

Southern Africa REPORT

Vol. 6 No. 2

November 1990

Economic Restructuring
Who Calls The Shots?

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"We Will Restructure"

Debating the Post-apartheid
Economy

Old Recipes, New Rhetoric

Structural Adjustment in 1990

The Killing Fields

Who is Gatcha Buthelezi
and
Why is he killing people?

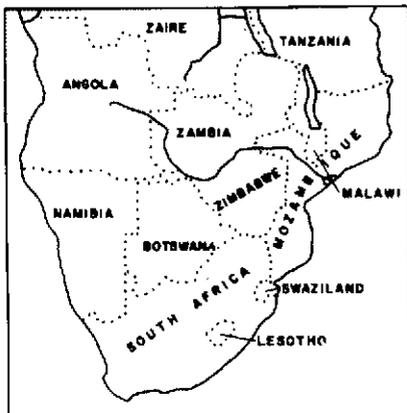
Namibia:

Five Months After

price: \$3.50

REPORT

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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)

427 Bloor St. W.
Toronto, M5S 1X7
Tel. (416) 967-5562

Submissions, suggestions and help in production are welcome and invited.

ISSN 0820-5582

SAR is a member of the Canadian Magazine Publishers Association.

Subscriptions

Annual TCLSAC membership and Southern Africa Report subscription rates are as follows:

SUBSCRIPTION:

Individual (1 year)	\$18.00
Individual (2 years)	\$35.00
Institution	\$40.00

MEMBERSHIP: (includes subscription)

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Waiting outside Addington Hospital as part of a protest of segregated health services - 2 August 1989

The Dismal Science

In a country like Mozambique, the grim language of war has increasingly been complemented by the hard language of economics as, in recent years, the high hopes with which the Mozambican revolution began have increasingly been checkmated. The complementarity of war and economics is likely to have been no accident, the Reaganesque "roll-back" of the 1980s being premised on the use, when necessary, of "destabilization" and economic disruption in order to bring radical regimes "to their senses" (cf. Nicaragua). Thus, in a provocative phrase attributed to the Caribbean writer, Horace Campbell, (see John Saul's article "Mozambique: The Failure of Socialism?"), the IMF can be seen to be merely "the eco-

nomie wing of the armed bandits [Renamo]"! Yet the deepening subordination to the global capitalist system that has been forced upon Mozambique has come to most of the countries in Africa by one means or another, as the IMF and the World Bank increasingly ride herd on an entire continent. The economics of "structural adjustment" makes economics, for Africans, a dismal science indeed.

A dismal science then, but also a necessary one when faced with the realities of the global economy. If solidarity work *vis-à-vis* the Frontline States of southern Africa is to move forward effectively, we cannot dwell solely upon a bemoaning of the fate of once-proud liberation

movements and "socialist regimes." Those who would wish a happier future for the people of these countries must explore the actually existing parameters of the situation in which such countries now find themselves, and begin to identify such room for manoeuvre as remains for the realization of progressive outcomes in these settings. It is a theme our parent committee, TCLSAC, plans to pursue further as a major focus of its work and the results of its reflections will undoubtedly find its way into future pages of *SAR*. We sense, however, that a good place to start is with a more global consideration of the meaning of the structural adjustment package now on offer - as the 1990s begin - to Third World countries. It is this kind of basic ref-

erence point for our further investigation of southern African regional realities that Manfred Bienefeld offers us in one of the lead articles in this issue of *SAR*.

Of course, fundamental economic questions are beginning to appear on the agenda in South Africa as well. There has emerged a popular movement in South Africa that has significant momentum and that retains high hopes as to its ability to plan a more equitable, just and prosperous socio-economic future for its people. And it is beginning to get down to the business of doing so, as documented in our lead article on the debate in South Africa regarding the post-apartheid economy ("We Will Restructure"). This is a debate partly within the movement itself, partly *vis-à-vis* other protagonists with a vested interest in the nature of future outcomes, notably the business community. Moreover, such is the nature of the South African economic system and of the vast discrepancies of power and income this system has come to manifest that this is already much more than a mere debate. It is, in fact, an early round of what can only become an ever more vigorous struggle between different classes and different ideologies over the shaping of South Africa's socio-economic future. Once again, we hope the article we publish here can help to arm us intellectually to accompany that struggle effectively.

Thus, the economic debate is joined and the struggle for a democratization of South Africa's economy has already begun. There is a Catch-22, however. As is well-known, the establishment of democratic political structures within which novel economic policies might eventually be launched is very far from having been achieved. The high hopes of a relatively straightforward "transition" in this respect - hopes brought to a quick flame by the release of Nelson Mandela and his subsequent triumphal world tour - have flickered. Even as we

contemplate the "next round", the developmental round, of the struggle for a fully democratic South Africa, we must guard against running ahead of ourselves. The anti-apartheid movement must do everything it can to support the "Mass Democratic Movement" in its efforts to overcome obstacles in its immediate path to political democracy - to overcome the sinister depredations of a Buthelezi, the obtuse recalcitrances of a De Klerk, the cruel machinations of a South African security establishment that refuses to yield gracefully to history (on some of these latter obstacles, see our article, "The Killing Ground", in this issue).

Time to close ranks again, as the anti-apartheid movement has so often done in the past? "Yes" - and then again, "No." Yes, self-evidently, for the reasons just mentioned. No, because the issues that will increasingly divide South Africans as to the nature of the post-apartheid economy must necessarily find echo in the ranks of our own anti-apartheid movement. To be sure, as our article on the South African debate demonstrates, that debate is somewhat more muted than might have been expected. Of course, the myth of the unqualified benevolence of the "free market" still provides the basic rationale for capital's vision of a new South Africa, just as it provides the rationale for the activities of the IMF and the World Bank elsewhere in the region. Despite its occasional acknowledgement of the acceptability of a "mixed economy," there is, in all conscience, little enough "give" from the camp of capital anywhere in southern Africa. However, the left in South Africa is being extremely circumspect in the way it talks of "restructuring" the economy and has refrained from sharply polarizing the debate. There are even some fears that the leadership of the popular movement may prove to be *too* circumspect, *too* timid, in this regard.

Such circumspection may not seem very surprising given the hostile economic terrain upon which that left must work and the subtlety of the calculations it must make. Fortunately, our analysis need not end there, however. As our lead article also makes clear, the terms of a new radicalism - muted but nonetheless militant - are beginning to surface from the debate. In consequence, there remains a reasonable likelihood that economic solutions sought by the popular movement will still prove to be more rather than less socialist, more "plan-" than "market-" oriented, more directed to a "democratization of the economy" than merely to "business as usual." It is to the terms of this kind of debate about South Africa's future that our anti-apartheid movement must increasingly attune itself.

Undoubtedly some Canadians within the anti-apartheid movement will be more comfortable than others with any such on-going radicalization of the popular movement's economic demands (Bob Rae's recent successes in Ontario notwithstanding!). Perhaps, to begin with, there will be less temptation for us to misconstrue the "progressive role" of the Canadian government's South African policy on this new terrain. Under such circumstances (as Dennis Lewycky notes in his critique of an article published in the previous issue of *SAR*), there is also every likelihood that ideological tensions - real, not arbitrary tensions reflecting quite different perspectives regarding basic socio-economic issues - will also characterize a Canadian anti-apartheid movement heretofore united around the lowest common denominator of a shared repugnance for racial tyranny. This is not, intrinsically, either a good or bad thing, merely inevitable. We can't see any good reason, in our own Canadian debate about South Africa's post-apartheid economy, for not discussing the issues that are likely to trigger such tensions as openly and frankly as possible.



Linic/Impact visuals

Miners, Welkom, South Africa

“We Will Restructure” Debating the Post-apartheid Economy

Apartheid South Africa encapsulates much more than a racially-hierarchical and authoritarian political system. Legalized racism in South Africa has also been wedded to a profoundly exploitative economic system, one that has produced grinding poverty for the vast majority of inhabitants of that country. In consequence, the current flood-tide of democratic demands must inevitably spill over into the economic sphere. As Nelson Mandela himself phrased the point when speaking to Canada's House of Commons, “therefore we will restructure the South African economy so that the wealth should be for all the people, black and white, and that all the people enjoy a decent and rising standard of living. We do not seek to impoverish anybody or to redistribute such

poverty. But a new democratic society will obviously address the issue of the impoverishment of millions of people as a matter of urgency.”

But what does it mean to “restructure the South African economy”? Already the question of what this “next phase” of the struggle in South Africa should look like is being hotly debated there. Canadian anti-apartheid activists got some taste of this debate this summer when a key member of the ANC's Economic Affairs Unit, Max Sisulu, and the well-known progressive South African economist, Steve Gelb, spoke at workshops in Ottawa, Toronto and elsewhere. More recently, several Canadian visitors to South Africa have

sought, quite specifically, to monitor the on-going debate regarding the post-apartheid economy inside the country and to report back on its substance and on some of its possible implications for solidarity work here in Canada. We have drawn on a number of such sources in setting out the following preliminary account of this economic debate.

As one talks to various protagonists of the debate about a post-apartheid economy, there does seem, at least superficially, to be some consensus regarding the overall goals of a new South African economy. As senior business figure Gavin Relly points out: “That the economic imbalances in South Africa are enor-

mous is common cause ... This poses a particular challenge as we look to creating economic structures and policies which will lead both to rapid economic growth and more equitable distribution of wealth." There seem few left to quarrel with ANC leader Walter Sisulu when he says: "The expectations of the people are for: a living wage which guarantees for every worker and his family a decent diet and an adequate shelter; the extension to all our people of the basic requirements of social security, medical facilities and a safety net for the unemployed; and free and equal education for all with facilities for adult polytechnical education." Thus, for Anglo-American's Bobby Godsell, "economic growth cannot be a national objective in itself. Growth is important to produce the resources needed to tackle poverty and underdevelopment." A Democratic Party economic advisor, Sampie Terreblanche, is prepared to go even further: "It is both desirable and necessary that whites acknowledge explicitly the huge 'apartheid debt' which has accumulated on their books and make a major effort towards repaying it."

There are even some apparent areas of agreement on the question of means towards these ends, including an eschewing of any very straightforwardly radical agenda for change. To be sure, some relatively marginal political groups are occasionally heard arguing for maximal state intervention in the economy under the banners of, variously, "scientific" or African socialism. But faced with the complex economic situation of a South Africa deeply embedded in the world capitalist economy, the popular movement has begun to conceptualize its economic programme far more gingerly. Thus at a November 1989 meeting of the ANC, the MDM and South African business leaders in Paris, Alec Irwin of the National Union of Metalworkers suggested that "our solutions lie neither in free market

capitalism nor in centrally-planned command-economy socialism. We have to open out the agenda of debate beyond ideological cliches, if we are to avoid a future economy where mass poverty exists side by side with minority wealth." As one observer (Patrick Bond) sums up, "the left has acknowledged that it can't run an industrial economy by itself, and big business leaders concede that the apartheid legacy needs to be redressed by affirmative action beyond the normal function of a free market."

Market and plan

Yet the question remains: how far beyond "the normal function of a free market"? What is to be the balance between the "free play" of market forces on the one hand and hands-on planning to realize progressive outcomes on the other? It soon becomes apparent that the polarization of the debate on such issues is still considerable - something that should not surprise us very much, of course, given the vastly different class positions that the various contributions to the debate represent. Indeed, when looked at closely, it is evident that for all its wringing of hands about existent inequalities and the like, there is not really very much shifting of position at all from the camp of capital.

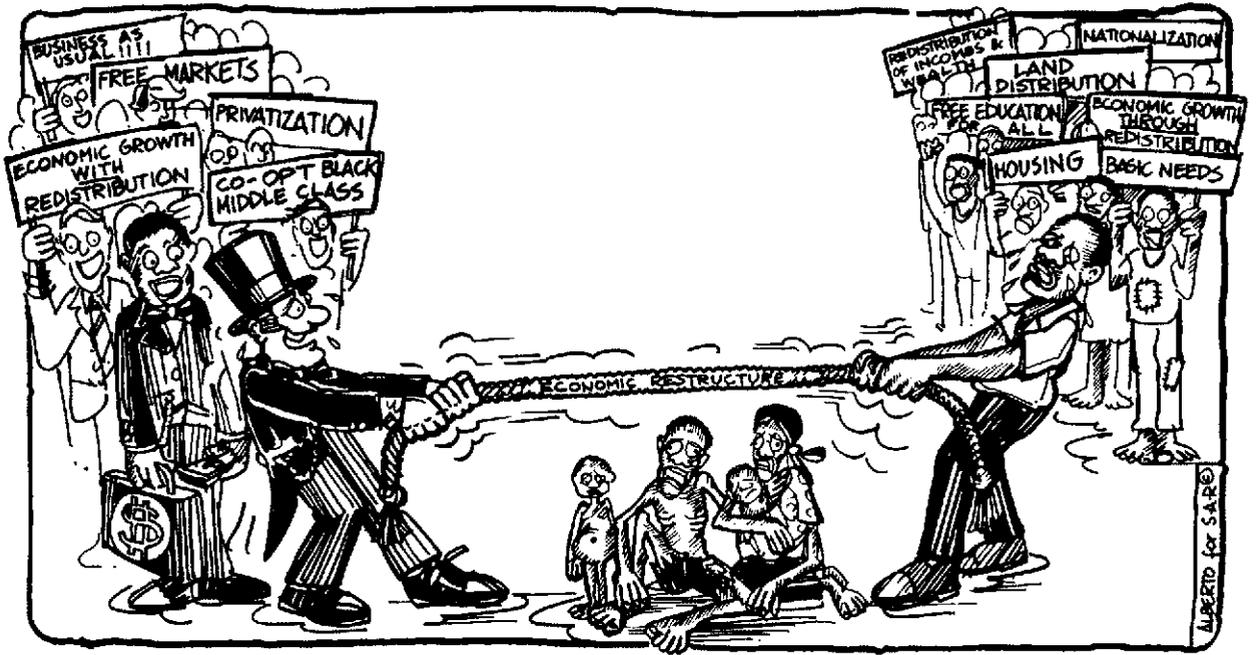
In the words of the Chamber of Mines, for example, "ample evidence, both real and theoretical, now exists to show that the best way (indeed the only way) to achieve ... this economic growth is through an open market-based economic system where resources are allocated, prices determined, information gathered and value judgements made by individuals." Or take the recent publication of the Anglo American corporation asserting that "a high degree of economic freedom is characteristic of prosperous societies. This is most clearly expressed in the freedom to acquire private property. Other features include a broadly-based and non-punitive tax system, sound fis-

cal policy, prudent management of the money supply and proper recognition of the power and place of the market in allocating economic resources." In short, it would seem that there is far less give from the right than from the left in much of the present debate.

Moreover, the rich and powerful are already using every means at their disposal to tilt the balance of the future policy towards as unadulterated a free market outcome as possible. The De Klerk government, for example, is pushing forward with schemes for further privatization and deregulation, various corporations are pushing ahead with retrenchments and with the movement of some of their capital out of South Africa, the better to gain leverage in the next round. Efforts are being made to attract Africans - especially middle-class Africans - away from militant political organizations by means of managerial upgrading and the opening of some new business opportunities for them.

The media is also seeking to narrow the terms of the debate with its attempts to undermine the credibility of such progressive economic solutions as are in the wind. Most specifically, the notion of nationalization has been a red flag for the establishment press. Prominent columnist Ken Owen's measured comment in *Business Day* to the effect that it "is at heart the policy of the hooligan" is merely the most extreme version of the refrain. Indeed, the mainstream press generally - largely owned, as it is, by the conglomerate Argus Corporation - has been severely criticized for its one-sided coverage of the debate on this issue, Adj Kumalo being prompted to write in the *Free Press* earlier this year that "the media 'debate' has thus been little more than a monologue."

This in turn is a slight exaggeration. Radio and television talk shows are facilitating some exchange of views, the progressive *Daily Mail*



and the corporate-leaning *City Press* have both published special supplements on the future economy. The anti-apartheid Afrikaans paper, *Vrye Weekblad*, is planning a similar supplement while the *New Nation* has, among other things, unveiled in its pages a key document arising from the Harare meeting on the future economy held between the ANC and the leading trade union central COSATU. And the best of the left periodicals – *Work in Progress*, the *South African Labour Bulletin* and *Transformation* – have offered very sophisticated analyses of numerous novel economic questions.

Liberal posturing

In doing so, they seek to counter the weight of such heavy-duty apologists for existing economic structures as the Chamber of Mines whose own thoughts on nationalization, if more subtle than Ken Owen's, are equally definitive: "nationalization of the gold mines would almost certainly reduce profits and therefore lessen tax receipts, the redirection of dividend payments to central government coffers would create an enormous financial burden for the state

apart from seriously undermining both international and domestic investor confidence." And they must confront the widely-publicized views of an array of intellectual hired-guns, right-wing liberals like John Kane-Berman of the South African Institute of Race Relations who trumpets the "silent revolution" that free markets and the rise of the black consumer is said already to be bringing into existence in South Africa: "Post-apartheid South Africa is not something that is going to be legislated into existence by some future government under a new constitution. It is already being created on the ground" through "a total integration of the economy", a natural movement – in the spheres of urbanization, education, health and industry" – of "ordinary people, rank and file South Africans, men and women."

As stated earlier, the popular movement has by and large been much less messianic in its pronouncements than this, taking the likely constraints upon its future actions seriously while being visibly sobered by the recent failures of the more grandiose state-

centric "socialisms" of Eastern Europe and some other African countries. Yet even on the question of possible nationalizations, the left refuses to be intimidated by establishment rhetoric. Marcel Golding of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), among others, has gone to some lengths to explain the economic advantages of the nationalization of the mines, for example.

State control, he maintains, would allow for the mining of lower grade ore and therefore prolong the value of the resources, would help develop downstream processing of minerals within South Africa and permit proper care of the environment. None of these, he continues, are highly profitable activities and are therefore not of major interest to the mining companies. Furthermore, Martin Nicol (also of the NUM) emphasizes, South Africans see nationalization as a key political move in gaining control of their nation: "Control of mining is a social and political issue as well as an economic one."

The same applies, even more forcefully, in the case of land. Here,

in particular, the recent words of South African Communist Party Secretary Joe Slovo have resonance: "If every racist statute were to be repealed tomorrow leaving existing property relationships undisturbed, white dominations would remain intact." There are crucial economic dimensions, of course. As Hilary Joffe of the *Weekly Mail* argues, "perhaps the central issue which has to be addressed is that of agricultural productivity. If the government wants to convince its constituents that desegregating land is a good idea, it will want to argue that this will not have an adverse effect on South Africa's food production." Small wonder that the land question looms so large in the emerging debate or that the ANC is itself planning a major workshop for the near future to consider how to handle a redistribution of land. Issues of training, credit, marketing and appropriate technology will be discussed, as well as the likely strengths and weaknesses of various possible future forms of land holding - freehold, traditional, state leasehold, cooperative and/or parastatal.

State control

What bears emphasizing is that, in this sphere as in others (witness the fierce debate over possible strategies for overcoming South Africa's severe housing crisis, for example), the strongest voices within the popular movement see clearly the weakness of mere market solutions - in marked contrast with the consensus of opinion in the business milieu. If, realistically, the movement accepts the inevitability of a "mixed economy," it seems probable the bulk of its members do so in agreement with Joe Slovo's formulation that "the resources which have to be generated to correct the inherited imbalances and deprivations of the majority demand, in the first place, a necessary degree of state control (involving selective forms of ownership and participation) over the strategic sectors of the economy. In the second place, the necessary coexistence of private

and social sector - the balance between the 'market' and the 'plan' - must afford pride of place to the latter."

What this might look like in practice remains itself under debate, although in this case the debate is as much or more *within* the popular movement as it is with its business community counterparts. To be sure, forums for the latter kind of debate have been available, the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa-sponsored meeting in Germany that brought together business, academic and ANC representatives to discuss issues related to social justice and economic growth, for example. But more important is the kind of meeting held earlier this year in Maputo that convened health workers from South Africa and elsewhere to talk about a post-apartheid health service.

Most crucial of all, perhaps, are the discussions taking place both within the the trade unions and within the ANC. COSATU has integrated such debate with its other educational and informational activities and with various working groups set up to coordinate planning around the Workers' Charter and Living Wage campaigns. Formal discussions have occurred within COSATU as to the future role of unions within a new economic planning process, the merits of breaking up the vast conglomerates that are so much a feature of the South African economy, and the manner of ending the discrimination against women within the economy-now-in-the-making. The Metalworkers Union (NUMSA) has been particularly active in spawning Research and Development Groups as "an attempt to involve workers in these complex issues" (in the words of the union's Adrienne Bird). And then there is COSATU's Economic Trends Group, through which the union seeks to draw on the expertise of a number of progressive and informed academics in conceptualizing more clearly the "big economic questions", present and future.

As for the ANC, debate invariably begins with reference back to the Freedom Charter but despite that document's emphasis upon the centrality of a redistribution of power and resources in order to "(promote) economic development for the benefit of all" in a new South Africa the Charter remains vague and open-ended regarding specific undertakings. Moreover, as Max Sisulu of the ANC's Economic Affairs Unit has recently put it, proposals for the management of the economy can really only be the product of the kind of "wide-spread consultation, and ... informed and democratic policy debate" that becomes possible once official apartheid is removed and a popularly elected government is in place. Nonetheless, discussions are taking place within the ANC at all levels, while alongside the organization's Economic Affairs Unit a new Centre for Developmental Studies is taking shape in order to coordinate research and planning for a post-apartheid South Africa. And discussion of economic restructuring will be a key theme at the crucial Congress of the ANC to be held in December.

Meanwhile, there is some attempt by the ANC to carry the discussion to the community level, even though such discussion remains rather "top heavy", in the words of one editor of the woman's magazine, *SPEAK*. Similarly, at least one union activist has noted that even in the unions, and despite some good efforts in this respect, much of the substance of the debate has not yet filtered down adequately to the rank and file membership. There also is far too little discussion "with the poor and homeless", she continued, with the attendant danger that "some people will be left out of the debate and any redistribution of wealth that may take place." Such observers express concern that the ANC has moved rather more rapidly to engage the black businessmen's organization, National African Feder-



Men's Hostel, Guguletu, Capetown

Roger Meintjies/Afrapix/Impact Visuals

ated Chambers of Commerce (NAFCOC), in dialogue. Thus after NAFCOC's four day national conference in July on "Hastening the Process of Black Participation in a Mixed South African Economy in the 90s", a working panel of three ANC and NAFCOC representatives was set up to make recommendations on how black business could become an ever more active agent within a post-apartheid economy.

"Growth through redistribution"

Still, the key link for the ANC within the on-going debate remains with the unions - and this is a particularly important source of progressive promise. Notable was the

April meeting in Harare when about 60 progressive economists (including a number linked to the Economic Trends Group) and representatives of the ANC and COSATU came together. In the resultant document, "The Economy Beyond Apartheid", recommendations for a set of post-apartheid policies that included fresh perspectives on state intervention, land ownership, the nationalization of industry, gender-related issues, agriculture, foreign investment and basic goods and services were roughed out. According to the document, "a non-racial and democratic state would follow an economic strategy that aims to achieve economic growth through a process of increasing equality in the

distribution of incomes, wealth and economic power."

Note the emphasis on the "(re)distribution of ... economic power." The basic position of those businessmen (and liberal intellectuals) who, as we have seen, acknowledge the unacceptability of existing economic inequalities, has been to attempt to reduce the problem to one of a redistribution of incomes and services along rather conventional welfarist lines. "Growth with redistribution" is probably the way they would choose to present the position, with growth to be linked to a manufacturing sector regenerated by massive investment of a capital intensive nature and by the supplying of intermediate manufactured products to the international market - and with the basic structure of economic power to remain more or less unaltered in the process. What seems to be emerging from the ANC/COSATU camp is something different, however: a "basic needs approach."

In contrast to the free-market idealism of Kane-Berman's "silent revolution", this approach does not take as the starting-point for growth a set of autonomous capitalist decisions made in response to the "spontaneous" imperatives of the market, world-wide and local. Rather it highlights, in the words of the ANC's Max Sisulu, "investment in social overhead" and "vastly increased allocations for housing, education, training, health care, public utilities, as well as investments in economic infrastructure." As economist Stephen Gelb of the Economic Trends Group further elaborates, this implies not merely a different version of welfarism but an alternative (and potentially much more effective) economic development strategy to that suggested by the business community. It would mean, in Gelb's words, not "growth with redistribution" but rather "growth through redistribution." "The broad objective of this strategy", he writes, "is to expand

both employment creation and the production of basic consumer goods. In other words, rather than separating redistribution and economic growth, the aim would be to achieve growth through the more extensive and rapid redistribution of incomes and wealth." The result: a "focus upon absorbing the labour surplus by expanding relatively labour-intensive industries producing basic consumer goods to supply domestic and foreign consumers."

Gelb and others are quite clear that such a growth path will not happen "spontaneously." Rather, it will have to be willed into existence by state and community action. If not displacing the market, it must at least judiciously reshape its imperatives; if not abolishing private ownership of the means of production, it must at least aggressively qualify, in the collective interest, capital's power. The need, in sum, is actively to shape capital's investment decisions in such a way as to ensure a production pattern that meets those needs that are being identified as "basic" to the betterment of the lot of the mass of the population. And to do this - the point is crucial - not merely on welfare grounds but, equally importantly, because production so defined provides, precisely, the most promising fly-wheel for long-term economic growth! It is in some such way that the real flesh of practical economic policies might begin to be put on the bones of Slovo's assertion, cited earlier, that in South Africa's mixed economy "the necessary coexistence of a private and social sector ... must accord pride of place to the latter."

Forces at work

The precise set of tactics that might ensure the success of such a strategy are by no means clear, of course. Gelb and others talk of the possible benefits of breaking up the huge concentrations of capital (notably the Anglo-American corporation) that dominate South Africa in order to realize the existence of units

sufficiently small and self-contained to give the mechanisms of state direction some greater chance of exerting leverage. There is also discussion of the possible expansion of state control over the financial sector and/or refining the tax system, the better to guide investment decisions along "growth through redistribution" lines. It may be, in this regard, that too little has yet been discussed within liberation circles about the implications of South Africa's inherited debt, of foreign investment and of the perils of the international financial system (the World Bank and the IMF, for example) for restricting the kinds of strategic options a post-apartheid South Africa might seek to pursue. Perhaps, as some on the left fear, such international pressures, together with the weight of the internal capitalist class (black as well as white), may yet prove too powerful and the leadership of the popular movement too weak to resist following the line of least resistance in future economic decision-making. Still, enough has been said to suggest that the premises of a new and promising creativity in the economic sphere - the first steps towards a long-term strategy that is far more socialist than not - are beginning to be forged within the movement itself.

Moreover, there are other forces at work that will also influence the outcome of the struggle to consolidate a progressive line of economic advance within the popular movement. Thus, community- and factory-based groups and organizations are already going beyond the realm of idealized projections and are making their voices heard in quite practical ways. A range of concrete initiatives in the economic sphere begins to signal to planners and politicians the existence of a groundswell of popular energy eager to shape the building of a genuinely democratized economic system. Space does not permit an inventory of all such initiatives but mention might be made of current

attempts (emanating from Soweto, for example) to redirect (and decriminalize) local tax systems, or of squatters' groups to invade land and attempt to redefine titles. Or of those unions who seek to spawn housing schemes and economic cooperatives and others who seek to gain greater control over their own pension funds and over the investment decisions of their companies (the Chemical Workers Industrial Union *vis-à-vis* foreign investors, for example).

To be sure, there are those who are nervous about these trends. They suggest the dangers that will arise if a leadership, even a left leadership, finds itself ringed about by such popular assertions (and by such additional pressures as might arise with the realization of more direct workers' control both within and without the state sector). Will such a leadership then find itself being held hostage to a revolution of rising post-apartheid expectations, with this, in turn, serving to distort its more judicious calculations as to the imperatives of progressive economic change? Let's admit that, indeed, the challenges of the next round will be complex. And that the emergent leadership of a post-apartheid South Africa will have the tough task of explaining clearly its choice of national priorities, its preferred allocation of scarce resources, and of rallying people to support its programme. But the evidence of recent African history suggests that, in so planning the development process, the benefits of pressure from below are likely far to outweigh any costs of such pressure. How else is a leadership cadre to be held true to its (ostensible) progressive purpose, in South Africa or elsewhere? The best guarantee of the continuance of a debate about the post-apartheid economy that places the most fundamental of questions on the table must surely be the continuing and deepening empowerment of the South African people themselves.

Old Recipes, New Rhetoric: Structural Adjustment in 1990

BY MANFRED BIENEFELD

Manfred Bienefeld, an economist with long experience in Africa, now teaches in the School of Public Administration at Carleton University in Ottawa.

The need for extensive and urgent structural adjustment arose in a large number of developing countries in the early 1980s. Many of them suddenly found themselves trapped in economic structures that needed much more foreign exchange than they could realistically earn. There were many ways of describing this situation: the aggregate level of domestic demand was "too high"; consumption and investment patterns were "too import-intensive"; the real prices of primary exports were "too low"; accumulated debts were "too large"; real interest rates were "too high."

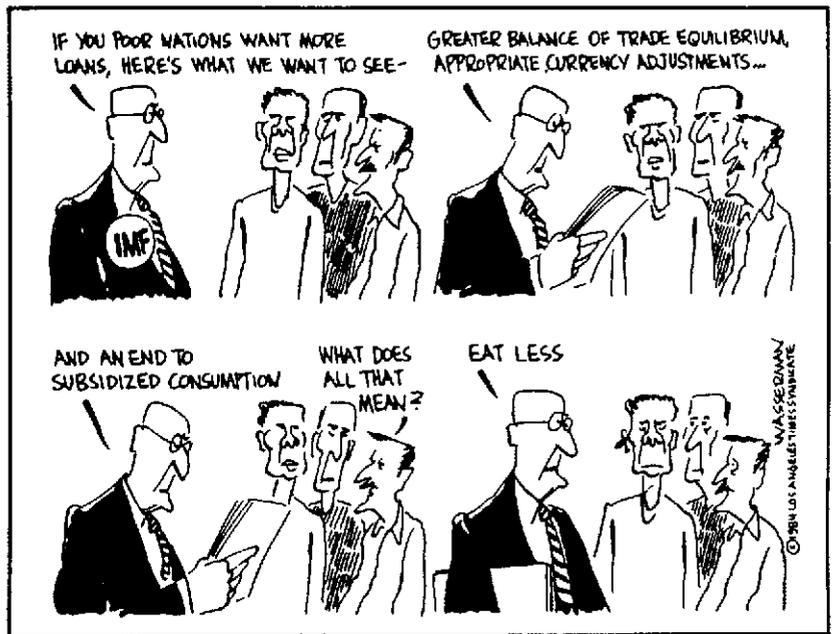
In a descriptive sense, these statements were all correct; each one merely described a different aspect of the chronic and severe deficits in the current accounts of so many economies at this time. The debate over "adjustment" emerged over the issue of how best to deal with these imbalances.

For a time, such deficits can generally be financed by borrowing abroad. The challenge is to make sure those funds are used constructively – to finance the structural changes that will restore economic growth, and not merely to defer painful choices that will increase underlying imbalances even further. The "conditionality" of the World Bank and the IMF is supposed to ensure the constructive use of borrowed international funds.

Unfortunately, the market-oriented adjustment policies that these institutions have been demanding as a condition for loans

were never likely to ensure such an outcome. Indeed, in many respects, they have made prudent economic management even more difficult; despite the flood of rhetoric to the contrary, they have pushed welfare and environmental concerns further into the background. Moreover, despite a growing body of evidence documenting the failures and limitations of these policy prescriptions,

role in resource allocation was never very strong from the outset. Theoretically, it was based on little more than an unbridled faith in the efficiency of markets and on the repeated assertion that whatever the extent of "market failure", the results of the interventionist alternative would inevitably be worse. Empirical and historical support was primarily derived from the end-



the multilateral institutions are currently strengthening their demand for a comprehensive liberalization of all markets. This is both a dangerous and an unjustified development which must be strongly resisted both by independent bilateral donors and by the NGOs.

Weak argument

The argument that the massive structural imbalances of the early 1980s could be resolved by allowing market forces to play a greater

lessly repeated claim that the success of the Newly Industrializing Countries (the NICs), and especially that of the East Asian NICs, clearly showed the importance of these neo-conservative policies to the developing world.

These claims were widely contested at the time, but the World Bank and the IMF were not accountable to anyone who had an interest in presenting arguments and evidence that contradicted their position. No matter that eminent neo-

classical theorists like Frank Hahn, writing in the *Lloyds Bank Review*, could warn that even in applying these ideas to the British economy "these advocates say much more than even pure theory allows them to say, and infinitely more than the applicability of that theory permits." No matter that many others pointed out that underdevelopment was synonymous with structural rigidities deriving from technological, infrastructural and institutional weaknesses that would impede the operation of the market. No matter that yet others pointed out that the most successful East Asian NICs were in fact highly statist economies whose policies were almost diametrically opposed to those advocated by the agencies. Writing in the *IDS Bulletin* in 1980, the author noted that "they pursued their ... export strategies in the context of a nationally-defined long term policy, which captured national dynamic and external economies, and which placed a premium on the development of national capabilities to apply and adapt technology, as a basis for creating the ability to develop it."

Objections ignored

Such objections were either ignored or denied while the agencies invoked "the magic of the market", as appreciatively acknowledged by Ronald Reagan in his 1988 address to the World Bank and the IMF when he "welcomed" the "increase in the practice of lending contingent on countries' turning to more market-oriented policies." By the late 1980s, it had become clear that the claims made on behalf of orthodox structural adjustment policies had either been vastly exaggerated or significantly misrepresented. Of course, these policies did generate an enormous net flow of resources from the developing to the developed world, both by sharply expanding developing country exports and by dramatically reducing their imports. This did bring developing

country current account deficits under control so that they could now be less easily accused of "living beyond their means." At the same time, the large net transfers out of these poor economies helped to rescue many banks from collapse and even contributed to their remarkable profitability over the decade.

"Bank profits have grown steadily during the debt crisis, according to a report by the Joint Economic Committee of Congress The Administration's whole approach to the debt crisis has kept the banks solvent but it has sunk the debtor nations further in debt." (Wall Street Journal, 31 December 1986)

In addition, the huge increase in developing country exports lowered commodity prices and helped the industrial countries to return to non-inflationary growth - for a time. Finally, these policies also integrated the developing countries much more fully and completely into the international economy, thereby undermining the ideological, institutional and economic base to reintroduce more domestically oriented, more cautious or more nationalist policies in the future.

Benefits to the West

It is no accident that these "achievements" all benefitted the international and the industrial economies most directly. Moreover, it is a sobering thought that even if "the magic of the market" had actually increased total factor productivity in the indebted countries by some additional amount (say ten percent), the situation of the indebted countries would have changed very little. The number of debt reschedulings would merely have been a little less frequent and the banks would have done even better, but there still would not have been resources to satisfy the many claims that went unfulfilled, claims that these policies would: allow a basis to be laid for renewed, sustained per capita growth in the indebted countries; allow the debt burden to be significantly reduced; allow infrastructures to be

rebuilt and investment levels to be maintained; allow welfare losses to be arrested, or even reversed. In short, allow a return to development in any meaningful sense.

These failures are now openly acknowledged by the multilateral agencies who claim credit for discovering many of the problems their critics had pointed to long ago. The following statements by the World Bank reflect this learning process.

"Borrowers and lenders often fail to take full account of the institutional, social, and political rigidities that restrict a country's capacity to adjust." (World Bank 1985:2)

"We did not think that the human costs of these (structural adjustment) programs could be so great, and economic gains so slow in coming." (World Bank Chief Economist for Africa cited in the Toronto Globe and Mail, June 22)

"These attempts at financial sector reform point to certain pitfalls The clearest lesson is that reforms carried out against an unstable macro-economic background can make the instability worse (Often) the removal of capital controls allowed volatile capital flows and undermined monetary control." (World Bank, World Development Report 1989).

In short, just as the structuralists had always argued, the "magic of the market" could not provide the needed efficiency gains under the circumstances prevailing in the developing world. The theoretical, and highly ideological, assertions on which these policies had been based have, therefore, been shown to have been entirely untenable. Moreover, the scanty empirical evidence that had been produced to back those theoretical assertions literally evaporated with a recent Bank announcement. The World Bank formally acknowledged in a 1989 report on sub-Saharan Africa that the experience of the East Asian NICs does not lend support to its policy prescriptions which are based on a model

structural adjustment

that "differs ... from Japan's and Korea's, where the state played lead roles in targeting, establishing, and protecting key industries."

"Errors" predicted

The multi-laterals discuss these discoveries as if they were regrettable but genuine errors that could not have been foreseen. The point, however, is that they were foreseen. At present, these same institutions claim to be learning from their mistakes. They belatedly recognize that market liberalization can, on occasion, be costly and inefficient, and that the most successful developing countries actually maintained extensive, discretionary controls over financial and capital markets, over trade, over industrial investment and over technology policy, especially during the critically important early phase of their industrial development. However, despite these significant concessions, the Bank and the Fund still claim that market liberalization is always desirable in the longer run and that the problem is merely one of phasing and sequencing.

In fact, there is little empirical evidence to show that the deregulation of financial markets increases the efficiency of real resource allocation. A 1987 survey of the literature published in the *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* concludes that those who advocate such policies on efficiency grounds "ought to have accumulated some reliable evidence" before "trying to encourage greater competition in the financial system." What is clear, on the other hand, in a 1989 IMF report on international capital markets, is that the risks of financial deregulation are increasingly dangerous and impenetrable and that effective reg-

ulation is becoming more difficult even in the much stronger financial sectors of the industrial economies and at the international level.

In a 1989 report, the World Bank acknowledged:

"that competitive financial markets,

although efficient at mobilizing and allocating funds and allocating risk (evidence?), can still make mistakes - witness the excessive lending to developing countries that took place in the 1970s and the current savings and loan crisis in the United States. Another (lesson) is that market-based financial systems can be unstable and susceptible to fraud."

According to the Bank this merely "underlines the importance of adequate regulation and supervision." However, it does not appear to diminish their belief in the desirability of such deregulation in the developing world. Indeed, even though the United States regulators were clearly unable to contain the market's tendency to "instability and fraud", they imply that developing countries could manage this task, if they had the will and presumably the training! They even urge these countries to increase the efficiency of their banking systems by encouraging "the entry of new banks, domestic or foreign, (to) stimulate competition," but do not acknowledge that this would enormously complicate the task of providing "regulation."

World Bank policies unchanged

In the final analysis, the thrust of the Bank's advice has changed little as a result of the lessons it has supposedly learned. In fact, their new-found concern about the proper sequence in which markets should be liberalized may ironically become a basis for an even more militant assertion of their apparently discredited neoconservative policies. This conclusion derives from an argument recently summarized in a 1989 IMF study on the World Economic Outlook:



"one of the most important conclusions of the sequencing literature is that governments should begin by freeing those markets where prices tend to be less responsive - for example, labour markets should be deregulated before goods markets, and both labour and goods markets before financial markets."

According to this thesis, it is because "liberalization has occurred in reverse order", starting with financial markets, that "some comprehensive reform programs have not lived up to earlier expectations." The problem is that when financial deregulation is undertaken in the presence of rigidities in non-financial markets, this "may even result in destabilizing and inefficient capital market speculation." However, the authors are quick to add that:

"Recognition of this possibility does not imply that capital controls should be retained or reintroduced, but rather that reform efforts in other areas should be accelerated." They concluded by asserting that these problems, "reinforce the case for accelerating the completion of comprehensive structural reform of all markets."

Thus have the neo-conservatives snatched victory from the jaws of defeat. Evidence which shows that the liberalization of markets has been a costly mistake has been transformed into a case for a more radical and more extensive liberalization of all markets. In this context the Managing Director of the IMF is currently calling for "a decisive policy push . . . (that) leaves no room for a step-by-step or piecemeal approach."

The World Bank does not go quite as far as this, but it is relentless in its assertions that market liberalization should proceed in an open-ended manner so that "after substantial progress has been made toward (domestic) reform, the government can move to the final stage: full liberalization of interest rates, the elimination of the remaining directed credit programs, the relax-

ation of capital controls, and the removal of all restrictions on foreign institutions."

Of course, one would search in vain for the evidence that would justify such extreme policy advice. Indeed, there is no such evidence. The Asian economies that have survived the 1980s relatively successfully, did so in large part because they did not simply allow their development strategies to be defined by the market in the 1970s, when the Bank was inducing the developing countries to borrow far beyond a prudent level. Although, more recently, they "also moved toward deregulation", the World Bank itself notes that "reforms were introduced more gradually and were less comprehensive."

Serving the few

Indeed, both history and theory tell us that developing countries that follow the neo-conservatives' disastrous advice, will primarily be serving the interests of the small number of people that have the skills or resources to give them effective access to international markets and finance. Most of the rest of their people will merely become redundant under such conditions since, even working for starvation wages, they would be unable to create conditions attractive to globally mobile capital. As such, they would increasingly come to be regarded as evidence of a "population problem."

Meanwhile, the political foundations on which a saner and more socially efficient alternative will have to be constructed are being undermined by the turmoil of present policies. Equally destructive is the widely propagated, but disastrous, corollary that the only alternative is the sort of bureaucratic central planning that has failed so spectacularly in Eastern Europe. The sad truth is that as the social fabric in a country disintegrates, the need for alternative policies becomes greater even as the society's capacity to formulate and implement them declines.

Of course, these insights are not new, nor are they confined to one part of the ideological spectrum. In fact, over the years, many respected mainstream economists have drawn attention to the Emperor's lack of clothes, but their warnings have been readily and conveniently ignored by those who have reaped such monumental rewards from these "mistakes." Thus, it was neo-classical theorist Frank Hahn who may already have written the epitaph for this latest phase in the development policy debate when, in 1982 he commented on Mrs. Thatcher's claims to have "discovered" the solutions to Britain's social, political and economic maladies.

Writing in *Lloyd's Bank Review*, he drew special attention to the fact that markets are potentially particularly unreliable in dealing with future uncertainty, so that in theory "speculative bubbles which eventually burst are possible" and "there is no logical obstacle to an economy pursuing a path which runs into feasibility constraints and so experiences discontinuous dislocation." Moreover, the historical evidence clearly suggested the importance of establishing political and institutional mechanisms for curbing such centrifugal tendencies. In fact, Hahn concluded this part of the discussion by noting that:

"This was Keynes's view. I have yet to see it refuted. The French drew the conclusion that they at least required indicative planning. The Japanese have for a long time employed non-market institutions to supplement private investment decisions. In Germany, the banks seem to act as market substitutes. In Britain, where politicians now follow gurus rather than arguments, we are all set to rely on the invisible hand doing a job which, in practice, it will not and cannot do."

Seven years later, Paul Krugman, another well known main-

stream economist, summarized the evidence that had accumulated in the meantime regarding the effectiveness of those same neo-conservative policies at the global level. His findings lend more than a little support to Professor Hahn's earlier warning.

"At this point, belief in the efficiency of the foreign exchange market is a matter of pure faith; there is not a shred of positive evidence that the market is efficient."

"It might be worth noting at this point that similar results obtain for other asset markets The bottom line is that there is no positive evidence in favour of efficient markets, and if anything a presumption from the data that markets are not efficient" (emphasis in the original).

Professor Krugman adds that any observer "without an intellec-

tual vested interest in the efficient market theory" would have to acknowledge that the facts provided "a good piece of evidence that the (foreign exchange) market is not efficient." He might have added that this would certainly also include those with "a material vested interest" in the efficient market theory. This would make it somewhat easier to understand why policies that have so little support in either theory or history should be so dominant in practice; and why their palpable failures should now be leading to an even more extreme assertion of the need for a comprehensive and radical deregulation of markets.

Apart from some marginal tactical concessions, this evidence has had no effect on the basic thrust of the orthodox policy advice. The chanting of the economist's mantra continues unabated: Deregulation

enhances flexibility, efficiency and welfare. When it doesn't, the fault is readily identified as a lack of training, or commitment, or wisdom or courage (usually called "political will"). Meanwhile, the bad news is "counterbalanced" by the good news from the latest, ephemeral "economic miracle" where a huge infusion of foreign exchange stimulates short term revival of an economy previously strangled by a chronic absence of foreign exchange.

However, it is surely ironic that amidst all the orchestrated celebration of the market's triumph, we should be in such grave danger of ignoring the main lesson of Eastern Europe - that policy makers who allow their ideologically-preferred policies to blind them to the real world, will bring disaster upon themselves and upon their societies.

RECOLONIZATION OR LIBERATION A New Booklet on Debt and Structural Adjustment

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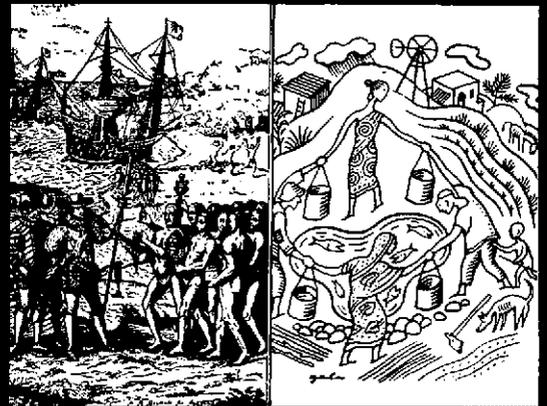
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Recolonization or Liberation was written by the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice (formerly called GATT-Fly), a project of Canadian churches mandated to do research, education and action in solidarity with people's organizations in Canada and globally.

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Recolonization or Liberation



The Bonds of Structural Adjustment and Struggles for Emancipation

by the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice



Gatsha Buthelezi talks with Fern Kirkpatrick of U.S. Foreign Policy Association, New York, 1985

The Killing Fields

Who Is Gatsha Buthelezi and Why Is He Killing People?

Too sensationalist a sub-head? No indeed. For it seems necessary to underscore, as graphically as possible, a few home-truths about the grotesque slaughter that has been occurring in South Africa in recent months, first in Natal and now in the Transvaal. Necessary because so much media coverage of these events has tended to miss the main point, using time-honoured clichés about "tribal warfare," "black-on-black violence" and the like to mask a reality that, at least in certain of its crucial particulars, is much more straightforward than that. Thus Toronto's *Globe and Mail* talks glibly of "inter-ethnic conflict between two distinct ethnic groups" while ridiculing "the ANC [suggestion] that the violence has been orchestrated solely

to bring Mr. Buthelezi more prominently into the political picture." Yet the ANC's explanation is substantially correct, certainly far closer to the truth than the *Globe's* "orgy of tribal bloodletting" synopsis of events.

At the root of the troubles is, indeed, Gatsha Buthelezi, Chief Minister of the Kwazulu homeland and principal leader of the Kwazulu-based political movement, Inkatha. Accepting participation in the government's Bantustan scheme in 1970 (though consistently refusing "independence" thereafter), he revived a moribund Zulu nationalist organization, Inkatha, in 1975 in order to provide a political base for himself. Painted as a moderate because of his capitalist leanings (in-

cluding a firm rejection of any form of sanctions) and his rejection of armed struggle (and indeed of most other militant forms of confrontation with the state), he and his cronies proved, more or less from the outset, to be anything but moderate in their brutal manner of consolidating their hold on power in Kwazulu. (Inkatha's extraordinary rape of the university campus at Ngoye in 1983 is merely one particularly graphic example of a far more general pattern in this respect.) It is from this Bantustan base that Buthelezi, a man of infinite personal ambition, then sought to make himself available for any political outcome which could further this ambition.

In particular, he sought to position himself as a possible compro-

mise candidate for the day when the contradictions of the apartheid system would seem to dictate some kind of reform option. The discussions around a power-sharing model for Natal (orchestrated around the "Buthelezi Commission" and within the KwaNatal Indaba) represented one earnest of this intention. Yet such was the strength of pan-South African nationalism within the black community that Buthelezi could never convincingly carry his tribaltinged and conservative politics beyond Natal. Moreover, it became increasingly apparent throughout the 1980s that the rising "Mass Democratic Movement" – the chief protagonist of a broader national project – was also winning increasing support amongst the Zulu people themselves. Faced with the possible eclipse of its position, Inkatha slashed back brutally at ANC/UDF/COSATU supporters in Natal.

Take careful note: the violence that surfaced so dramatically in Pietermaritzburg and elsewhere in 1988 and 1989 was between political groupings *within* the Zulu community. (It was not, that is to say, "tribal violence" in any meaningful sense.) And it was largely initiated as a political tactic by Inkatha, now increasingly on the political defensive and attempting to reconsolidate its position by force of arms. Of course, 1990 brought even more bad news for Buthelezi: the clear recognition by President F. W. De Klerk of the ANC's primacy within the black community and of its claim to co-equal status with the government in negotiating the future of South Africa. Buthelezi thus saw himself being shut out from the crucial early rounds of bargaining over a new constitution. He was no longer a preferred intermediary and, indeed, became increasingly fearful of a democratic constitution that promised not only to ignore all his mumbo-jumbo about "power-sharing" but even to sidetrack the prospect of recycling the Bantustan system – so long the chief underpinning of his power, – in some kind of "federal" system.

How, then, to get to the bargaining table before having to face the none too tender mercies of the ballot box? There was an answer: if no longer quite credible, he could at least try to make himself indispensable. If you want a peaceful transition, he seemed to say, include me in, include me in or a great many more people will die. In some such mood, Inkatha carried its bloody tactics beyond Natal and into the Transvaal.

True, Buthelezi does have some social base, especially in the remote rural areas of Kwazulu where Inkatha's machine-style politics can dispense its patronage, where its closed and aggressive methods can serve to intimidate dissenters, and where its ethnic sloganeering can have some added resonance. This kind of politics has not played nearly so well in the more sophisticated urban townships of Natal, even if, in the mushrooming shanty-towns that now begin to ring the formal townships, the notorious Inkatha "warlords" have been able to establish some similar patterns of social control amongst a desperately impoverished and marginalized population. Moreover, this kind of warlord system seems to have found some echo in the tribally-exclusive and isolated migrant-labourer hostels of the Transvaal cities. It is from these hostels, of course, that Zulu men have been mobilized as the cutting edge of Inkatha terror.

Where are the denizens of the white power structure while this terror tactic has been playing itself out? White politicians have never been unduly worried by the fact that Buthelezi is not quite their creature. By and large, his ambitions could be absorbed in such a way as to reinforce their own, especially when he chose as his role to be the hammer of the popular movement. The evidence is strong that the police played, at the very least, a facilitating role on Inkatha's side in the Natal violence of the past several years. Now, perhaps, De Klerk and company (including his friends in

the business community) may be less sanguine about Buthelezi's utility – if they have, indeed, begun to define a new strategy, one premised on accepting the ANC as the primary interlocutor for (controlled) change. Yet it is also clear that there have been whites up to their elbows in the recent violence. Who are they?

They are right wing whites, needless to say, who have a brief both to undermine the ANC and, more generally, to panic other whites, presented with the spectre of "black anarchy," away from support for democratic reform. But are these right-wingers minions of the state or do they represent some shadowy "third force"? In fact, this latter distinction cannot be easily made, given the well-documented degree of police participation in ultra-right political groups. What can be confirmed more unequivocally – from numerous first-hand accounts – is the fact of active police involvement in the Transvaal killings, working alongside Inkatha to mobilize and transport the death squads within the townships.

Indeed, the involvement of the security forces in the violence may cut even deeper than that. A recent report in the *Weekly Mail* (September 21, 1990) documents the fact that, on at least one occasion (in 1986), an elite unit of Inkatha fighters was trained in guerilla warfare by a division of the South African Defense Force at the Hippo Base in the Caprivi Strip. Further evidence points to the on-going training of Inkatha "hit-men" by the SADF at camps in Kwazulu itself. And there are signs, too, of collusion, in training and in general logistics, between these Inkatha forces and Renamo (the South African backed wrecking crew that has inflicted such damage upon neighbouring Mozambique) – including suggestions that some Renamo units may actually have been actively involved with Inkatha in the recent township offensives!

We return, inevitably, to the question of De Klerk's role in all

of this. Opinions differ, and no one can know for certain what that role is. Some see him as following a two-track policy, negotiating with the ANC while giving Inkatha just enough space to chip away at the ANC's credibility and bargaining power. This is plausible, though it would be a dangerous tightrope for De Klerk to walk – at least as likely to produce a kind of social anarchy unattractive to De Klerk's cronies in the business community as to soften up the ANC to be more pliable interlocutors. More likely, some argue, is that De Klerk cannot fully discipline his security apparatus which may now, to some degree, be operating at cross purposes from him. Whatever the case, the current situation certainly places the ANC in a particularly awkward position. They are inclined to accept De Klerk's *bona fides* for purposes of getting on with negotiations but must remain uncertain of them, nevertheless. And they are inclined to call for state intervention to keep the peace but must continue to underscore, simultaneously, the fact that the state cannot be trusted to be even-handed in doing so.

These complexities suggest, in turn, another question. Could Buthelezi have been coopted to the

popular movement by more political means before things had degenerated to this point? Could he even now be so coopted? A gesture by Mandela in this direction earlier this year was apparently ruled out of order by the ANC when Buthelezi tried to force his own extreme terms upon any such reconciliation. Was Mandela merely being naive about Buthelezi's agenda on this occasion (or, to take another example, on the occasion of his Ted Koppel Town Hall appearance when he refused an opportunity to expose Buthelezi's complicity in the violence as aggressively as he sought to expose the complicity of the South Africa police)? If so, there now seems even less excuse for such naiveté regarding Buthelezi's role and intentions, but, with the possibility of Mandela's meeting with Buthelezi now being revived, there may also be less room for manoeuvre. Buthelezi is, in effect, holding a gun to Mandela's head, and one fears he may be having some success in his attempt – running far beyond any legitimate claims he might otherwise have – to bully his way to the centre of the negotiations table.

Alternatively, could the MDM – the ANC in particular – have

been more successful in grounding its political presence in the townships in such a way as to erase the social tensions that Buthelezi and the security forces now seek to manipulate? For cooler heads have not always prevailed in the townships: Inkatha's invocation of Zulu identity has sometimes triggered counter-ethnic claims, for example, and the radicalized youth has not always acted with the kind of political deftness and diplomacy that might help diffuse tensions rather than exacerbate them. Perhaps one can say that the ANC, deeply hostile to "tribalism," deeply committed to a smooth transition to democracy, has been less effective than might have been hoped in establishing its active leadership on the ground – including within the hostels! – inside South Africa (cf. Anton Harber, "The ANC begins to wobble as it nears the home straight," *Weekly Mail*, September 21, 1990). But one makes such criticisms gingerly, and at some risk, if only by implication, of permitting an underestimation of the ruthlessness of the enemies – those who seek to turn the townships into "killing fields" – who still block the road to establishing the premises of a peaceful democratic politics in South Africa.

Namibia: Five Months After

BY COLIN LEYS

Colin Leys is a professor of politics at Queens University and a long time observer of the southern Africa scene.

In November 1989, UN-monitored elections brought a victory for SWAPO, the South West Africa People's Organization, with 57% of the popular vote and 41 out of 72 seats in the Constituent Assembly. This was less than the two-thirds majority needed to pass the independence constitution, and so SWAPO progressively accepted virtually all of the constitutional provisions originally proposed by the

Contact Group (of which Canada was a member) in 1981, guaranteeing many civil and human rights and the independence of the public service, etc. – guarantees the opposition parties were united in demanding. SWAPO induced two opposition leaders to join the new government and reassured the white population by appointing a white businessman (Otto Herrigel) as Minister of Finance. The Constituent Assembly was converted into the new National Assembly without a further election, SWAPO President Sam Nujoma became President of Namibia,

and the country became independent – minus Walvis Bay, which South Africa refused to give up – on March 21 1990. Recently Colin Leys visited Namibia and brought us back a report.

Within hours of arriving in Windhoek in July, I met a SWAPO MP and asked him how he felt things were going. He replied, "People are frustrated. They know that it takes time to make changes, and they want to give the government time, but they wonder what is really happening. They don't know whether to start making demands



Liebenborg/Afrapix/Impact Visuals

A survivor of the Cassinga massacre teaches children

or whether they should still wait." In the next five weeks, I heard the same sentiment expressed everywhere. The limitations on the SWAPO government's freedom of action are recognized (even if some - like the clause in the Constitution that prohibits getting rid of public servants of the illegal South African regime - are seen as unacceptable). People also accept that it takes time for the incoming ministers and permanent secretaries (deputy ministers in Canadian terminology) to initiate changes; and they have been told by the Minister of Finance that revenue is in short supply and that many needed expenditures must wait, pending aid negotiations. But they also wonder how

far the new government really envisages radical change of the kind that most Namibians dreamed of during the long years of the independence struggle - a drastic redistribution of education, health and housing resources, for example, and of personal incomes, between the races.

The leadership has understandably been absorbed by cabinet meetings and ministerial duties in Windhoek. Only recently have many of them moved out of their offices, but even then they have not given the impression of being keen to meet and listen to ordinary people. It is far more common for them to make public speeches at rallies where they speak in English,

now the national language, which usually only a handful of the audience understand. Their comments are laboriously translated, point by point, into Afrikaans and two or more vernacular languages. The long-awaited SWAPO Congress is now not to be held until 1992; and while intra-party elections have been organized, the party does not give the impression, as yet, of seeking the widest possible democratic input into policy-making, let alone seeking to make the leadership accountable to party members.

There are good and not so good reasons for all this; the point is only that the government's popularity and legitimacy, its one over-

whelmingly valuable asset, is being heavily drawn upon in this key transitional period. There is a notably low level of radical rhetoric, and people are conscious of it.

At the same time the radical nature of the change that has already occurred simply by ending South African control, and the war, should not be underestimated, above all in the north where the fighting took place. During the war people lived in constant danger of being blown up by a land mine, or shot for being out during the curfew, or tortured on suspicion of having dealings with PLAN combatants – or just for not being deferential enough.

An exchange with an Ovambo companion on our way north illustrated this: I asked him what people thought about the President's and the ministers' salaries, which had just been set at the rate of Rand 20,000 per month plus allowances for the President (more than De Klerk gets, according to the opposition press) and Rand 16,000 plus allowances for ministers. He replied that such things concerned people like him (an educated professional), but not most of the rural population in Ovambo. Most people were just deeply grateful to be free from fear and from white arrogance.

This is no doubt a significant difference, not just between rural people in the north, but to some extent between northerners and southerners (i.e. people from the old "police zone," the white settler regions) in general.

There is a deep well of loyalty for the SWAPO leadership in Ovamboland, stemming partly from ethnic solidarity and partly from the area's distinctive experience of oppression by the military and Koevoet (the brutal and lawless counter-insurgency force) during the war. It was notable that "Namibia Day," on August 26, marking the first exchange of shots in the war, at Ongulumbashe in 1966, proved to be almost wholly a northern, if not purely Ovambo, affair.

The difficulties facing the new government are serious enough – so serious, in fact, that one Namibian observer, sympathetic to the government, remarked that the real test was whether it could manage to "tick over on a good neo-colonial course" – not whether it could produce radical changes. The Finance Minister's budget speech in July contained the following caution:

Apart from being faced initially with a budget deficit of some R556 million for 1990-91 and a foreign debt amounting to R726.5 million, urgent attention has to be given to the increasing unemployment rate, conservatively estimated at 30%, urbanization and squatting, the escalating crime rate, the population growth rate of over three per cent, the sluggish economic growth rate and the illiteracy rate of 65%. In addition, the rocketing inflation which we in Namibia can hardly influence, increases the difficulties with which the new independent country has to struggle.

The crime rate escalated, in the opinion of the police, following the return of the 42,000 exiles from abroad before the November 1989 elections, with residents of the black townships as usual bearing the brunt of it. While it would be quite wrong to attribute all the rise in crime to this cause, a UNICEF survey published in August this year did find that only six per cent of the returnees of working age had obtained "formal sector" jobs. Many have no source of income at all.

The police force, reduced from 6,000 to some 1,300 of the former "SWAPOL" personnel, has been rapidly re-established with large numbers of returnees (former SWAPO police from the camps in Angola and Zambia and former PLAN fighters), as well as former "special constables" (untrained, daily-paid SWAPOL staff). A major drive to train the new, often uneducated, police officers is under way. Active steps have been taken to change the ethos and image of the

new force ("NAMPOL") from that of a repressive, military-style organization to that of a police *service*, respecting and protecting the people. But many problems have arisen. At one stage President Nujoma ordered the army onto the streets in Windhoek as a deterrent to criminals. Public reactions were mixed, however, and the measure lasted only for two weeks.

A force of 1,500 "border guards," recruited entirely from PLAN ex-combatants, was sent to Kavango and Caprivi to secure the border with the UNITA-controlled region of Angola. This force created a new problem through its high-handed treatment of the local population, especially individuals and localities seen as loyal to the opposition party, the DTA; following mounting attacks in the opposition press, including stories of maltreatment of tourists, the "border guards" were "withdrawn" by the Prime Minister at the beginning of September, and the newly-formed Namibian Defence Force replaced it along the border.

Anxieties about the risk of destabilization by elements in Namibia and South Africa opposed to the settlement with SWAPO persist. After the *Namibian* newspaper reported government concern about an alleged coup plot by Namibian ex-members of SWATF (the South African-controlled Namibian army) and Koevoet, its offices were fire-bombed on August 5. It is clear that De Klerk has no interest in destabilizing the SWAPO government, which has everything to gain from supporting his negotiation strategy; but it is also clear that the SWAPO government has at present virtually no way of controlling the movement in and out of Namibia of South African right-wingers with an obvious potential interest in destabilizing it. This applies also to members of the so-called "Civilian Cooperation Bureau," which seems to have been responsible for the murder of SWAPO leader Anton Lubowski in September last year.

Faced with such problems, both economic and political, the government's record to date possibly deserves more respect than its local critics are apt to give it. It has dealt, not very clearly, with the thorny question of citizenship, offering it to most people who have lived for five years in Namibia and are prepared to renounce any other. It has amnestied more than half the prison population inherited from the colonial regime. It has introduced promptly a 200 mile territorial limit off the coast, which is essential for Namibia to rebuild the fish stock and ensure that the national economy gets the benefit. It has announced plans to train teachers, so that the long process of rectifying the gross inequality in school provision between races and regions can begin (in 1986-87, R329 was spent on every Ovambo school student, compared with R1,071 for every Herero student, and R3,213 for every white student). Plans to remedy the similar gross inequalities in health services and housing were also said to be in hand.

Given Namibia's situation, few quick dramatic changes could be made. There are exceptions, however. For example, in the "white township" of Oshakati, the main military and commercial centre of Ovamboland, large houses stood empty in August this year, while a few hundred metres away the rest of the town's population live in what are largely shanty-towns almost entirely lacking in amenities (and often under water, floating in garbage and sewage, in the rains). In the vacuum left by the abolition of the old "second tier" (bantustan) Ovambo government, perhaps, no policy seems to have been adopted for using the empty "white" housing in the face of so much need. Remarkably, only some of the empty houses have been squatted in, and only some looted for their fittings.

The government has introduced a cautious budget, but one stressing the need for expanded public investment. It has had one piece of good

fortune, in that the predicted budget deficit has not materialized: on the contrary, a small surplus was forecast in the budget speech, and the economy of the north, which many observers expected to collapse with the withdrawal of the army, does not give the impression of being in terminal decline. There is acute unemployment, and so far no plausible means of expanding and diversifying the Ovambo economy has been proposed. Yet the region does not seem depressed. The big supermarkets in Oshakati and Ondangua are not full of people, but they are still full of goods. The explanation may lie partly in the revival of cross-border trade with Angola, which the end of the PLAN-South Africa war has made possible in this sector. But Ovambo business acumen and thrift should not be underestimated either. A great deal turns on what happens in this region, which contains half of the population, including 80% of the unemployed returnees, whose expectations have been raised by their sacrifices in combat and their education and politicization in Angola and overseas.

* * *

SWAPO's socialist policy programme of 1976 now seems a distant memory. One socialist I met remarked that when he and a friend tried to count all the socialists they knew in the country, they could only think of six. Allowing for some exaggeration, it is still probably true that outside the ranks of NANSO, the student organization, very few people have other than liberal-egalitarian ideas and hopes, within the framework of a broadly individualistic, private enterprise economy. The question is rather whether a significant number of the SWAPO leadership are determined to bring about a much more equal society. It is too soon to tell. Some observers feel that under the watchword of "reconciliation," the new government has been accommodating itself all too rapidly to the inherited structure of power and status. Others see many of the old

leaders, in spite of their long years of dependency on the international community, as nonetheless dogged and persistent champions of the national cause, who will never be content merely to manage the old racialist and exploitative system, however gradual and limited the changes they may seek.

Municipal and regional elections, due in the next 18 months, will give some pointers, as will the 1991 budget, and the specific policies on housing, health, land reform and mining revenues that emerge over the coming year. Individual leadership appointments will also be significant. For those who believe that a "mafia" of Ovambo "securocrats" will eventually entrench themselves permanently in power, the deferment, in the face of a public outcry, of the appointment of Solomon Hawala as Army Chief of Staff of Solomon Hawala (Hawala was PLAN chief of security during the torturing of the "SWAPO detainees" in Angola), may force some reconsideration. The impulse to behave as if the SWAPO leadership were still an untouchable power elite, secure in their exile headquarters, may still be there, but it is no longer unchallenged. Other, more cosmopolitan and progressive tendencies are also evident.

On the other hand, the DTA and most of the smaller opposition parties are noticeably lacking in constructive ideas, and are mostly still discredited by their participation in the South African-sponsored "interim government" prior to 1989. The trade union movement, whose pre-independence growth was impressive, has been placed under SWAPO tutelage by the insertion of the exile leader John Ya Otto as General Secretary of the National Union of Namibian Workers over Ben Ulenga, its internal leader. In general, the lack of democratic traditions in most sectors of Namibian society under South African occupation means that for the moment, the initiative lies very much with the government.

Mozambique:

The Failure of Socialism?

BY JOHN S. SAUL

Active with TCLSAC since its founding in 1972, John Saul is a member of the editorial working group of Southern Africa Report

"Capitalism," Berthold Brecht once observed, "has an address." Capitalism's no mere abstraction, he was saying, but real live individuals in control of very concrete economic institutions, reproducing, more or less self-consciously, the exploitative social system of which he disapproved. For Brecht, that's where the buck, the blame, the abstraction, had to stop. And that's where the on-going struggle to develop a more humane system had to be "addressed."

For western radicals, "the failure of socialism" — this latter phrase so pervasive a talisman of political discourse as we enter the 1990s — has an address as well. For some, that address is close to home, no further away than the constituency office of their local social-democratic party where they have come to see organizations ever more deeply enmeshed in and compromised by their historic bargain with capitalism and the most "bourgeois" features of democracy. For others, particularly many of an older generation, the Soviet Union itself has provided the postmark for "failed socialism." Here was a peculiar brand of socialism, authoritarian and smug, but with promise perhaps of an "alternative," of some counter-weight to imperialism. And yet, for those with eyes to see (and not in every case merely with the advantage of hindsight), no real promise at all.

China, Cuba, Nicaragua and, for many of us in the anti-apartheid movement, Mozambique. My own association with the Mozambican revolution began in the 1960s when I moonlighted, occasionally, from

my job at Tanzania's university and helped out with English-language translations at FRELIMO's headquarters in Dar es Salaam. My commitment to the Mozambican struggle was deepened by a trip to the liberated areas of Mozambique in 1972, first-hand participation in 1975's dramatic independence celebrations in the newly-renamed capital of Maputo, numerous subsequent visits to the country, including attendance at several key Congresses and meetings, and even a spell of full-time employment there, teaching at the Eduardo Mondlane University and in FRELIMO's party school.

Through these years I passed close enough to the flame of Mozambique's revolutionary process to see how real was the sense of humane purpose that came to motivate so many FRELIMO's cadres, how sincere, too, their grasping for a Marxist methodology that would help further to codify the radical thrust of their undertakings. I had seen enough, in any case, to insulate me from both the ultra-left abstractions of a Michel Cahen (*SAR*, May, 1990) and the crass cynicism of a Heribert Adam with his suggestion that recent developments have "reduced Frelimo's ... versions of freedom ideology to rhetorical socialism ... In a crunch, the elite therefore adjusts ideological interpretations as arbitrarily as they adopted them. No conversion is involved, as is frequently assumed, because a collective ideological commitment hardly existed in the first place."

Yet my more recent visits had also revealed the progressive decay of Frelimo's high promise, a decay by now self-evident to all observers but one that has been particularly well documented, over the past few years, in the various articles by Mar-

shall, Roesch, Loxley and others in the pages of *SAR*. Still, I had not been back to Mozambique myself since 1986 when I travelled there this summer to attend a conference and to visit friends. It very quickly became apparent that even the instructive contributions of Marshall and the others had not quite prepared me for what I was about to witness.

The conference itself was a revelation. Officially convened by the Frelimo party and the Ministry of International Relations, it was entitled "Rethinking Strategies for Mozambique and Southern Africa." The number of delegates invited from western establishment circles was remarkable enough. Even more remarkable was the strong pitch in favour of adopting quite unalloyed "free market" policies to deal with Mozambique's development problems that was formally presented by each of the three senior governmental ministers who addressed various sessions (Pascoal Mocumbi, Jacinto Veloso and Armando Guebuza).

Guebuza was particularly hard-boiled in this respect, acknowledging the hardships that the structural adjustment programme has brought to many in Mozambique with the matter-of-fact assertion that the market economy solution does in fact make the rich richer and the poor poorer, bringing with it more social injustice as "the price of progress." Indeed, it was the World Bank's own representative in Mozambique who sounded more of a warning note. He suggested that the Mozambique government had become rather too naive in its dealings with international capital, not being willing or able enough to drive the kinds of hard bargains with firms and western agencies that might actually defend the country's interests.



Chiziane/AIM

Central Committee of Frelimo voting changes to constitution

Not that this representative himself queried the premise that a wide range of benefits could flow from more or less total immersion in the international market-place. But it was rather disconcerting, as I said in my own address to the conference, to find the World Bank standing marginally to the left of spokespersons from the Mozambican government! Equally disconcerting, I continued, was the small inclination on the part of any of the Ministers to take seriously the fact that, even if a certain kind of socialism could be said to have "failed," there was still good reason for measured scepticism as to whether capitalism could succeed under the conditions in which Mozambique finds itself.

Most remarkable of all, however, was a briefing given exclusively to conference delegates by Mozambique's President, Joaquim Chissano. Chissano seemed to be

addressing himself most directly to the more establishment-style delegates from Germany and the United States (in particular, perhaps, the extremely right-wing former Reagan ambassador to South Africa, Herman Nickel). In doing so, however, he also starkly revealed just how supine Mozambique has been forced to become *vis-à-vis* western dictate:

"The US said, "Open yourself to OPIC, the World Bank, and IMF". What happened? ... We are told now: "Marxism! You are devils. Change this policy." OK. Marxism is gone. "Open market economy." OK, Frelimo is trying to create capitalism. We have the task of building socialism and capitalism here.

We went to Reagan and I said, "I want money for the private sector to boost people who want to develop a bourgeoisie." Answer: \$10 million, then \$15 million more, then another

\$15 million. You tell me to do away with Marxism, the Soviet Union and the GDR and give me [only] \$40 million. OK, we have changed. Now they say, "If you don't go to a multi-party system, don't expect help from us."

Chissano did note that the structural adjustment programme being followed by the Frelimo government has deepened the hardships of the Mozambican people at least as much as it has produced economic advance. And he warned that "the readjustment programme must start showing results. Or we must take other directions." But what "other directions"? In fact, Chissano said rather forlornly in capping this threat, "we don't see which other way. We are totally dependent on inputs from outside. If they are not forthcoming in the correct manner, it is no use."

The debate will continue about what has brought Mozambique to its current sorry pass, what combination of an unpromising historical starting-point inherited from Portuguese colonialism, a relentless siege imposed upon the country by outside forces (notably the architects of South Africa's destabilization strategy), and a Frelimo development project marred by significant failings of its own. Old Frelimo friends, people of genuinely left instinct and intent, were in a reflective mood, prepared to discuss more openly than had sometimes been the case the party's failings. Not that anything I heard or saw caused me to revise my earlier opinion: first and foremost amongst the causes of Mozambique's so-called "failure of socialism" has been the ruthlessness of the aggression launched against it and the destruction, quite literally, of a society that has been attendant upon that aggression.

Indeed, I came to feel that I had, if anything, underestimated the broader imperialist underpinnings of the grim destabilization of Mozambique. At the seminar itself, as well as in other discussions, a pithy epigram about Mozambique attributed to the Caribbean social scientist Horace Campbell took on ever increasing resonance: "The IMF is the economic wing of the armed bandits!" There have been many indications, over the years, that South Africa's destabilization tactics dovetailed neatly with the Reagan doctrine of Third World "roll-back." After all, these tactics had been applied in earnest only upon Reagan's entry into the White House. Now private discussions with Frelimo veterans underscored the extent to which Samora Machel had premised his own tactics in the early 1980s on his grasp of the fact of US/South African connivance in destabilization. The neutralization of American hostility was thus front and centre in the calculations that underlay the signing of the Nkomati Accord.

As things turned out, Machel had underestimated the extent to which South Africa was an independent actor. South African and American policies as to the best methods of dealing with Mozambique diverged after the Nkomati Accord – the Americans apparently accepting it as rather more of a supine Mozambican surrender to the reality of *force majeure* and the logic of the international marketplace than the South Africans were prepared to do. As a result, destabilization continued. Yet Chissano's words, quoted above, give some further measure of the ruthlessness with which the Americans (alongside other western powers) have been prepared to follow up economically on the advantage bequeathed them by South Africa's direct physical weakening of an "enemy regime."

At the same time, some Frelimo veterans were also prepared to discuss, more frankly than ever, the weaknesses of their own project. Perhaps the mistake was in going for the vanguard party structure in the first place, one of them said. Certainly, he continued, we were wrong, all of us at the top, in fostering a cult of personality around Samora, whatever his undoubted virtues and the particular strength of his dedication to a popularly-based development strategy; this personality cult he saw as being the biggest change, politically, in the transition from the Mondlane period to the Machel period and the most questionable one. My friend also referred to a long series of discussions he and I had had over the years (including during the period when I had taught at the FRELIMO party school) in which I had often emphasized the costs of FRELIMO's embracing the particularly lifeless brand of Marxism on offer from the Soviets as the ideological instrument for codifying its radical intentions. We should probably have listened more to you, he said lightly, then – in a wry voice – "Of course, you didn't have in your briefcase the military hardware that we also felt we needed"!

As our talk flowed along these lines, I got a fresh sense of the costs – perhaps far outweighing the benefits – of Mozambique's having had to turn (inevitably?) to the Eastern bloc for support of its attempt to escape subordination to western capitalist dictate. Moreover, in this and other conversations, I found concern expressed that the regime's original attempt to systematize its revolutionary nationalism within a Marxist frame of analysis had had less depth intellectually than it needed to have (and less depth, certainly, than I had myself dared to think at the time). Perhaps this is also what makes it so easy for Chissano now to suggest that "marxism [not, be it noted, "Marxism-Leninism"] was creating problems for us" (*Expresso*, May 12, 1990) – and to leave himself so little conceptual middle-ground for blunting the charge of the most unadulterated of free-market nostrums.

A number of more concrete subjects were also broached, notably in a discussion of the importance of Samora's failure, in the breathing space provided by the end of the Zimbabwe war, to do something about the military. In particular, this might have involved moving out the dead-wood amongst the army's commanders, both those who were not up to meeting the novel demands of the independence period (so different from the days of the liberation struggle) and those who had failed to resist the temptations to corruption. Did Samora feel too close, from guerilla days, to members of this leadership cadre to take the necessary steps? Yet a transformed army might have made a great difference in containing Renamo as South Africa first began to reactivate the latter group.

Then, as the war escalated, Samora seemed himself to lose his nerve and his self-possession, the period from 1983 to 1985 revealing particularly graphically, Frelimo friends argued, some of the costs of excessively centralized and per-

mozambique

Peasants planting corn in Chokwe, Gaza Province



Children play in Chibropulo, Gaza Province

Mula/AIM

sonalized rule. True, a vibrant and critically-focussed meeting of the Central Committee in 1986 did see the beginnings of a revitalization of Frelimo – and of Samora. Moreover, it seems quite plausible that it was precisely as Machel now began to move to transform the situation, giving promise, for example, of at last shaking-up the army, that the South Africans determined to kill him. But how could the situation have been allowed to degenerate so far in the first place?

Unfortunately, my time in Mozambique did not permit a full exploration of all the questions that Mozambicans should now be asking themselves about the contribution of their own errors of omission and commission in the demise of their experiment. Certainly, one was tempted to cavil at times about what was being said – and about what was being left unsaid. For example, were even my most reflective Frelimo friends sufficiently self-critical about the extent to which party/state directives and controls had tended (with whatever good intentions) to straitjacket initiatives from below and had thus failed to facilitate vitalization of unions, women's organizations, "civic associations," media? And yet it was refreshing to find that for some Mozambicans – though perhaps not yet enough of them – work has begun on a task that is now essential to the left the world over: that of studying, self-critically and with more effective tools than have been available in the past, socialism's setbacks.

Moreover, given some of the realities just touched upon, one can scarcely argue, from a progressive point of view, that all the recent changes in Mozambique are pure retreat. Indeed, in some instances they seem more a case of too little change too late. Stronger steps towards effective democratization, if that is what is happening in Mozambique, are certainly welcome, capping a lesson socialists have had

to take more firmly to heart everywhere in recent years. And there may be a general kind of wisdom, too, in seeking to let markets do some of the work that has broken the back of the planning apparatus in Mozambique. Regrettably, however, one senses that these changes are not being made in some measured manner, the better to deepen the effectiveness of a popularly-rooted project. Instead they seem more the grasping at straws of a leadership left reeling by the pounding it has taken, a leadership desperate to keep afloat on the turbulent seas of (continuing) destabilization and ever deeper reintegration into the global capitalist system.

In some cases, too, it seems that the weakest attributes of many Frelimo leaders have become magnified, benevolent authoritarianism now turned into something much more overtly non-benevolent. Take, for example, the hard version of Mozambique's present development strategy cited earlier from Minister Guebuza's remarks at the conference. As I pointed out in my own conference intervention, it may be no accident that the Minister who once offered up to the people of Maputo the hardship and high handedness of "Operation Production" (a programme of forced urban removal in 1983) in the name of socialism, is now prepared to offer the hardship of extreme polarization of incomes to that same people in the name of capitalist development.

Not all were on quite this wavelength, even if it did seem at times that the most salient division one could discern within the Mozambican leadership lay between those who favour a quite crude and aggressive project of entrepreneurial greed and corruption (exemplified most clearly by Guebuza himself and apparently packaged by those around him in crypto-racist terms as exemplifying the best kind of "African advancement") and those who favour a somewhat softer, more technocratic and "rational" version

of "free market" strategy. Does there, in addition, linger, within the Frelimo system, something of Samora Machel's left-wing populist sense that Mozambique's development strategy should benefit, first and foremost, the poorest of the poor?

President Chissano himself may not have lost sight of this bottom line of Frelimo's historical project entirely – however impossible he is finding it to give meaning to his best instincts in this regard. And even the senior leader who commented to me ruefully that "the Samoran project is over" did suggest that the Mozambican state remains a site of struggle where some remnants of Frelimo's socialism might still be defended. For him, however, the main "deposit" of the first fifteen years of Mozambican independence may need to be sought elsewhere, in something equally real if rather more amorphous: "in the minds of the people" and within the folds of a Mozambican culture still in-the-making.

He did look, concretely, to some of the cooperatives that have been established in the Green Zones and to some of the strikes that had been triggered, earlier this year, by the worst enormities of structural adjustment's impact. These were possible sources of bottom-up regeneration that might yet place a more successful radicalism on Mozambique's historical agenda. But from where, in turn, did they draw their inspiration? Wasn't it in part from some residue, still alive in Mozambique, of "the Samoran project" at its most positive, at its most socialist? Doesn't the best of that project survive as one positive point of reference for progressive endeavour, survive as precisely the kind of historical bench mark that few other African peoples can find in their post-independence past to take sustenance from? His conclusion: perhaps in this oblique way, if in no other, the Frelimo struggle really does continue.



S.A. police guarding Robert Engleb's cricket tour, Johannesburg, January 1988

BY BRUCE KIDD

Bruce Kidd, who has competed for Canada as a long distance runner in past Olympiads, teaches physical education at the University of Toronto. His articles appear regularly in SAR.

"Send me a tour" is apparently the first thing South African president F. W. De Klerk said to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl during his visit to Bonn last spring. Both men need to be reminded that the sportsworld is not interested in playing the legitimization game.

There is no question that the quarantine of South African sports should be maintained and strengthened for the immediate future. To do otherwise would be an "affront to the oppressed majority" and would "send the wrong signal" to the apartheid regime and its powerful friends, as Sam Ramsamy of the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC) told several audiences in Toronto in June.

Nevertheless, the dramatic breakthroughs of the last year and the hopes raised by the beginning of "negotiations on negotiations" have put the question of lifting sanctions clearly on the agenda. At the Fourth International Conference Against Apartheid Sport, held last September in Stockholm, activist athletes expressed radically different points of view.

The discussion revolved around the conditions under which the boycott should be dismantled. To what extent must this decision await the "profound and irreversible" destruction of apartheid as an entire system? Might sanctions be lifted on a sport-by-sport basis, as individual federations meet the tests set by the non-racial movement and the international community? If so, what should those tests be? How can the leverage provided by the moratorium be used to optimum advan-

Not Yet De Klerk: Defending the Sports Boycott

tage in the interim? How can the international community assist in the post-apartheid reconstruction?

The Conference Against Apartheid Sport is unique in the overall sanctions campaign, because it brings together all the major players – liberation movements and anti-apartheid organizations, the United Nations, governments and the major NGOs meet with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the major international and national sports bodies. In Stockholm, for the first time there was direct representation from the non-racial sports movement from within South Africa and participation from Namibia.

The conference began in a mood of guarded celebration. Since the last such get-together in Harare in 1987, there have been significant victories on almost every front. Sanctions have been tightened in the Olympics, and in cricket, tennis, and professional boxing – all popular South African sports. A number of countries, including Canada, have taken steps to deny visas to South African athletes, and where governments still allow them to play, activists have made their lives miserable. There was much affectionate sharing of battleline experiences and the solidarity movements' unwritten history.

The most gratifying news came from the leaders of the non-racial National Olympic and Sport Congress (NSC) from South Africa. The NSC's successful opposition last January to the "rebel" English cricket tour has proved an important watershed. It used to be that no matter how much criticism and censure those athletes who flouted the boycott received in their own countries, once they stepped off the plane in South Africa, they could expect a hero's welcome, first-class all the way, with little contact with apartheid's foes. But the mobilization against the English "test" has changed all that. Everywhere they went, the cricketers and their

sponsors were directly confronted by thousands of demonstrators. In Kimberley (where the first game was moved to avoid a protest) and Johannesburg, the players were forced to cook their own meals and clean their own rooms because the hotel workers refused to serve them. The series had to be cancelled prematurely.

As a result, South Africa has probably seen its last lavishly financed "rebel" tour. If another is tried, NSC leaders are confident that

establishment of the moratorium on international competition. The goal is the creation of single, democratic, non-racial bodies for every sport, *i.e.*, the unification, according to a one-person one-vote constitution, of the presently racially-defined bodies with their non-racial counterparts. This will be no mean feat: in most sports there are separate white, coloured and black bodies in addition to the non-racial federations. To make these new organizations effective, a broad measure of redistribution will be necessary.



Anti-rugby tour demonstrations, Durban, S.A., August 1989

Mayet/Afrapix/Impact Visuals

they can stop it. The Congress now effectively controls the route to international competition, and a growing number of people from the once haughty white sports establishment have begun to realize this. In the last few months, the still-functioning white Olympic association and several of their member sports, notably swimming and track and field, and the establishment bodies in cricket, rugby and soccer, have sought out the NSC, effectively suing for peace.

In keeping with the evolving "two-track" strategy discussed previously in these pages ("Adjusting the Sports Boycott", March 1989), the NSC has viewed these negotiations as a stepping stone to a strengthened non-racial sports sector, in preparation for a post-apartheid South Africa. The precondition the NSC has set is an immediate acceptance by the sports es-

This process has the blessing of SANROC and the IOC, through the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA). Both have indicated that democratic unity is a minimum condition for South African entry into international competition. (Language is instructive here: Ramsamy and his African colleagues stress that the real South Africa has never competed in international competition.) In August, ANOCA sent Ramsamy to South Africa (his first return in 18 years) to make these terms clear to the government and the white sports establishment and to consult directly with the non-racial leaders. In Stockholm, Ramsamy reinforced NSC President Mluleki George's judgement that the willingness of many white leaders to enter unity talks is "genuine" and "encouraging."

This strategy was also largely endorsed at the conference by the two representatives of the South African Council on Sport (SACOS), the older non-racial umbrella federation which up until now has been polemicizing against it (see "Old Ploys vs. New Players", *SAR*, Dec. 1989). Although the issue of "non-alignment" has yet to be settled - SACOS is opposed to the NSC's close public association with the ANC - it would seem that the chances for unity among the anti-apartheid sports community have significantly improved.

But the buoyant optimism generated by the activists' and the non-racial leaders' reports was tempered by a fear that some long-standing supporters of the campaign may be pushing the process too quickly, encouraging a widespread expectation that whatever the outcome of the ANC-De Klerk negotiations, sporting exchanges with South Africa are imminent. While the Africans stressed that "the pillars of apartheid remain firmly in place", "the unity talks have barely begun", and "it would be dangerous to relax the boycott now", several prominent Europeans likened the international campaign to a race and suggested that the "finish line is very, very near."

U.N. Assistant Secretary-General Sotirios Mousouris gave the impression that the U.N. is impatient to wind down the boycott campaign, predicting that the Fourth International Conference would be the last. IOC President Samaranch said that since the Olympic Movement was "the first to say 'no' to South Africa, it would be proud to be the first to welcome its return." Was this an awkward translation, or a straw in the wind? While Samaranch has long been committed to an African solution, the next Games are in his home town of Barcelona and a non-racial South African team would give him a striking diplomatic triumph. Spain has resumed the

practice of giving visas to South African athletes. In the corridors, delegates also worried about the unannounced relaxation of cultural sanctions by the nordic countries (who have always been the forefront of international solidarity) and the loss of the Eastern European communist governments' unbending support.

To clear up any confusion about the timetable, the conference's final - and unanimous - declaration emphasizes that the road ahead will be long and difficult and that "there remained a yawning gap between hope and achievement." It calls upon the international community to extend and intensify the boycott. The conference rejected the idea of uncoupling the sports campaign from the overall struggle - and with it, the prospect of lifting sanctions on a sport-by-sport basis - and renewed the pledge to maintain the moratorium until apartheid is completely eradicated. At the same time, it endorsed the "unity talks" between the NSC and the sports establishment, indicating that even after sanctions are withdrawn, only united, democratic, and non-racial sports bodies would be admitted to international competition.

It is to be hoped that such unambiguous language will restore the resolve of the "sanctions weary." It is expected that these resolutions will form the basis of the ANOCA advice to the major South African sports bodies (both establishment and non-racial) when they meet in Harare in November.

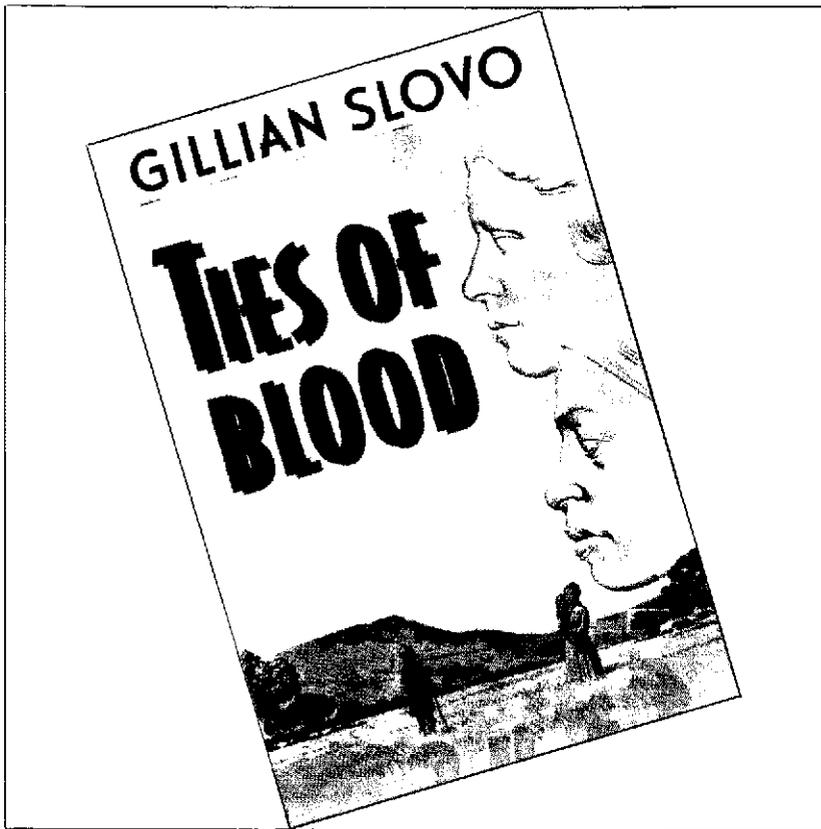
While the moratorium prohibits international competition, the international community is being encouraged to provide financial and technical assistance to the non-racial movement (and to the front-line states). The conference also addressed this challenge. Though white facilities and programs are superb, the historic pattern of centuries of racism has left black athletes woefully disadvantaged, and in the rural areas opportunities do not

exist at all. The NSC is anxious that the pattern of Zimbabwe and Namibia not be repeated: when those liberation movements won their independence, the whites still monopolized the best opportunities. The first Zimbabwe Olympic Team, in Moscow in 1980, was entirely white.

There is a heady ambition among the non-racial leaders, one we might well emulate in Canada after the neo-conservative decade of shrinking expectations. They speak of sport for all as if they mean it, and they are determined to extend opportunities to girls and women, and take sport to the oppressed peoples of the rural areas and bantustans. But the task will be enormously difficult. Economic development, education, health care, and housing will properly be higher priorities for any democratic government.

Continuing residential segregation will significantly reduce the effect of open access laws, and if more pro-active policies are tried, such as busing township athletes to the best white clubs, they will be bitterly resisted. Most sponsors will continue to concentrate solely on the popular stars, effectively boycotting projects of grass roots development. (Sponsors are still giving most of their money to the elite white sports.)

The non-racial movement has begun to receive some international assistance (Canada has contributed about \$50,000; Sweden is training swim coaches), but so far it's been a drop in the bucket. Sam Ramsamy has suggested that there be substantial international reparations for the superprofits extracted under apartheid, some of which could be used for sports, but this and similar proposals need to be followed up. The good news is that for the first time in this series of conferences, the international community was able to take an active interest in non-racial sports as they are being developed at the grass roots. That's another measure of the advances of the last year.



Ties of Blood

BY DEREK COHEN

Derek Cohen teaches English literature at York University, Toronto.

Ties of Blood by Gillian Slovo, Michael Joseph, London 1989. 569 pages

This is a curious novel. It is tendentious, naive, simplistic, and woodenly written. Its characters, with one important exception, are immobile and two-dimensional, its settings are unconvincing. And yet there is a remarkable way in which the sheer persistence of the work, the sheer quantity of its detail, the audacious sweep of its historical and geographical perspectives ultimately take hold of you and compel respect. The work ranges over most of this century, encapsulating the

history of essentially one white and one black family who are tenuously linked by politics and the colour bar. The white, Jewish family of active communists and ANC members force a connection with a black family into whose sphere they are thrust and to which they stubbornly cling. The black family, lacking, of course, the freedom to cling, has to accept the relationship, artificial as it sometimes is; though this family too is unusual in that it produces from a royal tribal lineage some notable freedom fighters and martyrs. The terms of the relationship itself, however, are almost entirely and inevitably defined by the white family.

But more specifically, as the Acknowledgements candidly state, the novel provides a version of the Slovo family from the perspective of one of the daughters. As everyone knows, the (to me) rather marvellous movie

A World Apart was the other Slovo daughter's version of herself and her mother. The central concern of this novel is a ringing reprise of the tense and brittle relationship between the daughter/victim and her mother the political activist. Where the movie supplied a glimpse into a few short years in the life of the child of activist parents, the novel more ambitiously attempts a huge sweeping history of South African politics since before the founding of the ANC to the present (1988). It describes in some detail every major event in the twentieth-century history of black and left-wing resistance to apartheid, including the Mineworkers Strike, the founding of ANC, the Freedom Charter and the Congress of the People, the Farm Labour scandal, the Sophiatown removals, Sharpeville, the Ninety Day Law, Rivonia, Soweto. Though the inclusiveness of the work results in an often desultory treatment of individual events, as the novel approaches the present and, indeed, the personal, a new intensity seeps into the narrative that augments its conviction. Like her sister's movie, Slovo's novel is ultimately and centrally concerned with the relations of daughters and mothers; it seems to propose a familial history of resentment that is passed down through the generations of women. Starting with the first mother to have come to South Africa – Riva Cyn – and her fractious relations with her daughter, the novel constructs a family history of absorption and adaptation to the South African milieu chiefly as it affects the mothers and their daughters. In South Africa, socialization is a deforming process as the families – black and white – are compelled to come to terms with the ubiquitous and inescapable fact of racial division in a world where racial hatred is the norm and attempts to challenge that norm can be illegal.

Half of the book is given to the Swiece family, a father, mother and two daughters. The ambiguous per-

spective of this part of the story is that of the older daughter, Martha Swiece, and concentrates a good deal on her growing up in England under the shadow of the special kind of notoriety of political parents. Her father is serving a twelve year jail sentence in South Africa, and it is with her mother (the wrong parent) that Martha must come to England as a child. The father is released from jail and finally is assassinated by a bomb in Maputo. The premise of the book, asserted several times, is that to resist apartheid is to be a victim of apartheid. The Swiece family are active communists and work to effect a revolutionary politic in South Africa. Their daughters, non-political and occasionally disgusted by the obsessive political activity of their parents, are as much victims of South African politics as their parents. The political imperatives of Jacob and Rosa Swiece (note the initials), leave the daughters neglected and resentful. Where political work needs to be done, the daughters must occupy a second place. The book is clearly a kind of exorcism for the author - the biographical resonances are too strong for this aspect to be ignored. It is, therefore, interesting that Slovo kills the wrong parent. It is Joe, not Ruth, who is executed by the South Africans. Part of the reason for this is fairly clear. One would guess that Ruth's premature death left unresolved many of the resentments and rages that this daughter felt against that mother. By resurrecting her, by killing her father, she can work through the relationship in a fantasy of her own creating. She can construct a reconciliation that may never have occurred, develop a means by which to lay to rest ghosts and memories that must have left much unease in the wake of Ruth's terrible and untimely death.

The parallel lives of the black and white families produce some predictable but interesting bases of comparison, and Slovo keeps the reader aware of how it is always

worse for the blacks, even in prison, and within patriarchal systems such as that of South Africa and almost everywhere else, it is always worse for women. By extension, it is always worse for the black women. The Bopape family, who end up in Soweto, related by ties of affection, history, politics, and circumstance to the Swieces are constant evidence of these truisms. Their suffering is, simply, more elemental, their danger greater, the existence more precarious in every way, and Slovo is uncompromisingly aware of this. Where the white family is relatively easily able to obtain comfort and wealth and to supply their children with the best that money can buy, the black children daily face the dreadful dangers of poverty and racism. They drift into crime and drink, their families disintegrate without the social and financial security taken for granted by the white communists. The Swiece family is prosperous, well dressed, socially active (Slovo is quite interestingly ambiguous about Rosa Swiece's expensive lifestyle and habits). Their black counterparts are poor, their child drifts into crime, becomes a murdering tsotsi thug. The Swieces, for all that they are communists, are relatively respected by the police and government; the blacks are brutalized and killed in jail, shot at in demonstrations against the government. The only occasion in South African history in which white demonstrators have been shot at was during the 1922 mineworkers strike, where the miners demonstrated under the historic banner: "Workers of the World Unite for a White South Africa." This episode, which forms a significant part of the narrative, helps the characters to formulate political positions. In the white world we are taken to cocktail and dinner parties, barmitzvahs, family celebrations, into all of which the ugly fact of apartheid drifts. The black world is activist politics and poverty and, for some, trying with much greater difficulty not to be political; to live apart from the world of resistance.

The two worlds are drawn together by symbiosis, hatred, guilt and love.

There is a third world in the novel which is less satisfactorily dealt with, and that is the world of Afrikaans South Africa. This novel continues one of the sorriest traditions of English South African fiction; that is the demonization of the the Afrikaners. One of the many episodes of cruelty in South African history is the farm labour scandal of the 1950s where the police provided farmers in the Transvaal highveld with black prisoners - more often than not men who had been arrested for Pass offenses - to work the farms. Too often the men, who usually did not come to trial, disappeared completely, murdered by the farmers or their black foremen and buried in mass graves on the farms. When it was exposed and investigated, when the conditions of slavery, deprivations, beatings, torture and murder were uncovered and charges were laid, even the notoriously callous white public - including Afrikaners - was appalled. Now it is indeed true that the vast majority of the farmers who used this labour were Afrikaans, but not all. At least one farmer charged at the time was Jewish, like the Swieces. The Afrikaners are represented in only one dimension, their culture and history grossly simplified. They are policemen who beat and murder blacks, or they are farmers who beat and murder blacks. This kind of simplification does nothing to help us understand and attack apartheid; it turns the struggle from a political and economic war into a war against evil with evil identified as Afrikaans civilization. This kind of thinking usually ends up vindicating extermination.

Yet this section of the novel that deals with the farmer labour abuses is one of many that succeeds largely because it is fascinating history. The fictionalization of that history throughout the novel is not always compelling fiction, but it is always fascinating history, and Slovo

represents it in full and interesting detail as she attempts to connect it to the lives of the South Africans she has created. She accurately recapitulates a story of increasing repression and resistance, until, towards the end of the novel, in 1988, government repression has become a huge juggernaut that knows only force, and resistance itself is falling into the hands of an angry unthinking black youth who see that the juggernaut must be stopped by any means. Finally, after a maladjusted growing up in England, Martha attempts to appease the spirit of her domineering and powerful mother by joining the ANC and going off to teach in their school in Africa. It is a somewhat artificial resolution to her con-

flict, but suggests that the reconciliation she makes with the memory of her father/mother is one of acknowledgement and submission to the politics that has always been a violently intrusive presence in her life.

A World Apart, with which this novel demands comparison, was successful because its confrontation with apartheid was personalized through the agency of the child. She saw apartheid and what it did, but she also saw that apartheid brutalized her parents, made them sacrifice their children for their politics. This novel's view of apartheid ranges too far from what the author seems to know or understand. Her accounts of the black family are sensi-

tive but distant, well meant but unfelt. The burden of feeling of the novel, like that of the film is the feeling of betrayal and resentment the heroine/author feels towards the parents who abandoned her by taking her to England, displacing her and not being able to compensate her. The trouble in part is that by the time the family gets to England Martha is no longer little. Her resentments seem petty, her hatred for her mother merely unfortunate, and her propensity to blame it all on apartheid a little petulant. Joining the ANC in the last chapter is a nice idea, but it isn't a real explanation or resolution. It is an imitation of her mother and father with the motive missing.

Readers' Forum....

"The I Love Lucy (sic) Show" Revisited



27 August 1990

Your account of the Taking Strides Forum certainly is provocative as I'm sure you intended it to be. While there are aspects of the account that I agree with and observations that I have also made, overall I am disappointed with it as a contribution to the ongoing discussion on how we improve solidarity work in Canada.

I think the account relied too much on gossip and supposition. I think that, uncharacteristically of *SAR*, the article lacked a broad, independent and thoughtful analysis,

dwelling as it did on small incidents, private comments, speculation and frankly, some worn-out assumptions about the nature of Canadian solidarity work.

The points about "behind the scenes manoeuvrings" and admissions in "private conversation" were blown out of proportion. Yes, there were private conversations and decisions made by the Steering Committee that everyone in the movement did not know about, but these could not be considered intentionally deceptive or covert. If anything, I think some key actors were too consultative in that basic issues were brought to the Steering Committee that I thought were obvious or agreed to by the Inter Agency Working Group on Southern Africa (IAWGSA) as a whole. For example, the issue of a background paper on Southern Africa and whether or not resource people were needed were brought to conference calls. The Committee was adamant that decisions be made by the group and representatives on the Committee

were consulted regularly and frequently. Under the circumstances (extremely short preparation period, amorphous constituency, limited resources, ideological diversity, alternative policy vacuum) I think the Committee did a good job.

The reference to the "NGO-dominated IAWGSA" is unwarranted as it should be clear to most people that the IAWGSA, as a body of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), is by design NGO dominated. The Steering Committee for the Forum was set up to broaden representation, but within the constraints of funding and logistics. I don't think anyone felt this body was democratically representative, but it was as honestly representative as possible considering the movement itself has been unable to set up a democratic forum. Small references like this one, coupled to references like "Ottawa-centric", to me indicate remnants of worn-out polarizations to characterize the strug-

gles within the solidarity movement when a more critical analysis of ideological differences is needed. From my point of view, I thought the major NGOs played too passive a role in the Forum, not a manipulative one, covertly or overtly. I think the solidarity movement has been torn apart by the same polarities that Canada as a whole is struggling with (French/English, east/west, aboriginal/white, urban/rural, industrial/agrarian, populist/socialist). To make reference to simple historical tensions only exacerbates those tensions and does not help us critically understand what we should do next to build our commitment and support for South Africans fighting for democracy.

Therefore, I think your criticisms and conclusions of the Forum are worth discussing but I don't think they offer much direction or suggestions for action. For example, while I think the anti-apartheid movement is being somewhat domesticated and tamed, I don't think it is because of a few individuals. I think part of the problem lies with the movement itself that has not provided a collective leadership but has tolerated individuals who dominate a period or situation. And I think the responsibility for this rests on everyone's shoulders, including yours. We have not sought consensus, we have not confronted the ideological differences and we have, therefore, not set a common platform for solidarity. Just recall how we handled the doubts raised about unilateral support for the ANC and the efforts to work inside South Africa in the early 1980s - both were discredited rather than considered fodder for constructive debate and strategic planning.

Your criticism of the lack of a Canadian commentary to open the Forum is important and valid. Without the movement's voice at that point, the whole Forum was left with a critical disequilibrium. However, I disagree with your assessment that a critique of or challenge to Canadian government policy should

have been the focus of this commentary. Rather I think we should have had someone challenge us, the anti-apartheid movement, on how to find a new and appropriate overall strategy that could parallel what is happening in South Africa.

I also disagree why this omission happened, i.e., the influence of key individuals, funding ties to the government, ANC control and an Ottawa centric nature. While all of these points played a part, a key problem, I think, was the history of ideological division that has not been openly articulated and confronted within the movement and which created a situation for the Steering Committee that was operationally volatile. The Committee discussed having a speaker but we could not agree on a person (and therefore a position) that would not alienate some element of the movement. What eventually took place at the opening of the Forum was not due to conscious planning but rather the result of contending positions (within the Committee and the movement as a whole) without leadership for a strong alternative.

What I think was more fundamentally amiss for the Forum as a whole was the persistence of a now inappropriate political strategy for the movement. Instead of shifting strategy to one that is more sensitive to the rapidly and dynamically changing situation in South Africa, we maintained an approach that has worked in the past to some degree but which has also failed to bring the anti-apartheid movement together at previous attempts.

Basically, I think the approach in the past was based on an oppositional politic, where the focus was to oppose apartheid and thus to expose and dismantle oppression and racism. Alliances, for example, were thus built on what needed changing or dismantling. This meant that we treated Canadian government policy as a peripheral means to an end for the movement and more of a bother than a political opportunity.

Practically, there was an exclusiveness about the movement as only those groups and individuals openly against apartheid were trusted and included. Organizationally, there was some justification for centralized control and strategic coordination.

Without going into a lot of detail, what I think is needed now is a more visionary political strategy for the solidarity movement, that seeks to construct a democratic and non-racial society rather than merely hold this up as an ideal to rally support around. This strategy would admit some directional flexibility and the necessity of temporary alliances as a society in formation would constantly present new obstacles and opportunities for solidarity. This strategy could not be as tightly controlled and coordinated centrally as the resources are not available to do so and the nature of the struggle to be waged needs some diversity, flexibility and action on numerous fronts.

I therefore don't think your criticism of Ted Scott was constructive or appropriate. Like all of us he has his own views and ties. He has contributed a great deal to solidarity work in Canada and I don't agree that he solely should be criticised for his position on Canadian government policy when the anti-apartheid movement has not been able to offer a clear and firm direction on what should be done with the government. I think the Canadian government's position towards South Africa should be more assertive and critical but I fail to see how criticizing one individual for doing what he said he would do will advance our demands for firmer political support for the ANC and sanctions.

It seems to me that the Forum failed to significantly move the movement forward because its primary resolution, the setting up of a network, is conceptually and politically out of sync with the times. We set up a network without knowing what it is for and what it will do.

We set up a structure without funding and any inherent force to keep it alive. I suspect it will never get off the ground, not because of the devious intent of NGO types in Ottawa as you suggest, but because it doesn't have its own ideological or practical dynamism.

Yes, the idea for the network came from the Forum's group discussions, but it was not unanimously agreed to nor commonly understood. The network idea obviously has a practical ring to it and therefore has some validity, but without seriously discussing what is needed for the struggle in South Africa right now and plotting specific action first, the network becomes another bureaucratic structure in search of a *raison d'être*.

Just a word on the ANC - part of our past and current informal strategy has been unilateral support and to some degree blind adulation for the ANC. More appropriately, I think an independent solidarity movement is a more dynamic way of supporting the ANC as it creates a partnership of equals and focuses intellectual and material energies on structural needs rather than organizational ones. Therefore I tend to agree with your assessment of Moses Mayekiso's perspectives and how we

fell into a semantic debate with the ANC rather than dealing with substantive issues of democratization in SA. However, I don't agree that this was mainly due to the position of the ANC representatives in the Forum. The ANC representatives were working within the discourse of the moment that we all shared a responsibility for creating. They believed they were part of the movement as they were led to believe by previous meetings. The ANC reps were working according to their logistical needs and policies. I would also have liked Peter and Jabu to have offered different guidance and input, but I completely understand their actions and the position we put them in.

So I appreciate your critique of the Forum, as it was seriously flawed (and just to be clear, I accept some responsibility for the pedagogical and communication flaws). However, I don't think we did expose the complex issues around anti-apartheid work, but rather we were again disabled by them and tended to move in the direction that was organizationally easiest. Instead of tackling the hard requirements of how we actually support the ANC and what sanctions should be applied now and how (or even more important, what we do after sanctions

are lifted), we merely set up another organization. Instead of taking Moses's comments about the necessary democratization taking place in South Africa and how Canadians can support a civil society that is seeking ways of fitting with political structures, we talked about wording of a statement. Instead of critically analyzing how we could build on Canadian government policy towards SA (which was certainly built on the decades of solid solidarity work that the movement had done with Canadians) we continued to create dichotomies and focus criticism on our allies.

I still think we have the intellectual resources, commitment and solidarity experience to define a new strategy and that is where I would like to have seen SAR put its energy. If the network is going to function dynamically it will need to vitalize support from all our allies and creative leadership from those with vision on what needs to be done. I look forward to your next perspective on what we should do.

Dennis Lewycky
Ottawa

Ed. note: Our apologies to Ms. Lucie Edwards of the Department of External Affairs for our misspelling of her name.

Solidarity Forever?

An Outsider's Impression of the Canadian Anti-apartheid Movement

David Abrahams is a UDF activist attached to the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education at the University of the Western Cape. This letter comes following the month he spent in Canada working with TCLSAC. During that period, he worked as part of the facilitation team for a series of workshops analyzing current solidarity work in the Toronto area. His visit was financed by the South African Education Trust Fund.

July 1990

Images of Canada? To activists inside South Africa, the international

dimension of our struggle has always been a crucial one. It is one of the four pillars - along with the armed struggle, the political underground and mass mobilization. But it is also rather removed, seen as the responsibility of the ANC.

As someone not familiar with this site of struggle, it was certainly very refreshing to discover that the problems encountered in the solidarity movement are not fundamentally different to some of our own problems inside the country. Our main

task is to win as broad a layer as possible of people from all sections of South African society to the side of the liberation forces, led by the ANC. The main task of the solidarity movement is also about winning people over to support the struggle of the people of South Africa. This is a mammoth task in a country the size of Canada, where the government has a very clear agenda of its own. I struggled to find one major newspaper which had any clear idea of the real issues facing our people. The media was obsessed with the

theme of "black on black violence."

There were other familiar issues, including scarce resources and the day to day struggles of small, very committed groups to survive financially. I left Canada convinced that we give very little and expect a lot from the solidarity movement. I learned how very fortunate we are to have people fighting on our side all over the world. I also learned how selfish we are, because we have become so self-centred inside the country. We expect support and very seldom have or make time to support the struggles of others. Yet there are tens of thousands of people in Mozambique and Angola who have died so that we could be free.

When I left Canada I also left behind people like Jabu, Peter, Margie, Ish and others. They are compatriots but also political exiles, talking of "home" which some of them left in great haste as long as thirty years ago. Some have returned since then as visitors. With the "new climate" inside the country, they now face the painful decision about whether to return for good. Anybody who dares condemn them for not being able to make up their minds has no idea of what living in exile, in limbo, is all about. When we were together we spoke about "home." At the end of the visit I packed my bags and came home. For my compatriots, it is not that simple. I was in exile for six weeks - or so it felt with all the developments taking place inside the country. When I got back to South Africa I simply continued to struggle. I didn't have to rebuild my life after decades away. In Canada I learned not to pass judgment.

There were many things of the solidarity movement that impressed me. I visited a Toronto Board of Education workshop on South Africa. There I found Canadian school kids who could not only find South Africa on a map but also pose questions and suggest solutions to issues which did not differ much from what is being said inside the country. I

left feeling that not enough was being done to tap the enormous reservoir of interest among students, interest that is not likely to remain without nurture. The question of linkages between South African and Canadian students is very important. They are the future of the Canadian solidarity movement.

One impression of the solidarity movement, at least in Toronto where I was based, is the need for a much greater sense of cohesion and coordination. The disparate nature of the solidarity movement is a major drawback in its ability to chart effective action. Again, there are enormous practical difficulties in relation to this, distance being one of them.

The other issue that I think quite crucial for the solidarity movement to address is the relationship of the solidarity movement to the black community. The impression I got is that this relationship is quite a tenuous one. I do not think it is correct for me to speculate about the reasons for this apparent divide, but it is something that the solidarity movement needs to take quite seriously.

The "moment" in South Africa is fluid as never before. While in Canada I spoke as a UDF activist. Now I write as a fully-fledged member of the ANC. For most of us who have spent time all these years doing what we regarded as ANC work, it is simply a legal transition. But it is an important one! The task now is to translate the assumed mass support of the ANC into solid, well-organized branches. With this goes the difficult task of getting two essentially similar political organizations, the ANC and the UDF, into a coherent working relationship without duplicating structures and campaigns.

The terrain of struggle has shifted onto qualitatively different levels. One thing that is quite obvious is that South Africa is not enjoying the same type of coverage as before. Developments in Eastern Eu-

rope have seen to that. Secondly the international climate is changing rapidly in relation to the continued isolation of South Africa, at least on the political level. How exactly this affects the solidarity movement will be difficult to say.

For me, the increasing success of the De Klerk government in breaking out of its isolation and gaining sympathy from western government makes united solidarity action all the more necessary. As the process of negotiations deepens, the question of international pressure on the regime becomes crucial. After all, as Nelson Mandela has repeatedly stated, there is absolutely nothing to show that the movement away from apartheid has even begun, much less become irreversible. The question of international solidarity is thus crucial in fighting the notion of the permanence of changes which leaders like Thatcher and Mitterand have taken up. To us inside the country, it is very much a case of the struggle continuing. Apartheid is definitely still an issue, and the solidarity movement must continue to make this clear.

The last issue I want to touch on is the question of the implications of the Groote Schuur minute, especially where it affects the solidarity movement. This has special bearing on the sanctions campaign. The basic decision taken was that the ANC would not make further calls for the intensification of sanctions. In other words, existing sanctions would be maintained but no new sanctions would be called for. The logic behind this for the ANC is similar to what was being argued in Canada by solidarity activists, i.e. that a call for new sanctions was not likely to be very successful. All these issues mean much strategic thinking needs to be put into the questions and tasks facing the solidarity movement over the crucial months ahead.

David Abrahams
Cape Town

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