illegal under international law, the new government is likely – with the active encouragement of the UN and western governments – to absorb it in order to retain a good credit rating.

Namibia's prospects for increasing its revenues are uncertain. For the last ten years mining multinationals have been "high-grading," using up the best quality ore while dumping profitable ore of lesser quality in slag heaps. Base metals, a large proportion of Namibia's resources, are in a chronic state of low prices.

Namibia's likely largest source of income will be customs duties collected primarily at Walvis Bay. Like Lesotho and Swaziland, Namibia will have to go through the humiliating negotiation of these duties with the South African government, and the threat of withholding these funds will be a Damocles sword.

In the absence of additional state resources or significant wealth redistribution, foreign assistance becomes critical to meeting the justifiable expectations of the majority of Namibians. If Canada's change of direction is an indication, Namibia is in big trouble.

Canada has shown far more generosity in supporting the transition to independence than in making pledges for post-independence development. Canada quickly ponied up \$25 million to help UNTAG monitor the election and another five million dollars for other programmes. Next to that, CIDA's projection of \$10 million for the next five years looks particularly pitiable.

Although Namibians have not yet made a formal detailed request

for aid, UN and other studies indicate that Namibia will need several hundred million dollars per year.

There are three options for the Canadian government to channel aid - through the UN system, the Commonwealth fund, or Canadian NGO's or private contractors. After the CIDA cuts, Minister Monique Landry specifically ruled out the government opening any new country to country programmes.

The UN system is certainly prepared to take the lead in aid to Namibia; in fact, it is too eager. UN agencies have hurried to put together plans without the benefit of Namibian participation. A UN-sponsored conference on Namibia in Oslo in September 1989 was billed as a preliminary discussion on areas of aid in Namibia. However, not one Namibian was invited to attend, and NGOs were specifically excluded. But UN agencies took the opportunity to present plans to governments for funding.

Documents prepared by the UN agencies universally stressed the weakness of Namibian institutions, and the need to build up the UN agencies' infrastructure in Namibia, a policy which would further marginalize Namibians. The UN was widely condemned in the Namibian press.

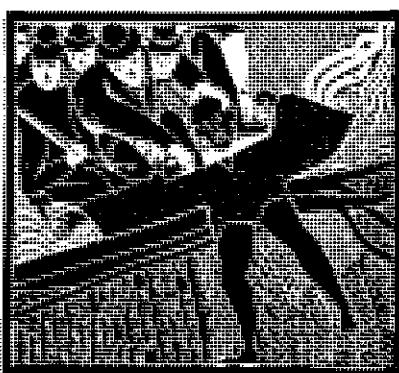
Fortunately, despite the heavy repression of the South African state, a lively and competent NGO community has developed in Namibia. Centred largely around the Council of Churches of Namibia, this system grew to include independent trade unions, student groups, women's groups, and community-based education, health, and development organizations.

Although stretched by the demands of the independence process, the groups have been able to assist over 40,000 returned refugees. These organizations are the embryo of the independent non-governmental sector in Namibia, as well as in some cases, the basis for future govern-

ment services. It is this sector which deserves support from Canada and other countries.

Key planning around future aid to Namibia must have an economic focus. The neglected and impoverished subsistence agriculture economy in the North will need more extension services for stock. The fishing industry has called for the Namibianization of fisheries and emergency measures to rebuild the depleted fish stocks.

To respond, a group of Canadian NGOs - including OXFAM, CUSO, WUSC and the Association of Community Colleges of Canada (ACCC) - has decided to channel \$10 million in aid to grassroots



projects in Namibia over the next five years. The programme proposes a northern-focussed integrated agricultural, health, education and housing programme.

The biggest aid donors, apart from the loyal and committed Scandinavians, are likely to be West Germany and Britain - based on their historic link to Namibia - and Japan - based on the size of its aid budget. Most of these programmes are unlikely to be very creative, nor to provide significant support to the critical NGO sector in Namibia.

Canada could play a significant role, in not only adding to the total aid, but in providing the type of grassroots assistance to remote areas where the need is greatest and

where NGO's traditionally do very useful work.

To ensure that Canadian aid is used in this way, it must not be allowed to disappear into the monopoly of the UN agencies or the standard mega-projects. Only by careful planning and vigorous lobbying can Canada's aid be channeled in the right direction.

Canada is expected to announce shortly its final decision as to how much bilateral aid will be available for Namibia. Various lobby efforts have been used to try to move the level back to \$20 million.

Fortunately there will be other responses to Namibia's needs. Canadian churches will continue their support for Namibian partners, begun over 50 years ago. NGOs can use their regular levels of CIDA funds, emergency funds will be available, and regular contributions to UN agencies and SADCC will now be partially directed to Namibia. Combined, these can add up to a significant contribution.

However, no amount of "response" funds will compensate for a small bilateral programme. Some of the funds from the bilateral commitment will be used for support of UN special appeals, and perhaps further contributions to the Commonwealth fund. The full commitment will not likely go to the NGO initiative for Namibian NGOs, therefore a commitment of at least \$12 to \$15 million will be necessary to fund the NGO initiative at the anticipated level.

Efforts to move up the aid budget for Namibia will continue. Both CIDA and External Affairs report large numbers of letters coming in requesting five million dollars per year in bilateral aid. Around the independence celebrations in March, the government may be tempted into a generous announcement. A possible visit to Namibia by Joe Clark could also provide a boost, as may the first donor conference for Namibia, expected in June.

# A New Kind of Resistance Politics?

## South Africa in the 1990s

BY TOM LODGE

*Tom Lodge, the author of Black Politics in South Africa since 1945 (London and New York: Longman, 1983) and other important works, currently administers the African Program at the Social Science Research Council in New York. The following article was written just prior to F. W. de Klerk's speech of February 2, 1990, unbanning anti-apartheid organizations like the ANC, and the subsequent release of Nelson Mandela. We feel, however, that it continues to serve as a useful backgrounder for better understanding both this event and the possible course of subsequent developments in South Africa.*

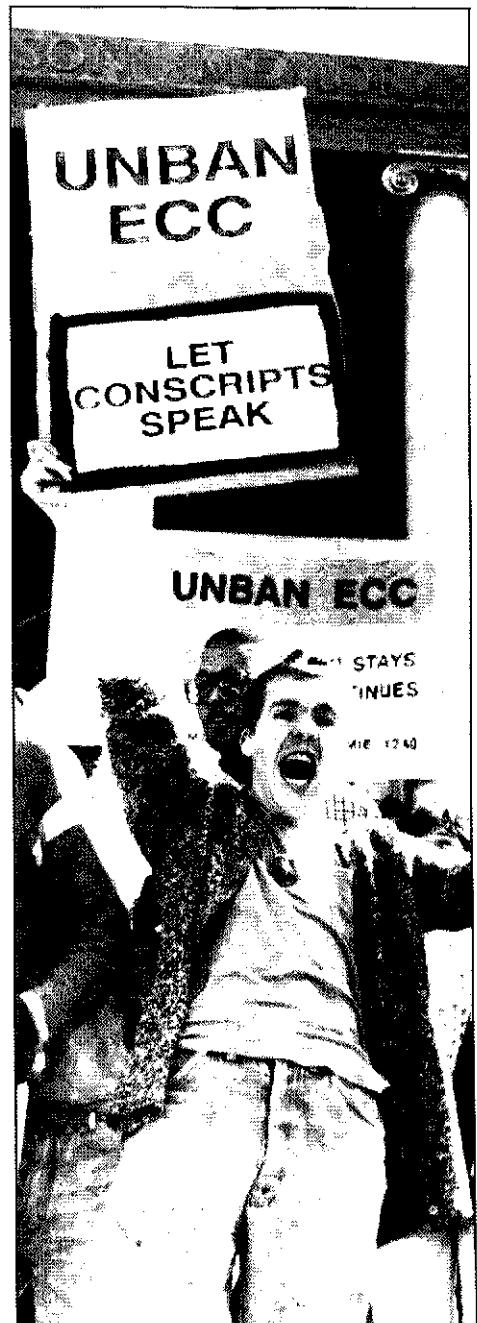
At the beginning of a new decade, the democratic movement in South Africa appears to be nearing victory. Nelson Mandela is reported to be in almost daily conference with cabinet ministers, F. W. de Klerk is about to announce a new dispensation, and the ANC is said to be ready to suspend guerrilla warfare in exchange for legality and negotiations. Suddenly all the rules about understanding South Africa politics seem to have altered. Or have they?

To be sure, notwithstanding emergency restrictions which outlawed virtually any open political activity, the UDF and the popular movement it heads survives as a powerful force. Indeed, 1989 witnessed a dramatic resurgence in activist fortunes. In the previous two years, 33,000 detentions had more than decapitated the UDF's organization; the detentions had substantially paralysed its campaigning capacity. The removal of key local activists drove the movement off the streets and into a semi-clandestine existence. Through 1988, the tide of resistance politics receded to involve

only uncoordinated clusters of committed enthusiasts.

One year later, though, the reappearance of open protest signalled the failure of emergency regulations to suppress black organization. The ANC may have helped to set the popular political agenda with its call in January 1989 of a "Year of Mass Action for People's Power," but a crucial morale booster was a hunger strike organized inside the prisons amongst the thousand or so remaining detainees in the same month. By April this had succeeded in persuading the Minister of Law and Order to sign nine hundred release orders including those of most of the high level UDF leadership. Though the strike was internally organized, necessary to its success was the strikers' ability to communicate with each other and, indirectly, with the media. In part, this was facilitated by a relaxation in the effective implementation of government restrictions. This may have been attributable to tensions within the National Party as well as the need to avert an intensification of already damaging external economic pressures.

Heartened by the triumph of the hunger strikers, as well as the easing of conditions which by May 1989 were beginning to allow a steady revival of civic associations and street organization, the UDF with COSATU officials began planning an am-



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bitious Defiance Campaign of civil disobedience, targeting segregated government-controlled facilities, beginning with hospitals. In February, COSATU affiliates had already formed local alliances with township notables, organizing boycotts and protests directed against the resegregation of public parks by Conservative Party councils in Carltonville and Boksburg. Under the rubric of the "Mass Democratic Movement," the public identification assumed by the COSATU/UDF leadership, the Defiance Campaign must have exceeded even the most optimistic expectations. Starting on August 4, with well-orchestrated processions of black patients arriving at the doors of eight hospitals in the Transvaal

and Natal, a savagely violent police assault was launched on a crowd in Cape Town. Killing at least twelve people, the attack generated a stay-away strike involving three million workers, and on September 13, a march of 35,000 protesters through the streets of the capital. Similar processions in smaller towns testified to the extent to which the movement built in 1984-86 had succeeded in reconstructing itself. Conciliatory measures by the new de Klerk administration, including the release from life sentences of Nelson Mandela's fellow Rivonia trialists and the repeal of the Separate Amenities Act, brought the 1980s to an exuberant close for followers of the ANC/UDF/COSATU grouping.

The survival, largely intact, of trade union organization through the most repressive phase of the emergency was an indispensable condition for the reassertion of mass politics in 1989. COSATU affiliates lost fewer key office bearers from the detentions than was the case with township-based bodies, but in any case their degree of organization was so much tighter at a rank-and-file level that they were much less vulnerable to immobilization through the removal of layers of leadership. Moreover, with most of their functioning located within the workplace, they were less inhibited by the presence of soldiers in townships.

Not that they weren't politically active outside the domain of the factories. In January 1987, a COSATU statement claimed trade unionists were leading the struggle to build street committees. By the middle of that year, at its second conference, the Congress was ready to adopt the Freedom Charter, notwithstanding festering tensions between "workerists" and "populists" in certain affiliated unions. The conference resolved in favour of the construction of "disciplined alliances" with "mass-based, democratic, and non racial" community organizations. A three-week mineworkers' strike in August 1987, though failing to secure NUM wage demands, nevertheless supplied impressive evidence of orchestrated union power in the key sector of the South African economy.

This power has its limits, though. For an industrial capitalist country, the rate of union enrollment remains very low. Rising unemployment may force the unions into an increasingly defensive dependence on legalistic processes. Finally, the ideological conformity required by political alliances may erode the unions' internal democracy, their major source of organizational vigour.

Meanwhile, the ANC succeeded in maintaining the levels of military action attained during the 1984-86 uprising. Police spokesmen



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In Lusaka, reunited ANC leadership, released from prison in October 1989

conceded that there had been 245 guerilla attacks in 1988, in contrast to 235 in 1987 and 231 in 1986. The guerilla offensive was brought to an impressive crescendo in the weeks preceding the Black Local Authority elections of October 1988. There was more obvious evidence of better guerilla discipline and control; in 1987 there had seemed to be an increasing number of indiscriminate attacks on such civilian targets as shopping centres, stadium grounds and bus terminals, accompanied by bellicose remarks made to journalists by Umkhonto commanders. This trend was reversed in 1988 after an ANC statement had disavowed such attacks and in 1989, policemen, government buildings and railway lines supplied the most common targets in the 204 attacks recorded up to October. In May, 21 ANC soldiers were trucked across the Western Transvaal border to mount a mortar attack on an SADF radar station, one of several incidents confirming a reestablished strategic priority being allocated to "hard" targets. The attack was the largest and most elaborate mounted by the ANC for several years, testifying to Umkhonto's logistical and tactical sophistication. This does not appear to have been diminished by the transfer of Umkhonto training facilities from Angola to eastern Africa, necessitated by the Angolan-South African agreement. Trial proceedings continue to indicate that larger numbers of Umkhonto recruits receive their military training within the borders of South Africa and that more elaborate command structures are located inside the country as well.

250 attacks a year, though, however well-orchestrated, will not win a war, and indeed the extent to which the South African authorities perceive a security threat probably lessened in 1989. The government contributed to holiday festivities at the end of the year by halving the period of compulsory military service for white men.

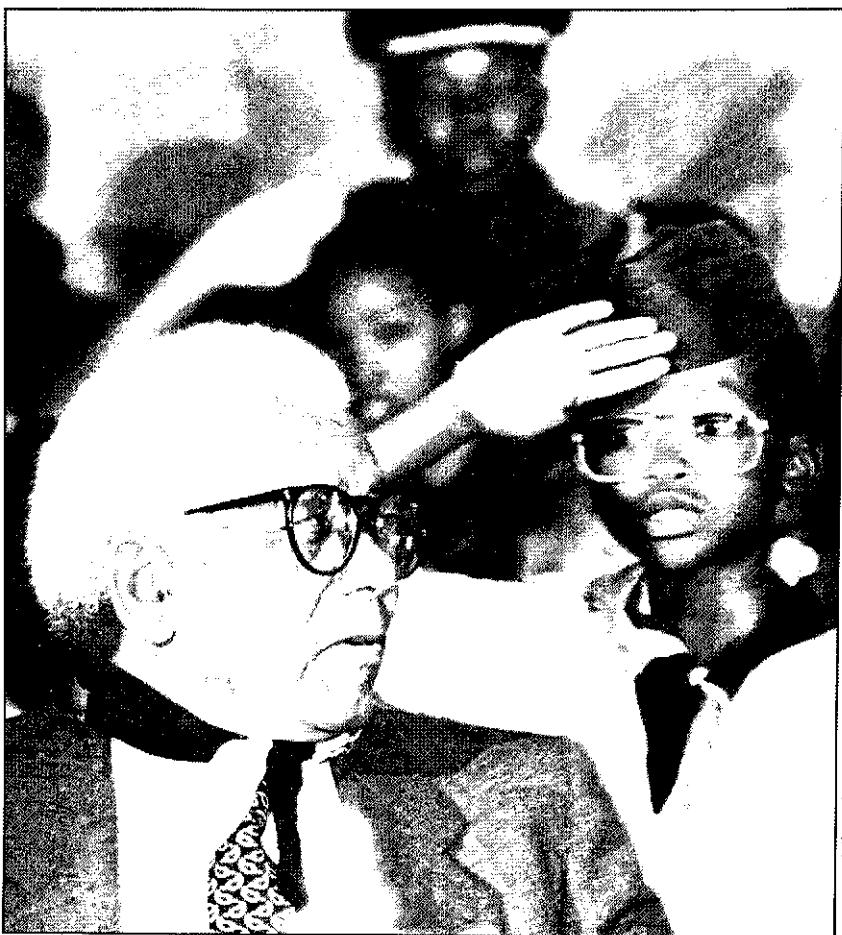


*Conscripts report to SADF to start two year compulsory service*

The ANC's diplomacy was to the fore both domestically and internationally. Two major conferences brought together Congress notables and more or less democratically-minded whites; as well, the ANC succeeded in persuading the Organization of African Unity to adopt its formula of preconditions for negotiations. Nelson Mandela began his meetings and discussions with various government leaders from the dignified seclusion of a warden's bungalow on a prison farm outside Cape Town. Soweto civic leaders successfully negotiated with the relevant authorities the cancellation on unpaid rents, the transfer of house ownership, and the establishment of a degree of community control over the electricity service.

Enlarging its domestic and international support whilst maintaining the loyalty of its partisans is likely to be the trickiest task for the ANC in the 1990s. A carefully balanced set of constitutional "Guidelines," a tighter rein on the military cadres, and the adoption of an ecological policy (surely unprecedented in the annals of international liberation politics?) may help to achieve for the ANC a new degree of internal and external respectability.

The process may have a price, though. Working class support for the ANC may increasingly be expressed in conditional terms. Significantly, the South African Communist Party has recently assumed a higher public profile than ever before; recent rallies demonstrate considerable public enthusiasm for the Party and its symbols. The SACP, though, is hardly likely to find itself at odds or competing with the ANC; its new programme, "The Path to Power," argues that a present emphasis on socialism would jeopardize the social unity indispensable to popular victory. This may not be a view, however, to arouse much enthusiastic agreement amongst more left-leaning COSATU affiliates. And finally, still in the background, but more conspicuous than they have been for decades, are the Africanists. In the present euphoria arising from the Defiance Campaign and the Robben Islanders' release, their drawing power seems very limited. But the recently-formed Pan-Africanist Movement gives the PAC a physical presence inside South Africa which it has lacked for ages. Heroic old leaders from the 1960s Poqo struggles, combined with younger men from a background of AZACTU trade union ac-



Youth welcome Walter Sisulu, released from detention in October 1989

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tivity, bring to the Africanist cause a fresh ingredient of fairly credible local leadership. As expectations raised by negotiations and great men falter, Africanist intransigence may yet win a new following from the young and the jobless.

Black opposition is as strong as it ever has been, but, as we have seen, it is a strength which is still subject to limitations. With the exception of mining, black unions do not have the power yet to close down key sectors of the economy for longer than brief demonstrative periods. Umkhonto we Sizwe does not have the firepower to seriously threaten the security of white society. The street activists can effectively veto the state's efforts to restructure the government of the townships but their power

does not yet extend beyond that. There are no immediate sources of compulsion which might persuade de Klerk and his colleagues to give up or even share control of the government. From their point of view, what can be gained from talking to ANC leaders? What is the point, for them, in reopening the political space which the Emergency closed down in 1986?

Well, first of all, the joint management committees' "hearts and minds" upgrading programme in the townships wasn't delivering the expected degree of black docility, and in any case, was much too expensive to accomplish on a large scale. Allowing processions and meetings, permitting the resurgence of the car-

nival style politics of the early 1980s might, in security terms, make better sense. But in addition to the resurrection of the doctrine of limited tolerance in the hope of defusing popular emotions, freeing up the political landscape has several advantages for South Africa's rulers. It certainly helps to deflect external pressures – last year the image of a more benign South African leadership divided the Commonwealth in debating new sanctions and probably helped the rescheduling of foreign debt payments. Domestically, an apparent "normalization" of political processes is an indispensable ingredient for consolidating domestic economic revival. Very few whites really want the siege economy which would be the logical accompaniment to continued militarized repression. Politically, the government may be hoping that with a more liberal climate, black opposition might be deradicalized through the formation of broader resistance movement alliances. Such alliances may be more internally divisive and hence more vulnerable to government strategies of incorporation, or at least, more moderate in their negotiation demands. Disaffected followers might break away to join more radical rivals to the ANC/UDF/COSATU grouping, leaving black resistance generally weaker and less capable of exerting concerted pressure.

But of course, what the government intends is one thing; what is possible may be another. The ANC may do well to take advantage of any new opportunities for entrenching itself on an organized basis within the country, notwithstanding the dangers and pitfalls in the new terrain of negotiation politics. Congress leaders can hope to develop a strength which can force a change in the state's agenda and it may be the chances are better to do this in open formation rather than through clandestine insurgency. Yes, the nineties may prove to be the decade of liberation, but no one should think it is going to be easy.

Judith Marshall's and Otto Roesch's recent articles (SAR Vol. 5 No. 2, December 1989) described dramatic changes in Mozambique and opened up debate about their implications for the solidarity movement. In response, four long-time followers of events in Mozambique from Sweden, the US and the UK have contributed to a round-table discussion. We welcome further contributions to this debate.

# Mozambique: Debating the Terms of Solidarity

## The New Terms of Solidarity

BY ANTON JOHNSTON &  
AGNETA LIND

Agneta Lind and Anton Johnston are both long-time activists in southern Africa solidarity work. Lind was one of the early members of the Swedish Africa Groups and worked in the literacy directorate in Mozambique from 1979-1983. Johnston was one of the first cooperants to be placed in Mozambique through MAGIC, the recruitment organization formed by the British solidarity committee, and worked in literacy both at provincial and national level from 1977-1983. They have both recently completed doctoral theses on Mozambique and continue to visit Mozambique regularly working in international cooperation in the fields of education and training.

Under the pressures of low-intensity warfare, the world market, and international aid organizations, a system shift is taking place in Mozambique which is having no less dramatic transformational effects on that society than did the conquest of national independence by FRELIMO. In very concrete ways, the process of structural adjustment is changing political, economic and social relations, and the distribution of power and wealth.

We have been asked to comment on what all this means for anti-imperialist solidarity work with Mozambique. Our reply should be regarded as a very personal one, from people who have a long history of solidarity with FRELIMO, but not necessarily representing the views of any solidarity movement.

Like other solidarity workers, we understood that there was a worldwide class struggle under way, translated into struggles on a global scale between the socialist and the capitalist/imperialist blocs, with capitalism maintaining its grasp over the Third World through imperialism and neo-colonialism.

In most underdeveloping countries there sat puppet regimes composed of military/petty-bourgeois alliances serving a comprador role in relation to international capitalism, pushing the workers and peasants down with one foot and climbing up after the international bourgeoisie with the other. Their economies fell into dependency, from which there was no way out except through socialist revolution. Fortunately, revolutionary forces were, in increasing numbers, setting out to overthrow colonialism and capitalism and institute socialism and peoples' democracies. The socialist countries would stand for defence, for alternative markets and sources of finance. Solidarity workers could contribute through various forms of committed support, at home and in the front line. Autonomous non-capitalist development would ensue, in socially just forms.

Suddenly the face of the world has changed. There is hardly a socialist bloc any more. Its sudden demise, to a large extent from within, poses serious questions for anti-imperialists as to Marxist and Leninist theories on the alternatives to capitalism and imperialism. One

watches in dismay as the alternatives to state monopoly socialism proposed in the ex-socialist states turn out to be a fearful blend of Coca-Cola, chauvinism and Catholicism. What, after all, is a solidarity worker to make of well-received visits to East Germany and Hungary by Herr Pik Botha? Furthermore, their demise not only deprives the Third World of alternative markets and sources of support and supply, but even takes away from the Third World a lot of western (and probably eastern) financing that might otherwise have been available to it.

Meanwhile, the majority of socialist-oriented countries in the Third World have knuckled under to the pressures of international capitalism, been forced to go along with the prescriptions of "structural adjustment," and thus put on ice their policies of social justice, autonomous development and self-help. Objectively evaluated, we witness the present success of Imperialist Multilateral Finance, the highest form of neo-colonialism. The ruling regimes in both underdeveloped capitalist and underdeveloped socialist countries go along with the IMF, largely because they seem to have neither any theoretical alternatives nor, had these existed, any space in which to put them in practice.

It depresses us extremely that the success of the IMF is such that today even most people on the left begin their comments on structural adjustment by saying: "We all know that structural adjustment is necessary, but . . ."(!) If the international solidarity movement has anything useful and revolutionary to do today,

it is first and foremost to change that formulation to: "Instead of this imperialist imposition of structural adjustment, what can be done in practice is . . ."

The issue of solidarity with Mozambique falls squarely into this broader scenario.

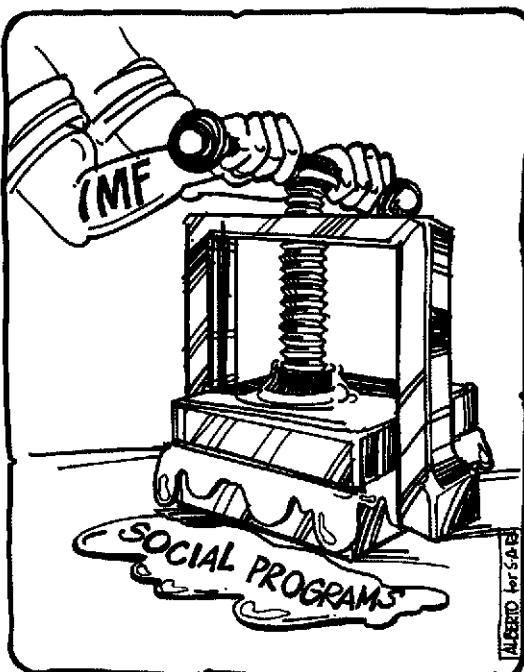
Until Mozambique's government buckled under and agreed to join the IMF/World Bank system, the country's economy was starved of access to foreign exchange. Although socialist countries and Sweden provided quite large amounts of aid, this was not sufficient to compensate for the general credit squeeze, the waste caused by internal policies such as the ten-year plan 1980-90, the destabilization undertaken by apartheid South Africa, and the destruction caused by its MNR.

Since the introduction of structural adjustment policies in 1987, large quantities of foreign exchange have re-entered the economy in the forms of donations and loans. There is alleged to have been constant economic growth since then, though how much is due only to capital influx is not clear. Nonetheless, Mozambique's current account deficit has risen by 45% since 1988, from about US\$660 million to about US\$957 million, and "is expected to rise to US\$1,146 million in 1993" (World Bank 1989). The World Bank foresees the country will remain totally dependent on concessional inflows of about US\$1,350 million per annum.

Where is all this aid going? Mozambique's debt amortization payments will average US\$284 million per annum. Some of the promised aid seems not to arrive; the provision of food aid this year has been much lower than expected. Aid in materials is often overvalued by the donor. A large amount of aid is tied; quite a large proportion returns to the donor through pur-

chase of equipment and consulting services. Most aid agencies administer their donations themselves, and thus set up and finance their own expensive local bureaucracy from the donated funds. To cap it all, they often weaken the state apparatus by employing key Mozambican officials themselves on salaries way above the level deemed to be appropriate under the adjustment measures.

Much of the small amount of cap-



ital Mozambique generates itself has to be thrown into fighting the South African-backed bandits. Furthermore, Otto Roesch's contribution to *SAR* (November 1989) clearly points out that the capital which is "left over" is to a large extent not being used for investment, but rather is falling into the hands of commercial enterprises and the higher managerial elite, for use in conspicuous consumption and illegal cross-border trading. Numbers of systems have been worked out to give higher managers and officials perks in foreign exchange; loans are given to ex-bureaucrats, allegedly to start up farms or enterprises. The "dumba-

nengue" markets flourish unchecked. Corruption is spreading through the state, now and then brought under Assembly debate or investigation, but with no punitive action taken. The World Bank is currently organizing further schemes to distribute foreign exchange to the "private sector," somewhat in the way that Zambia once auctioned off currency.

The IMF noted in its intervention at the Paris donors' meeting in October 1989 that while export of primary goods had indeed risen, notably of cashew and prawns, Mozambique's income from the export had stagnated "because of a sharp decline in the export prices" for these commodities. This can only mean in the medium term that the incomes of direct producers will fall, contrary to the claims made that structural adjustment would benefit them. The World Bank noted on the same occasion that there was a need to analyse "the provision of targeted food subsidies for the poorest households, possibly by encouraging self-selection by subsidizing only less preferred but nutritious foods . . ." (!). *Tempo* (14/1/90) lamented recently that "[government] estimates of the population affected by poverty indicate 90%." It continued: "Contrary to what one might deduce [from the 5.5% economic growth], the producers of these riches . . . far from seeing their circumstances improve over the three years of execution of the PRE [the economic recovery programme], live an economic and financial reality which deteriorates day by day."

In the period from the end of 1989 to the beginning of 1990 we are now witnessing extensive militant strikes in firms and the public sector in Maputo and Beira; the teachers have given notice that they will shortly go on strike.

*Tempo* comments: "The [striking Vidreiral] workers in demanding their [promised] 13th wage [increase], alleged that in December, 14 million meticais [about US\$17,000] had been spent in paying technicians' subsidies to nine people in the management ... to the workers were only distributed a few plastic toys ..."

Most distressing of all is the direct intervention of the World Bank in most aspects of policy-making in Mozambique, as part of the conditionality for loans. The issue is too wide to go into here, but in practice the World Bank presents Mozambique's government with detailed plans for implementation in almost all the state sectors, that are far more radical, far-reaching, and undemocratically derived than any of Mozambique's own short- or long-term "Marxist-Leninist" state plans ever were.

Objectively, therefore, Mozambique has become one of all those other neo-colonies. Politically it is dominated by international capital. The Frelimo Party itself has given up being a socialist party in all but the most vague and distant of terms (see Judith Marshall's analysis in *SAR*, November 1989). Economically Mozambique is totally dependent on aid, increasingly subjugated to South Africa, re-oriented towards the export of primary products, and has no hope whatsoever in the future of getting out of the debt trap on its own. Socially, it is ever more clearly divided. On the one hand, we have 90% of the population: exploited producers, workers, lower (ex) civil servants, refugees, and the unemployed. On the other, we have 10% (or even less) constituting a privileged petit-bourgeoisie divided into bureaucratic and commercial factions, both allied to international capital.

Whose side is the party or the government on? Even the official media protest that what is being done is not in the interests of the

producers, and is in the interests of the rulers (nowadays politely known everywhere as "managers").

Emotionally, it is not easy for us as solidarity workers to take the step of writing off Frelimo. We know how much bloodshed and external pressure it has taken for the situation to become what it is. It is manifestly unjust that the world capitalist system has managed by such means to suppress the socialists in Frelimo and promote a new privileged class which was previously hidden or suppressed. More unjust still, is that the "window of opportunity" was created by Frelimo's resolute anti-apartheid stand. The West allowed South Africa to ravage Mozambique in revenge for her position, at the same time as the whole world, including now Herr de Klerk himself, officially regards apartheid as being reprehensible.

Furthermore, it would be really unfair to ditch Frelimo when the solidarity movement has no concrete proposals as to what it should be doing instead. A new socialist revolution? Greater reliance on the socialist countries? Resignation from the IMF? Abstention from international aid? Indigenous development based on local resources and mass mobilization? Resignation from power and entry into opposition? Our lack of answers to all these questions is evident.

What are we to do? In the southern African context, it is clear that we have to redouble efforts to throw out apartheid completely, and prevent pro-apartheid manipulations from outside powers.

The solidarity movement has also to confront the IMF system in a more organized and coherent way. The debt trap has to be broken. We have to work to drive apart the present surface unanimity among the system's member government representatives. It is the case that all the governments subjected to structural adjustment would rather not implement the measures in the

first place. After all, they are being instructed to fit their countries into the world capitalist system as obedient, subjugate and permanently underdeveloped nonentities, and the payoffs for complying are meagre and short-lived. It requires little effort to prove that the structural adjustment measures are profoundly undemocratic, in conception, implementation, and results. What government would get elected on a platform consisting of adjustment measures? What constituency has ever been consulted or asked to vote on their introduction?

Central to the offensive against this system is to have not only a well-developed criticism of the inequities of its operations, but also plausible alternatives to present.

As regards Mozambique, we must stand up as vigorously as ever to support Frelimo against the bandits and their backers, to oppose the war and all the other operations of apartheid.

Other questions are more problematic. If Mozambican education workers go on strike against the government, do solidarity workers in education scab or strike? What do we do if the government fires the strikers or puts down strikes with violence? If we stand with the workers, is that still solidarity with the governing party? Can we claim that we are in solidarity with Frelimo but not with the government? Is there a difference today between what is party policy and what is government and World Bank policy? Or should we instead treat the case as we would, say, Zambia or Senegal, maintaining a "broad" solidarity with the working masses, expressed through support to the unions and the cooperative movement, and keeping our distance from the governing powers?

We think we should maintain solidarity with Frelimo. But it must be (as it always should have been) a rigorously and constructively critical solidarity.

## Sadly Revisited

BY STEPHANIE URDANG

*Stephanie Urdang's most recent book And Still They Dance: Women, War and the Struggle for Change was published last year by Monthly Review Press, New York and Earthscan, London.*

The two pieces on Mozambique by Judith Marshall and Otto Roesch in November 1989 were timely indeed. Hard reading I found, but hard because they struck a tone and a reality that resonated with my own recent visit – alas only for two weeks – to Mozambique. It was the shortest visit I have made since I began travelling regularly to that country ten years ago. It was also without doubt the most depressing and sobering. Did I get it all wrong I wondered as I came back to New York and spoke of my impressions and experiences? I felt I hadn't, and Judith and Otto have done a commendable – and very difficult – job of putting the current situation in Mozambique into sound perspective, while describing some unwelcome realities.

Those of us who have worked in the broad southern Africa solidarity movement for years now – many since the mid to late 1960s – did not accidentally chose to focus on Mozambique. The choice came out of our own political perspectives and our hopes that Mozambique would be one of the few countries that could demonstrate socialism with a human face in Africa, through its commitment to a new society. The work we did in the 1970s and 1980s was the result of political choices. And it became more urgent with the escalation of South Africa's destabilization tactics – "low intensity warfare" (LIW). This not just because of the starving masses – a horrific reality – but because of apartheid's role in the region and how it has gone about smashing the dream, a dream, that I still believe could have

been achieved in different, less hostile circumstances.

In 1987, my previous visit, I was appalled by the manifestations of the "LIW." I had become used to interviewing women at length in the rural areas for the book I was writing. But this time most of the interviews were done in refugee camps where stories of indescribable pain and courage unfolded. Anger against the apartheid regime seethed in me like a constant undertow, and kept tears flowing as I wrote some sections of my book.

This recent visit provided no respite from these harsh realities. The war continues. The brutality and personal and community disaster mount as inexorably as before. But there was something more. My visit came some two years after the implementation of the IMF/World Bank-sponsored economic recovery program so well outlined in the two articles. What was this? A spruced-up Maputo? Could it be that buildings were being renovated left and right and up and down so that scarcely a dilapidated building in central Maputo could be seen (in a city that was previously crumbling and collapsing).

The abundance of new model cars, cars belonging not only to the pervasive aid agency personnel. The market displayed high mounds of fresh produce of every description, and incredibly, piles of fresh shrimp, so long unavailable, alongside large fish, eggs and chickens. The bustle was reminiscent more of west than south-east Africa. No more bare store windows. Modern refrigerators to tacky toys to a variety of clothes to cricket bats (has anyone ever played that quintessential British pastime here?). "Why is Maputo such a well-kept secret?", commented a visiting UN official. "This is a little paradise!" Indeed, but one that few Mozambicans can delight in.

Beggars of every age haunt the market. Hundreds of young boys live in the streets, huddled together at night in ditches or abandoned buildings, cajoling passers-by for money by day. The prices in the market are so high that few but the most privileged can afford them (This is why the market is always full of produce, commented one Maputo resident.) One asks who is recovering in the economic recovery program. It is not the majority of Mozambicans whose poverty and appalling living conditions drag them down further by the month. And while buildings are spruced up, the slum conditions spread to encompass the steady stream of destitute refugees.

The stories of corruption were perhaps among the hardest to hear. Not just the petty level which is easier to understand – those with some access making sure that they can acquire a bit of security in a society and economy marked by almost total insecurity. But the large scale corruption within the army and those administering disaster relief is something other. And although, as Judith pointed out, the pre-Congress debate had been energetic on this issue, there was a deafening silence in terms of Party response at the Congress itself. This in a country that prided itself on its lack of corruption. A country that donors – United Nations and governmental – were only too happy to provide with aid a few years back because they could trust that virtually every aid dollar reached its destination instead of being siphoned off to half its size in deep pockets along the way to its destination.

I returned from Mozambique relieved that I did not have a general writing assignment, so that I could leave dealing with these questions till "next time." Nonetheless, I wanted to be part of discussions around how we in the solidarity movement address the question of broken dreams, not only Mozambique's but our own. How to



Joel Chiziane/AIM

Food distribution to people displaced by the war, Zambezia province

make sense of what is happening in Mozambique? Are there still points where people continue to struggle or has a dream of a different kind of society itself been destroyed?

It is too simplistic to dismiss it merely as a failure of socialism. It can't be clocked up as just one more failed socialist state as the US media has happily been describing events in eastern Europe.

Nor can we continue to place the blame on external factors alone, comforting as it would be to do so. Nonetheless it would be hard to overstate the apartheid regime's responsibility for Mozambique's economic distress. It has been and continues to be a very powerful factor. In the face of South Africa's relentless economic destabilization, the beleaguered nation had little option but to sign the IMF/World Bank agreement. And with the structural adjustment package came measures

which have increased yet more the hardships faced by the great majority of Mozambicans.

Since independence there have also been many mistakes and disastrous policy decisions that have contributed to Mozambique's current crisis. What we are witnessing now is the outcome of these various factors, intentional destabilization still being the primary one. This vast and intricate patchwork of causes and effects has given rise to a reality in Mozambique that in the heady post-independence days we could not foresee. And many millions of Mozambicans starve or live with hunger, while a privileged strata entrenches itself, benefitting from the economic changes swept in by the IMF.

Describing some of my thoughts and impressions to a journalist who has long been sympathetic to the region, he sighed and said, "So this is

just one more corrupt African government after all?" It clearly is more complicated than that. I am convinced that the new directions must be placed in the broader historical and current context. But neither can we delude ourselves that Mozambique is simply taking a different, but temporary path, while it gets its house in order with the help of the IMF/World Bank. At best we don't know if Mozambique can or will return to the socialist path. At worst, there are many with power who five-ten-fifteen years down the line will have new class interests to defend, a result of the rapid process of class formation under way.

What *Southern Africa REPORT* has done is to bring these issues into focus and allow for the much-needed debate to ensue. There will be many disagreements and different interpretations. What is healthy is that it is encouraging such debate to flower.

I travelled for a brief four days to Gaza province. I talked to old women trying to cultivate fields allocated by their communal village in drought-stricken areas, close to rivers that are too low for adequate irrigation. One woman, wrinkled, wizened, saddened and bent, leaned on her hoe and responding to my question, said, "Life was better under the Portuguese. Far better." What was context for her? Yes, the South Africans had launched a war on her country and new government, but she could feed her children before independence and she can't now.

And I talked to a district official, full of energy, full of love for his country, full of ideas about how to get things going again. For these two people, the struggle continues. And it is for people like these that the solidarity movement remains important. Urgent also is continued exposure of the South African regime's merciless policy towards its neighbours in the region, however much it might like to portray with its new "gentler and kinder" image.

## Jobs & Charity?

BY JOSEPH HANLON

*Joseph Hanlon is a writer on southern Africa and author of Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots?*

Why are we involved in Mozambique? Are we offering charity to the deserving poor? Are we creating jobs and careers for ourselves involving adventure in an exotic country? Or are we trying to assist a process of political change?

If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit to a mixture of all three reasons. And at its best, perhaps ten years ago, how wonderful it was. We supported the revolution, we helped poor peasants and we had jobs that allowed us to lie on some of the world's most beautiful beaches. We did not have to make choices; we could wear our rose-tinted glasses and ignore the problems and contradictions all around us. Indeed, support for the revolution meant we should not talk about forced villagization, corruption, a lack of democracy and economic policies which benefited a bureaucratic elite; indeed, we did not "see" these things, because blindness was a revolutionary virtue.

Well, the party's over. The bandits occupy the best beaches and aid agencies with more money are taking our jobs. We have lost our rose-tinted spectacles and express horror at the contradictions that were always there.

But we remain involved in Mozambique. So it is essential to return to the three reasons for supporting Mozambique, and to try to establish our priorities.

Clearly the first priority is our own jobs – without money for air fares, consultancy contracts and salaries, we can do little to help Mozambique. But having quickly resolved the first priority, it is the choice of the second priority that causes the major debate, both here (*SAR*, November 1989 and October

1988) and elsewhere. Some ask, as does Judith Marshall, whether the struggle "actually does continue." Is there a process of political change to support, or is the best thing to simply identify a few peasants and help them?

It has often been stated that the poor are poor primarily because they lack money (and power) – not because they are stupid, short-sighted, uneducated, or incompetent. Undoubtedly, the most efficient way of redressing the immediate problems of poor Mozambican peasants would be to pass out handfuls of US\$10 bills (or even better, 10 Rand notes); with generations of experience living close to the margin, most peasants would use that money wisely to buy food, clothing, agricultural inputs, education, and whatever else they needed.

Unfortunately, there are few jobs for us in simply handing out money. So taking account of our first priority, the question becomes: how can we do enough good in Mozambique to justify our own salaries?

If we choose to help just one identified group of people, we can never do enough good for them to justify what we are being paid. Our salaries and overhead costs mean that we are providing very expensive services indeed. Even if they thought that what we were doing was useful, peasant groups would surely prefer to hire technicians from the Third World, who cost much less and have more relevant experience. Given the money being spent on us, they could hire the best expertise in southern Africa – if that was what they chose to do. Or they could buy food or tractors or tickets out of Mozambique.

The only way we can be cost effective is to support and build structures and organizations which will benefit many more people than we can help directly. And that is a question of politics, not charity.

Most non-government organizations (NGOs) and many aid agencies (notably the World Bank and USAID) believe that this can best be done by strengthening the private sector – NGOs, churches, and businesses. Where such agencies do not exist, as is often the case in Mozambique, they try to create NGOs and companies. Most NGOs (on both the right and left) agree with the US line that third world governments do not act in the interests of their people, and thus it is important to create new private institutions which will take over the development jobs previously given to the state. Thus NGOs and bilateral aid agencies alike work to promote alternative (and often parallel) bodies to distribute emergency food, provide agricultural and development assistance, support small industry and so on. Often this extends to the promotion of alternative health and education services.

The often explicit goal of many NGOs, many bilateral aid agencies, and multilaterals like the World Bank, is to reduce the role and power of state institutions. This is remarkably similar to the goal of destabilization. It is not accidental that South African-backed forces destroy health posts, then IMF rules make it impossible for the state to pay health workers enough to return to dangerous areas, and then NGOs and churches move in to create a new parallel health service rather than rebuild the damaged state one.

The socialist goal of Frelimo was to provide basic services and a minimum living standard to all. The shared goal of NGOs, churches and most aid agencies is to provide a better standard of living and better quality services to a few. They differ, however, in choosing which few – NGOs help a favoured group of peasants, churches help their members, USAID helps the rich and so on.

For many of us, our initial support for Frelimo was support for a socialist project. As recent upheavals show, there is no recipe



Joel Chiziane/AIM

*Bridge on the only road linking Nakala port to the famine-stricken district of Memba, northern Nampula province*

for socialism. But at a minimum it must involve a central role for government, in response to the demands of genuinely popular organizations - co-ops, peasant associations, trade unions, and the like - as well as degrees of autonomy and self-sufficiency by those organizations. If we are to support the building of socialism in Mozambique, we must continue to support the government at the same time we support the growth of co-ops and other popular organizations.

Judith Marshall asks if the struggle continues. Yet the answer is clear from her own article, as well as the accompanying one by Otto Roesch (who has always written about the internal struggles when many others chose to ignore them). The recent strikes, the quite public actions by the growing co-op movement, and the angry complaints about corruption in the run-up to the Congress show one level of struggle. Another

is the bitter (albeit often secret) battle by some members of the government to resist World Bank and IMF pressure and maintain some level of socialism. One mark of struggle, which Judith mentions without analyzing, is the very different strategies now being followed in health and education, in the face of similar problems and pressures. Health workers and the Ministry of Health have succeeded in defending, at least temporarily, a socialist health policy.

Destabilization and the accompanying invasion of aid agencies and NGOs has clearly intensified the struggle. Many Mozambicans are choosing sides: class formation is rapid. In my regular visits to Mozambique, I still find people who are committed to the original socialist goals. But it gets harder for them: the bribes and benefits offered by the aid agencies are huge, while the old solidarity groups find the struggle too intense and with-

draw or retreat to doling out charity. The money (both personal and for projects) goes to those who advocate capitalism and privatization, not those who still support socialism.

If we really are in Mozambique to help build socialism (and not just to ensure our jobs and hand out charity) the we must wade into the struggle and help our friends. We should use our money and expertise to support progressive Mozambicans, especially those still in government.

In the coming years, ordinary Mozambicans will be looking to see who has the resources to help them. Will it only be private traders, churches, foreign NGOs, and wealthy donors? Will a socialist government and the popular organizations have only rhetoric and good ideas to offer, or will they too have money and power? Progressive foreign agencies will have a key role to play in this struggle.

# Forging the Agenda: Canadian Anti-Apartheid Movement Debates

*In the last issue of SAR we spoke, editorially, of "the challenge ... to the anti-apartheid movement to continue its efforts to further deepen public awareness in Canada." We also published, as one contribution to the debate about how to make our work ever more effective, Pierre*

*François' article "In a Lull: Canada's Anti-Apartheid Movement," a critical and controversial assessment of the state of our movement as we enter the 1990s. At that time we expressed the hope François' piece would "serve as a stimulus to further discussion and (we) welcome*

*additional contributions in subsequent issues." We are pleased with the response, a response not limited merely to jousting with François, useful as that may be, but also with raising additional questions and concerns that we feel will be of interest to everyone active in anti-apartheid circles. We publish here three fresh contributions to the forum we thus seek to make available to the movement. But we also reiterate our invitation to others to take part in the discussion, a discussion rendered all the more urgent in light of the novel challenges the most recent developments in South Africa now present us with.*

## A View from the West

BY DON KOSSICK

*Don Kossick is a long-term anti-apartheid activist in Saskatchewan, working with the Saskatchewan Linkage Committee which is a member of the Backing the Front Line National Coalition Against Apartheid.*

Western Canadian anti-apartheid activists gathered in Winnipeg on November 11th and 12th, 1989 to plan for action into the 'nineties. The meeting, billed as an activists' conference, had the clear intent of deciding on an agenda that would galvanize anti-apartheid work in western Canada, and contribute to the consolidation of an anti-apartheid network across Canada. The conference was organized by the Manitoba Coalition of Organizations Against Apartheid (MCOAA) with support from anti-apartheid groups in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia.

Over 60 delegates from the four provinces were in attendance, representing labour, women's organizations, students, church groups, solidarity organizations, aboriginal peoples organizations, committees against racism, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Peter

Mahlangu represented the African National Congress and Bafo (Styx) Nyanga the South Africa Congress of Trade Unions.

There were some important issues underlying the discussions. People felt that the agenda for anti-apartheid work had been dominated by fruitless lobbying of the Mulroney government for unconditional sanctions. Since 1985 the Conservative government and Joe Clark had held out the possibility of further sanctions pending developments in South Africa. The illusion of a promised increase in sanctions had tended to focus anti-apartheid work narrowly on lobbying.

In hindsight, we could see that this focus meant a neglect of the parallel need for community organizing throughout Canada that would have put grassroots political pressure on the government - working from local to provincial to the federal level. This does not mean that good community actions and education did not occur. At local and regional levels, people across Canada had gone ahead to work in some very innovative ways. What was missing was a national strategy to put key re-

sources to work at a decentralized, community level across the country, building an anti-apartheid network out of direct action and education. Such a parallel strategy would have added considerably to the lobbying pressure on Clark. Instead resources were diverted by NGO structures to the narrower strategy. And, as everybody knows in Canada, particularly in the eastern and western extremities, resources are key and those who control them can set the agenda.

This was evident in what transpired after the Parallel Commonwealth Conference in October 1987. At that conference there was a strong plea from regional delegates to maintain and expand a coordinated anti-apartheid network across the country. This was never acted upon. In fact, though considerable effort had gone into building the structure that helped to organize the Parallel Conference, representing regionally-based solidarity organizations as well as NGOs, this was virtually abandoned over the next two years. Subsequent national anti-apartheid gatherings were convened by NGO structures with mainly NGOs in attendance, and they ba-

sically responded to External Affairs' agenda about Canadian policy moves in southern and South Africa.

Objectively, the institutionalized NGO level of the anti-apartheid network was co-opted by CIDA/External Affairs, who tried to use the network to launder federal government policies. The people who march in front of the Shell gas stations and organize community-based sanctions campaigns were excluded from the process of setting directions for the national network, no doubt a CIDA/External Affairs dream-come-true. Fortunately, the institutionalized NGOs are not the engines of the solidarity movement and people have kept organizing regardless of the manoeuvres in the Golden Triangle.

Also informing the Winnipeg conference were the political lessons learned in Canada during the last couple of years of organizing against free trade, privatization and other elements of the new-right agenda. We have learned how to build coalitions between different constituencies and communities and the need to respect certain democratic principles if we are to succeed.

Anti-apartheid work is not immune to the demands for democracy that people will make in other forums for social action. To build a network and eventually a political movement, people must have the right to control and shape the agenda for the work that they will be carrying out in their communities. This demand comes out of political work in Canada and the example set by the Mass Democratic Movement in South Africa.

The issue of democratic practices in the network is an extremely sensitive one, especially for institutionalized NGOs and other top-heavy, centralized structures. It addresses whom you speak on behalf of, who gives you permission to represent a particular group, how decisions are made, and who is accountable for those decisions. It is time-consuming to follow this route and

it sometimes means giving up personal power in the interests of sharing power. However, the end result is a type of participation and community power across Canada that is much more than words on paper.

The national anti-apartheid network in Canada has been sustained by people at the community level, practising the principles of coalition-building. This has resulted in initiatives ranging from continuous Shell Boycott activity, to solidarity relations between communities in English Canada and Quebec and communities in southern and South Africa, to community education work in the interior of British Columbia and the small towns of Saskatchewan.

Coupled with the demand for democratic, participatory structures to carry out anti-apartheid work is an equal demand to bring the struggle in South Africa to bear on issues in Canada. We cannot pursue anti-apartheid work without dealing with the injustices that we have here. We can, in fact, learn from the work of the African National Congress, the Mass Democratic Movement, SACTU and COSATU to better conduct our political struggles here.

The Winnipeg meeting recognized strongly the importance of putting the relationship with the African National Congress in Canada front and centre in our discussions. At this conjuncture in southern and South Africa, it is necessary to forge a strong, cooperative working relationship with the ANC in order to contribute effectively to the struggle in South Africa. Our anti-apartheid work cannot exist outside of the strategy of ANC work in Canada. We have to develop a relationship that will bring the ANC and the anti-apartheid network together in the most mutually beneficial manner.

The final statement from the conference specifically addressed some of the above concerns: the leading role of the ANC and the

importance of working in partnership was recognized; the need for a democratic and non-exclusionary network, which includes all groups working against apartheid and racism, was endorsed; the common struggles of peoples in Canada and South Africa against racism and economic exploitation necessitating the forming of partnerships with movements of aboriginal peoples and people of colour here was acknowledged; and the prime importance of implementing mandatory, comprehensive sanctions was accepted.

Workshops targeted key areas of work - sanctions and diplomatic recognition of the ANC - discussing ways of building popular support for these aims within communities. There were discussions of other methods we might adopt for our work. In the workshop on racism in Canada, Phil Fontaine, representing the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, spoke of the need to build coalitions and networks which would create a common anti-apartheid and anti-racist front to support the aboriginal people, as they work towards self-determination and self-government. The link was made between the extraction of raw materials such as sulphur, uranium, and wood from aboriginal peoples' land in Canada - when they are fighting for control over their own resources - and the export of these raw materials to South Africa where they in turn help to fuel the apartheid regime.

The workshop on sanctions called for a "people's agenda," which would not be co-optable and would rest within the control of mass movements and community organizations in Canada. Sanctions work in western Canada would centre on strategic resources that are being extracted here, such as sulphur. A special sanctions monitor unit has since been set up (within the Saskatchewan Linkage Committee in Regina) to research and monitor the supplying of resources from western Canada to the South African economy.

Students, who have been the key sector in promoting the boycott of Shell on the prairies and in British Columbia, were well represented at the conference and convened a students' caucus. In their discussions they talked about strengthening ties with the ANC youth, escalating Shell Boycott activity, and holding a special "youth against apartheid" conference.

The conference as a whole called for the building of a community-based network across Canada and expressed a desire to work with other parts of the country in doing this. Since the conference, each provincial component of the Western Canadian network has met to decide how it will be implementing the actions discussed. A clear objective

for 1990 is to have the network in a position to call for coordinated actions and activities at a provincial, regional and national level.

So, was this conference an advance over other anti-apartheid meetings in the last while? Probably the major achievement was the opportunity it gave us to strategize how people themselves would carry out anti-apartheid work in their communities and how they would work with other communities. Both the Taking Sides conference in Montreal and the Parallel Commonwealth Conference in British Columbia, while providing a lot of information about the situation in southern Africa and South Africa and bringing the situation of the Front Line States into fo-

cus, were decidedly weak on how we organize in our own backyard to make our contribution to fighting apartheid. The linking of the struggle against apartheid with fighting racism at home, and with looking for political alternatives here represents an advance - it's an important step in our own political maturity to know that the front line is in Canada as well as southern Africa.

If we can maintain the sense of democracy and participation from the community level up, we can truly build an anti-apartheid movement that will help to defeat the South African regime, prepare for the next battle of building a new South Africa, and build our own political capacity for change.

## Buying Silence?

*The following is a response from a group of Toronto-based southern Africa solidarity activists.*

When Joe Clark addressed the "Taking Sides in Southern Africa" conference in Montreal back in early 1987 activists from the NGO's, anti-apartheid groups, labour, the churches and academia were not impressed. Clark couched his comments about the region in heavy cold-war rhetoric and showed none of the passion expressed by Brian Mulroney a year earlier when he visited southern Africa and said he understood why Africans had resorted to violence in their struggle against apartheid. Clark also pushed aside Mulroney's 1985 promise of full diplomatic and economic sanctions if the South African regime failed to take significant measures. The hopes for strong Canadian action against apartheid, hopes raised in the early months of the Mulroney government, vanished, and activists, gathered at the conference, expressed deep disappointment. Response to the speech included some

discreet but audible hisses and boos.

Last month at a luncheon organized by the South African Education Trust Fund in Ottawa some of these same anti-apartheid activists gathered to hear Clark again along with many prominent education figures also in attendance. Here was a very different Clark (or Clark speech-writer), giving a cleverly constructed speech which all those present could read in their own way. It had some punch to it, saying that sanctions had worked, and that de Klerk's present reasonableness was owed, at least in part, to economic pressures. The speech gave a persuasive rendition of Canada's policy of soft options - action on questions of censorship, dialogue, education and training. It was rich in detail about Canadian actions in the anti-apartheid struggle: amongst other things Clark spoke about the Canadian embassy's role in education activities, in training journalists and providing equipment for black community newspapers, and saving the outspo-

ken Afrikaans-language weekly *Vrye Weekblad* from financial collapse. The next day the *Globe and Mail* lauded Clark for his efforts with the headline, "Clark gets subtle on S. Africa." Clark seems to have been so subtle that those gathered to hear him rose to their feet in applause after his speech. How many of the anti-apartheid activists also rose?

While Canada's South Africa policy has stalled on sanctions and promoted soft options, has the anti-apartheid movement gone from boos to standing ovations? The politics of manners? Overseas Development Assistance cuts? Buying silence? Those of us involved in the solidarity movement outside the hub of power in Ottawa are feeling uneasy.

One problem for us is the predominance of development organizations in the leadership of the southern Africa solidarity movement. During the 1986/1987 period the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) became the focal point for joint



Peter Mahlangu, Chief Representative of the ANC, leads crowd in South African national anthem.

efforts, through the Inter-Agency Working Group on Southern Africa, IAWGSA. IAWGSA took a leadership role in a mixture of lobbying and tapping into CIDA/Partnership Africa Canada funding. National strategies included the "Taking Sides" conference and the subsequent Vancouver conference during the meeting of Commonwealth prime ministers in October 1987. These events were not organized in a particularly democratic or participatory way, both Ottawa-Montreal-Toronto centred and male-dominated, leaving both regional

groups and women on the outs.

After 1987, CCIC leadership on southern Africa seemed to go through a lull. IAWGSA ceased to meet for a lengthy period of time; CCIC consortia were formed for more focussed work on particular countries. The first was COCAMO, Cooperation Canada Mozambique, a twenty member NGO consortium focussed on Mozambique which established a \$7 million three-year programme in Nampula. A similar consortium, Program Angola, was formed a year later. Both drew

down significant CIDA funding from Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) and from CIDA-IHA for emergency. Both consortia were also actively involved in development education activities in Canada, their Ottawa offices mobilizing member agencies regionally to take on projects like the Bruce Cockburn tour and film launchings of a new film on Mozambique.

With the formation of the South Africa Reference Group (SARG) in 1988 South African concerns seemed to slip out of CCIC hands. SARG,

another group with heavy representation from development agencies, is closely linked to the South African Education Trust Fund.

SARG has set out an ambitious programme of broad consultation on political directions in South Africa and Canadian links to them. Its work style has done little to alter the tradition of "the boys" running affairs from their offices in central Canada.

IAWGSA/CCIC stepped back into the picture as a Namibian settlement began to fall into place. Canadian delegations were dispatched to monitor elections in Namibia, OXFAM-Canada set up an office in Namibia and a group of NGOs readied themselves to work in Namibia. And now with the launching of another new initiative at the national level with plans for another "Taking Stock" conference IAWGSA is poised to reassert itself again in a major way.

Of course IAWGSA as well as SARG have been natural points of convergence for the development agencies. The problem has been that many community groups, unions, teachers' federations and student groups have been left very much on the fringe. NGOs with southern Africa desk personnel able to devote full time to southern Africa concerns, backed with programme budgets for meeting time, phone calls, photocopies and staff travel have taken on a preponderant role in shaping national strategies on southern Africa. This is not to suggest that they have not done so with conviction and commitment of lots of volunteer time in addition to staff time. And some have worked hard to use their NGO position to facilitate links between popular organizations in Canada and southern Africa. However, the predominant role of development agencies in southern Africa solidarity work is not without its consequences. In general, this NGO orbit revolving around CIDA and External Affairs tends to slant the southern Africa

solidarity work up to the bastions of power rather than down into the community. There is a natural tendency to think first of influencing government policy which often takes us along dubious paths. For example, one of the main "demands" of the "Taking Sides" era in early 1987 was a CIDA bilateral programme for Mozambique. Such a programme was established in 1988 and NGOs claim this today as a clear victory. Yet in this same period, Mozambique was uniformly pressured by western countries to sign with the IMF with the offered carrot being increased flows of aid from western donors. This was confirmed to the NGO/government fact-finding mission to Mozambique in February 1987 when Minister of Cooperation Veloso reported that Mozambique was being pressed into an IMF agreement and western donors were saying they would freeze all aid until there was such an agreement. Mozambique signed and shortly Canada established a bilateral aid programme. NGO victory - or NGOs acting as foot-soldiers for IMF/World Bank/western government pressure politics to get yet one more third world country firmly in line?

The hustling role of the NGOs around Namibia has also made many long-time southern Africa activists uneasy, academics and church people included. An important worry is the desire of some of the NGOs to become the conduits for big CIDA grants into a post-independence "Country Focus" programme in Namibia. How much has this muted NGO capacity to really put pressure on the Canadian government about events in Namibia?

The major cuts in ODA allocations last May threw all of these tendencies into even sharper relief. The current spectre of funds being diverted from Africa to eastern Europe has exacerbated the situation even more. With funds flowing readily, the willingness of NGOs to take critical stances is presumably

greater. With severe budget cuts, the hustle to get CIDA funds takes on more intensity. No one can live in the Ottawa milieu without becoming finely tuned to the limits of critical discourse about government policy. The structural relation of the development agencies to CIDA funding sources is such that, consciously or unconsciously, these agencies carry out a kind of self-censorship. When the leadership of the anti-apartheid movement moves out of the hands of more independently-based activists in community, labour, university and church-based organizations, the tendency for compliance with government policy is much greater. Hence Joe Clark gets applause for a southern Africa policy that has moved more and more into line with Britain and the US and at a time when CIDA leadership has passed into the hands of Marcel Masse with his strong advocacy of International Monetary Fund dictates.

The development agencies have clearly decided to focus on CIDA and draw more money out of it for the countries of southern Africa. But where is the critique about CIDA's complicity in playing along with IMF bullying tactics in Tanzania, Mozambique and Angola? South Africa's neighbours have been cruelly punished for their efforts to dismantle apartheid. These countries' efforts to turn away from southern Africa's historic vocation as resource supplier for northern industrialized countries has mobilized the western powers, including Canada, into concerted action through diplomatic and IMF circles. Yet where is the development agency analysis of CIDA's role in the striking erosion of sovereignty in southern Africa where foreign donors now dictate policy in almost all countries of the region?

Searching questions need to be asked as we take stock of where we are in the southern Africa solidarity movement. Has our silence been bought by the lure of government funds?



Dave Hartman

*Thousands of Torontonians celebrated the release of Nelson Mandela*

## Towards a Common Strategy Support for the ANC-MDM

BY JOHN VAN MOSEL

*John van Mossel works for CUSO, Ottawa, on the East, Central and Southern Africa Desk.*

Pierre François' article in the December 1989 issue of *SAR* (Vol. 5 No. 3) argues that the anti-apartheid movement in Canada is "in a lull." His article was graced by an old photo of the South African Embassy. The building actually looks a bit different these days, clad with a new imposing iron fence, additional video monitors, and automatic gates. Why the new Embassy fences and gates? What kind of vulnerability is "Ambassador" de Klerk feeling?

I, for one, assume incredible anti-apartheid pressure continues! Public sentiment still abhors the apartheid system and its dehumanizing

and destructive effects, the obstacle it has long posed for the majority inside South Africa, and what apartheid represents as the fact and the symbol of white imperial power. I fear Pierre's view may be as dated as the photo which illustrates his article.

Pierre's article fails to grapple with the status and the strengths of the broad anti-apartheid movement in Canada, and the appropriateness of action by leading national and regional organizations. Rather, I think it unintentionally deflates the successes of the movement and encourages confusion for the reader.

I'm sorry Pierre didn't contribute to building a framework for evaluating the movement, helping to develop consensus on its key elements, or posing critical questions

for such an evaluation. 1990 is shaping up to be an important year for anti-apartheid work in Canada. We do need to assess our past as we implement new strategies.

I'd like to hear contributions towards an evaluation from people within constituency-based organizations: the churches, the trade unions, the regional coalitions of community-based groups, the "development education" community and the development organizations (NGOs). These are among the groups who have strength and leverage on Canadian public policy towards South Africa.

Pierre expresses views which seem irrelevant today. He raises to the level of "indicative and important" the information he gets from the back alleys of Ottawa-

based NGOs relations. Much of his "data" is a product of agency chauvinism, large male egos, unrepentant vanguardism, and plain old competition. NGOs in the "golden triangle" should be more cohesive in their activities, it is true. And an evaluation might look at relations among NGOs. But this data alone will not be critical in our planning.

The anti-apartheid movement has strived to build a broad base of support - an informed, committed and active constituency and various forms of "people's action" including boycotts, popular education, research, selective demonstrations and political action. We have tried to create the heat - the more pointed the better - that will push the politicians and the corporations to drop defective and deficient policy and adopt progressive stands. Let's evaluate our gains against the real objectives - popular action and policy change.

### Towards negotiations: a role for the anti-apartheid movement

The principal political force for a united, democratic, non-racial South Africa is the ANC-MDM (Mass Democratic Movement) alliance. This is so for a number of reasons. Not only has the ANC provided the most effective leadership in terms of the struggle, but the ANC and the "charterists" inside South Africa have had the vision and the means to bring together the broadest possible opposition consensus under the umbrella of the MDM. The significant "Mandela factor" is clearly part of this force. There is, in addition, a dynamic relationship between the ANC-MDM political al-

liance and the popular sectoral organizations (labour, the church, educational, legal, medical, cultural and media groups, women, youth, rural people, traditional leaders, and the civic bodies); one instructs, and at the same time is instructed by the others, each playing critically important roles.

The organizational behaviour of the anti-apartheid movement should be based on this understanding of the ANC-MDM as the central broad-based political organization of the people who have not been allowed to have a voice, yet who are speaking nonetheless. We should be looking for effective ways of supporting these organizations. The democratic movement in South Africa has explicitly asked that anti-apartheid groups in Canada work closely with the ANC here.

Today, on the eve of negotiations in South Africa, Canadians should mobilize support behind the demands of the MDM and the ANC for an end to apartheid. Already, in the last 18 months, significant work has been undertaken in Southern Africa to produce the ANC's Constitutional Guidelines. These now have been incorporated in large measure into important declarations by the OAU (the Harare Declaration), the Non-Aligned Movement, the United Nations Special General Assembly on Apartheid and the Conference for a Democratic Future in South Africa.

Official Canada supports an odd conglomerate of groups inside South Africa. Canadian policy tends to see the ANC as a "political party," not as the central political movement

for transformation. Hence, tangible support for the ANC is minimal. Canada's programs operated by the Pretoria Embassy are not guided by an established working relationship with the ANC and the MDM. If Canada really wants to help, particularly as the prospects for negotiations emerge, this needs to change. The anti-apartheid movement should pressure External Affairs to formalize a working relationship with the ANC and the MDM and provide concrete assistance to these organizations.

Efforts are underway to augment current levels of support to the ANC in Canada. We are eager for External Affairs to contribute to this effort. An ANC office with the resources and capacity to relate strongly to the anti-apartheid movement in Canada and to keep the broad public informed about developments and issues in South Africa will serve the interests of all concerned to end apartheid.

Efforts to strengthen the anti-apartheid network in Canada require all groups to come together with a common strategy. The meetings in Lusaka during mid-January, 1990 brought together the leaders of ANC and the MDM in an historical session of the ANC's National Executive Committee showing the considerable unity of purpose that exists at this critical point in the history of the struggle. The politics of establishing common platforms and strategies is something the democratic movement of South Africa has learned well. When will we acknowledge the need to learn from them? And then will we do it?

### REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

Plans are currently firming up to continue Canadian official and "people's" pressure on South Africa until negotiations are finalized and the supporters of apartheid are out of power. Members of CCIC's Inter-Agency Working Group on Southern Africa and regional anti-apartheid networks are planning a series of regional workshops, policy reviews and a major national work-

shop. The latter is scheduled for early May, in advance of the next meeting of the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers which is chaired by External Affairs Minister Joe Clark. The objective is to forge the broadest possible support for a common statement to government on Canada's policy towards South Africa. This is a strategic goal and all people who can contribute to this effort and its objectives are encouraged to take part.

# Defying Apartheid

BY JOHN REARDON

*John Reardon is a freelance writer living in Toronto who writes frequently on the cinema. This review first appeared in Festival.*

Like most oppressive political regimes that operate with any measure of success (in their terms), South Africa's system of apartheid has behind it a crude but effective organizational genius. By segregating race along rigidly maintained and demonstrably absurd but bureaucratically impenetrable lines, successive South African governments have managed to exploit the economic advantages of such a system while sequestering and concealing from the outside world its more inhumane and, for them, politically damaging, manifestations. Thus even travellers there have come back remarking on what a beautiful and trouble-free country they have seen, never, of course, having been permitted to glance at the squalor and

desolation of the black townships and the misery of the work camps. In such a potentially radical context, though, virtually every form of expression, every work of art, becomes an attempt to expose the dissimulation and official falsehoods of the system and thus also becomes, in greater or lesser measure, an act of defiance.

Two recent films tackle the egregious injustice and brutality of apartheid with special effectiveness. But while both deal with a similar theme — the politicization of an individual in a radically divided, racially subjugated police state — they approach their material from very different points of view and with very different filmmaking strategies.

*Mapantsula* is a spirited, riveting first feature by 29-year-old South African director Oliver Schmitz and the lead performer in the film, Thomas Mogotlane. Some background to the making of the movie

is perhaps germane to an understanding and appreciation of its accomplishments. In London in 1986, Mr. Schmitz, who had left South Africa the year before, met Max Montocchio, an expatriate Zimbabwean who had been working in film and television production in England for some time. Mr. Schmitz gave him an early draft of the screenplay for *Mapantsula*, and Mr. Montocchio agreed to produce and try to arrange financing for the film in England. Meanwhile, Mr. Schmitz returned to South Africa to work on the script with Mr. Mogotlane, whom he had known from earlier television work. The two co-writers, wanting to make the film in South Africa, but realizing the authorities would never allow them to execute the story they wanted to tell, submitted for an approval to the government's Ministry of Film a version of the script that minimized its political content and which read more as an innocuous gangster movie. Thus, when the script was approved and financing arranged (the cost was US 1.5 million), production began on



*Mapantsula*

what was ostensibly a low-budget crime thriller but what was in reality the first anti-apartheid movie made in South Africa. *Mapantsula* was subsequently screened to enthusiastic acclaim at numerous film festivals around the world, but remains banned in the country of its origin.

*Mapantsula* (the word refers to the term 'wideboy' and might be translated as 'gangster' or 'thief', but with overtones of hipness and flamboyance) is the story of Panic (Thomas Mogotlane), a strutting, self-centred petty criminal from Soweto who ekes out a mean existence by picking pockets, snatching purses and living off what meagre earnings his girlfriend Pat (Thembi Mtshali) makes from her work as a domestic. Seeing a world and a society so completely stacked against him and his race, Panic has embraced the cut-throat ethic of the township criminal class as his only means of survival. Politics is for dupes.

However, when Panic is arrested and imprisoned with a group of anti-apartheid activists, his life is irreversibly changed. Sensing vulnerability in Panic's ludicrous bravado and in his scorn for his fellow prisoners, the police try to get Panic to reveal what little he knows about the activists and their plans. As the interrogations escalate in intensity, though, Panic's resistance grows, as does his respect for those prisoners whom he once regarded with contempt. As his indifference and cynicism fall away, Panic finds a deeper identity and self-respect through the sort of defiance — mature and humane — he had always disdained as ineffectual idealism.

Schmitz employs a dual time-frame to tell the story. Beginning with Panic's incarceration, we flash back and forth from his violent, amoral life as a criminal and his relationship with Pat, to his transformation in the prison as he confronts the brutal, impassive face of white authority. The parallel device allows us to separate and contrast the



*A Dry White Season*

two modes of existence that define Panic's character, but because they unfold simultaneously, we are also permitted to grasp the ultimately optimistic vision of the film — that the capacity for decent, humane action has been within Panic all along, and that it is, presumably, within us all.

Although it is remarkable purely in cinematic terms, *Mapantsula* is perhaps just as noteworthy for the fact that it is in essence, the first South African film to be exclusively about the black experience of apartheid. Shot largely in dialect, with the rhythms, music (mainly by the a cappella group The Ovens) and gritty street-life atmosphere of township life forming the backdrop to the action and the magnetic, energetic and moving performance of Thomas Mogotlane predominating, the film, as entertaining as it is politically engaging, could very well turn out to be a landmark in an emerging national cinema.

If you haven't heard before of any of the performers in *Mapantsula*, chances are you've heard of nearly all of them in *A Dry White Season*. But the star factor (and the attendant mainstream commercial production values on display) is not the only element that distinguishes

this film from its less heralded relation. Where *Mapantsula* attempts to probe and delineate the experience of apartheid from a black perspective, *A Dry White Season* takes the more familiar and perhaps more accessible approach — worked to great effect by Chris Menges in *A World Apart* and to a worthy but less successful degree by Richard Attenborough in *Cry Freedom* — of exploring the system's impact on a member of the ruling white minority. (It is a small irony, perhaps, that *Mapantsula* is the work of a white director, while *A Dry White Season* was directed by the black Martinique-born Euzhan Palcy.) But like *Mapantsula*, *A Dry White Season* has as its central subject an individual's political transformation.

In the film, which was shot in Zimbabwe but which is set in 1976 amidst the turmoil of the Soweto riots of that year, Donald Sutherland plays Ben du Toit, a history teacher who lives comfortably ensconced in one of Johannesburg's affluent white suburbs. Sheltered from the realities of the system that sustains his class and its privileges, Ben is blithely unaware of what apartheid means for the majority of South Africans — until that is, those realities impinge on the serenity and placidity of his

life. When Ben learns, first of the beating, then the disappearance, of the son of his black gardener, Gordon (Winston Ntshona), he is at first incredulous, insisting that there must be an explanation, that it is all a mistake. But when Gordon, after having undertaken an investigation into his son's whereabouts, dies in police custody, an apparent "suicide," Ben is left with no choice but to press for an answer. As the evidence he uncovers mounts, and its incontrovertibility made plain, Ben enlists the help of an aging human-rights attorney, Ian Mackenzie (Marlon Brando, in a gloriously effortless but completely stellar performance), to launch an inquest into Gordon's death. Predictably, the inquest exonerates the police, but Ben, aware now that the authorities can't be trusted, realizes he has come too far to turn back. With the help of Gordon's taxi-driver friend,

Stanley (Zakes Mokae) and a journalist (Susan Sarandon), Ben, fired from his teaching job and deserted by his family, gathers enough affidavits to prove the police culpable in the deaths of both Gordon and Gordon's son. It is only at the end of the film that we learn the ultimate ruthlessness of apartheid justice and of the final price that Ben must pay for his convictions.

Although it bears the outlines of a conventional one-man-against-the-system story, *A Dry White Season* is exceptional for the way Ms. Palcy (*Sugar Cane Alley*) manages to present unflinchingly the palpable brutalities of apartheid (especially during the sequence involving the Soweto shootings, in which, as actually happened, scores of school children are shot for protesting being taught Afrikaans rather than English) without exploiting them for

overt dramatic purposes. When the material veers towards the melodramatic, her matter-of-fact, but still impassioned sensibility preserves it. She has this in common with Oliver Schmitz, as well as, more importantly, the ability to find the point where the personal and social, the private and political axes intersect and transform each other. In *Panic*, the low-life petty criminal, and in *Ben du Toit*, the naive, disbelieving schoolteacher, these two filmmakers have created characters who, severed from the deeper processes of their culture for very different reasons, yet manage to re-connect themselves to it and, in so doing, find out who they actually are and what they believe. And both films, by dint of the seriousness and honesty with which they approach their subject, help to illuminate the sorrowful political landscape from which they have emerged.

## Readers' Forum....

### Shell Petroleum

9 January 1990

Perhaps Mr. Herbert of Shell Petroleum, writing in your November issue, has provided an explanation of how Shell can engage in sanctions busting while claiming with a straight face to be abiding by sanctions. The technique seems to be to simply pretend that sanctions do not exist.

Mr. Herbert claims that "there are no British, French or European Community sanctions on the import of South African coal." This is false. In both the UK (despite Mrs. Thatcher) and France, parastatal electricity generating boards, who are by far the major consumers of coal, ban the import of South African coal. Thus both countries have near-total bans. This has been the case for some time and I wrote about it in *The Sanctions Handbook* (Penguin, 1987). Indeed, France

once took 6 million tonnes per year, roughly 15% of all South African coal exports, but now buys less than 1 million tonnes per year of apartheid coal.

To say France and Britain have "no" sanctions on South African coal is, in Mr. Herbert's words, "using deliberately misleading and false information." And Mr. Herbert is wrong when he suggests that Shell is "fully entitled to trade South African coal" into the UK and France.

Mr. Herbert is also wrong (or at least "misleading") when he writes that "no Shell company" has supplied oil to South Africa "for a number of years." It is well-documented that oil from Brunei Shell Petroleum Company reached South Africa in substantial quantities until at least 1986.



Mr. Herbert's letter must raise some questions about the quality of Shell management. If a Shell executive can make that many misstatements in a short letter, what other errors are made by Shell in the normal course of business? Can we, for example, trust what is written on Shell petrol pumps and the packages of Shell products? Perhaps the safest thing to do is to avoid Shell products completely.

Joseph Hanlon  
London, England

# THE SUNDAY STAR

De Klerk sets Mandela free  
as 'new' South Africa dawns

By Bill Schiller

TORONTO STAR

CAPE TOWN — Nelson Mandela, man, myth and to some, even messiah, was set to emerge a free man from Victor Verster Prison today.

Advisers said a bullet-proof Mercedes-Benz would take the 71-year-old African National Congress leader from the prison,

70 kilometers (44 miles) from Cape Town.

The new and totally changed Nelson Mandela, who has been a political prisoner for 27 years, will be received by the ANC's national executive committee, which African National Congress leader Frederik Willem de Klerk has invited to the prison.

De Klerk has invited the ANC's national executive committee to the prison to witness the release of the 71-year-old Mandela.

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**MANDELA FREE  
BY THE PEOPLE**



Four thousand Torontonians celebrated the release of Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC and other anti-apartheid organizations outside the ANC offices on Sunday February 11. Danforth Avenue was turned into a massive street party as the jubilant crowd danced, sang and cheered several distinguished representatives of the labour, black, church and political communities. Toronto City Council declared the day Nelson Mandela Day in his honour.