

Southern Africa REPORT

Vol. 7 No. 1

July 1991

"I Owe My Soul....."



-
- RESISTING ADJUSTMENT
IN MOZAMBIQUE:
The grassroots speaks up
-
- "DEEPER IN DEBT"
What are our alternatives?
-
- THE FRONTLINE STATES
IN THE NEW ERA
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
*The Ruth First Memorial
Lecture*
-

Squeezing Southern Africa

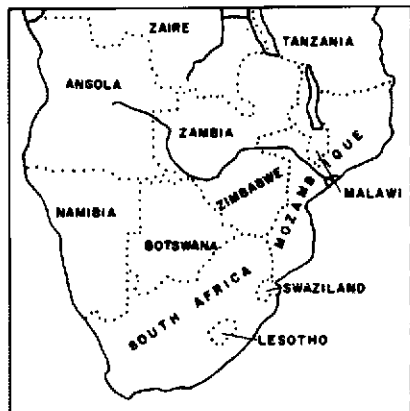
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REPORT

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Southern Africa REPORT

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427 Bloor St. W.
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SAR Collective

Lois Browne, Margie Bruun-Meyer,
David Cooke, David Galbraith, Lisa Horrocks,
Carole Houlihan, Mary MacNutt, Linzi Manicom,
Judith Marshall, Alberto Mourato, John S. Saul,
Lauren Swenarchuk, Joe Vise, Mary Vise

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Jason Laurre/Impact Visuals

“... To the Company Store”

*Angolan getting water;
oil pipeline in background*

“Apartheid isn’t dead, it just smells funny.” So runs the recent headline of a leading South African magazine. As is well known to *SAR* readers, the current “negotiations moment” is balked of fulfilment – by de Klerk’s intransigence and Buthelezi’s ruthlessness as well as by weaknesses of the ANC-centred popular movement that have stunted its ability to force the pace of transition to a non-racial democracy. Clearly, the onus is upon the anti-apartheid movement, in Canada and elsewhere, to keep alive a sense that the anti-apartheid struggle continues and that there is still much we must do, along the familiar lines of past solidarity work, to ease the process of apartheid’s overthrow.

Yet the truth is that, alongside the “moment” of negotiations, the people of southern Africa are also living the “post-apartheid moment.” Well before the corpse of institutionalized apartheid is laid to rest, they have become prey to powerful forces that seek to shape the region’s future in ways very different from any outcome hoped for by anti-apartheid activists over the years. The promise was that of a region at peace and able, at last, to plan a rational and humane pattern of social and eco-

nomonic development for itself. Instead we find, in southern Africa as elsewhere on the continent, a process of virtual *recolonization* to be afoot.

As John Loxley describes elsewhere in this issue, the underlying key is debt – itself a reflection of the imbalances at work in the global economy. It is this debt relationship that renders most national economies vulnerable to the dictate of powerful centralizing forces within the global capitalist system seeking to dictate domestic policies in their own interests. In southern Africa the linch pin to this system is the IMF/World Bank tandem and its “structural adjustment” packages, about which we have written previously in these pages. But as Loxley so eloquently argues, the global logic of the system has a way of capturing everyone everywhere within its net.

Thus, while most Canadians live much further up the global hierarchy than most southern Africans, Loxley demonstrates how the negative fall-out from “Free Trade” (and its related policies) in this country can also be traced back to the exactions of the larger system. Note carefully: there is a clear hint here for those who seek to find the terms for new relations of solidarity between Cana-

dians and southern Africans relevant to any new, post-apartheid era. We can and should be bound together around our mutual interrogation of a global system that is spinning out of our control, that is, in fact, controlling us.

In this context, the fortuitous circumstances that facilitated the forging of a broad anti-apartheid alliance in Canada and elsewhere – hostility to the crudely institutionalized system of naked racism in South Africa – begin to melt away. This is likely to be particularly the case as regards that rather surprising fellow-traveller of anti-apartheid activity of recent years, the Canadian government. Extreme racial inequality will continue to be reproduced “spontaneously” by “market forces” for many generations to come in South Africa unless dramatic action is taken to transform the socio-economic situation there. Yet, as Patrick Bond argues in this issue, the IMF/World Bank is already jockeying for position to preempt any such action. The pro-business agenda of the Mulroney government, bent, however slightly, out of round over South Africa, will now find itself fitting quite comfortably within such a global agenda for South Africa.

Indeed, the general trends within the Canadian foreign policy establishment seem likely to reinforce any such trend. Thus, the "Ministry of Foreign Affairs" that was headed by Joe Clark has now become the "The Ministry of External Affairs and International Trade Canada" under Barbara McDougall! This is the same McDougall who left her previous Employment and Immigration portfolio with a shocking backlog of refugee cases. Even more sinister, insiders suggest, is the fact her new external affairs and international affairs brief overlaps so closely with the Trade and Industry portfolio headed by Michael Wilson - architect, via free trade and the Goods and Services Tax (GST), of Canada's very own "structural adjustment" programme.

Another indication of the increasing stamp of a corporate agenda on Canadian foreign policy-making institutions is the April axing of the "CIDA Special Programs Branch." This branch of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was distinct from the bilateral programming undertakings and enabled ordinary Canadians, through their churches, unions, cooperatives and voluntary organizations to become involved in international development. It was marked by a rich diversity of local initiatives, with Canadian NGOs much respected internationally for the creativity of their programming. Now the "Special Programs Branch" is to be replaced by the "CIDA Business and Special Programs Branch."

The justification is budget cuts and a massive rationalization exercise within CIDA that is merging several departments. One notes, however, which branch is given precedence in the new department. Moreover, it is precisely this kind of "rationalization" exercise that led to CIDA's recently "adjusting" CUSO with a whopping \$875,000 budget cut and directives to leave co-operant and administration budgets intact while cutting back on programme budgets. Is it coinci-

dental that this impacts directly - and negatively - on CUSO's current programme priority of support for labour and popular movement groups from southern Africa to Central America? For it is just such groups that are becoming most vocal, on the ground, in their resistance to structural adjustment.

Resistance to structural adjustment. This is another central theme the current issue highlights, notably in Judith Marshall's account of the forces forming within Mozambique's new, more pluralistic "civil society," that seek to keep the concerns of the poorest of the poor on the agenda in that country. There is promise here, promise also to be heard in the voice of Morgan Tsvangirai, the Zimbabwean trade unionist we interview here, and in the voices of the many groups - unions, civics, women's organizations and the like - within South Africa's own civil society that seek to resist a mere recolonization of South Africa in the post-apartheid round.

We return by this route to the challenge such trends present to the anti-apartheid/southern Africa solidarity network. How can we make our support to those struggling for genuine transformation in southern Africa most relevant in the next round? Some, motivated primarily by their (admirable but limited) distaste for institutionalized racism will merely melt away - or, at their best, find more pressing fronts for humane endeavour in other spheres. Others seem more likely to stay the course. Thus, within the Canadian churches there are those who seek to challenge the premises of "recolonization." Witness the recent brief of the Taskforce on Churches and Corporate Responsibility to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade: "For a century church missions provided health care and basic education in many parts of Africa. With independence, African governments appropriately took over these functions. Fifteen years later, after the debt crisis and structural adjustment, de-

velopment agencies in Canada (including the churches) are receiving increasing requests from these countries to provide aid (medicine, school supplies, food supplements) and Canadian personnel to replace services and jobs which have been provided by their government. In the churches' view this is a deplorable step backward towards a former era of charity on the one hand and dependence and loss of sovereignty on the other. As such, it is a very sorry outcome for two decades of development."

Mere charity is no long-term answer, then. Solidarity and mutual empowerment - of the kind CIDA, apparently, now eschews supporting! - are more likely to yield results. Clearly, the authors of such a church document are continuing partners within a solidarity network that retains a critical agenda relevant to the new situation. At TCLSAC we, too, are seeking to innovate, working to build what we call a North-South-South network on "Participatory Democracy and Sustainable Development" that promotes exchanges of people, information and strategies among 10 organizations, also committed to raising probing questions regarding the current conjuncture, in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania and Zambia.

This North-South-South network has already begun to popularize information, both in Canada and southern Africa, around broad themes like debt and structural adjustment, gender, environment, democratization and the links between NGOs, state and popular movements; we also look to helping organize a workshop, in southern Africa and amongst the various partners, in the near future.

Needless to say, we will keep readers informed about these and other new initiatives tailored to the imperatives of the new moment. For they are amongst the concrete ways in which the struggle, at home and abroad, really will continue.

Resisting Adjustment in Mozambique: The Grassroots Speaks Up

BY JUDITH MARSHALL

Judith Marshall, a member of the SAR editorial group, has worked for many years in Mozambique.

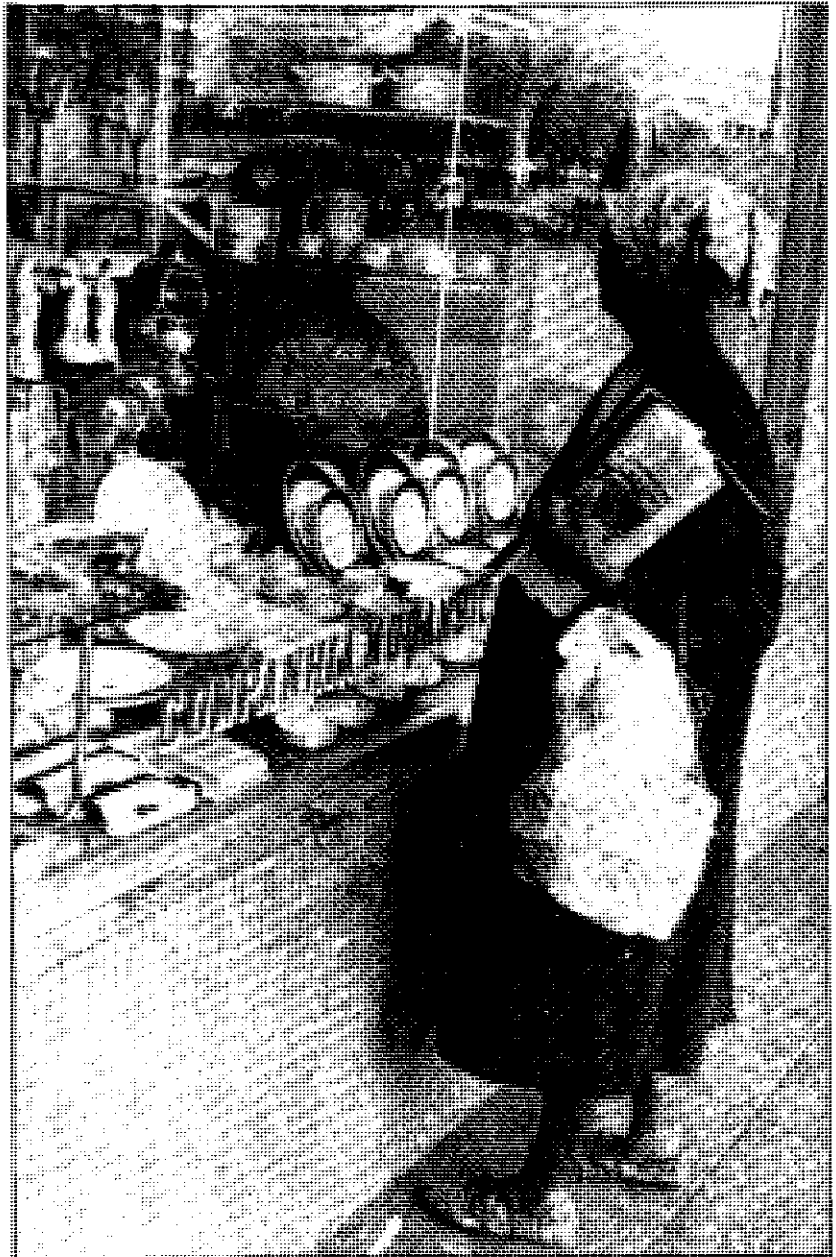
They say that the economy is recovering – but the damages that this entails ... Economic growth implies thousands of children dead, countless families without any means for supporting their children.

Samuel Machava,
Mozambique Christian Council,
August 1990

By the mid-1980s, Mozambique, like many of its African neighbours, faced a full-fledged economic collapse. Real production had fallen by a startling 37 percent between 1981 and 1985, amidst widespread shortages and inflation, acute foreign exchange problems and a government budget which could not be balanced. Exports going into the second half of the decade stood at \$80 million, less than a third of their 1980 level and less than 20 percent of total imports. Imports stood at \$450 million, down by half from 1981 levels. The balance of payments deficit topped \$400 million.

From 1982 on, virtually all foreign exchange earnings were spent in servicing Mozambique's foreign debt. By 1987, the debt stood at about \$3.2 billion, including arrears on debt payment totalling \$1.4 billion.

The Mozambican government unveiled an orthodox structural adjustment programme in early 1987, culminating four years of complex discussions with donor community members and the IMF/World Bank. The shock tactics included a first devaluation from 40 meticaís (MT) to 200 MT to the US dollar and subsequent devaluations up to the



Maputo shop full of goods as a result of the PRE. Can this woman afford these goods?

Antonio Muchave/AIM

current exchange rate of 1012 MT. Other features included liberalization of imports, privatization, cuts in public sector spending, active procurement of foreign investment and deregulation. Lip service was paid to social dimensions without effective programmes being established to cushion the impact, notwithstanding the prolonged war of destabilization carried out by the apartheid regime which had Mozambicans placing first on an international index of human suffering.

Economic recovery for whom?

Most Mozambicans found themselves cumulatively poorer as the first Economic Recovery Programme (PRE) unfolded from 1987-1989. They hold little optimism for the Socio-Economic Recovery Programme initiated in 1990. The demoralization is the greater on hearing that first calculations of the 1990 economic growth rate suggest it will be about one percent, after three years of four percent growth. Ordinary citizens now contend with poverty, social degradation and a spiralling level of violence in home, community and workplace.

Popular reaction to the PRE has shifted from initial relief to anger at the growing impoverishment. Joaquim Tembe, a Maputo literacy tutor, felt in August 1987 that things had become better. Before the PRE the shops were empty. "Now I know that if I save up for six months, I can buy a pair of shoes for my son ..." A year later, in July 1988, Amisse Balanca, a primary school teacher who had fled to Nampula when RENAMO ravaged his district in Zambezia, used 18 months of back pay to buy a mud-brick house. "The house was very expensive. Everybody blames it on the PRE." By the June 1989 Frelimo Party conference, a Maputo factory worker asked caustically: "When they put prices up on May Day, are they inciting workers to strike?"

In August 1990, conversations with Maputo factory workers like Julieta Estevão, a single parent,

pointed to a complete breakdown of the social fabric. Impoverished workers had to contend not only with rising food prices and new fees for health and education but also with survival scams of fellow-workers.

It's hard to keep the children in school. There are fees of 6,000 meticals per semester. The books are not a difficulty ... The hard thing is the notes that come home with an amount written on them that the children must pay ... We the parents don't trust what is happening. What is this money being used for? But we pay it. If not, our children are prohibited from the classroom.

By 1990, workers at CIM, a major food complex in Maputo were spending half their pay on a food basket lasting only until mid-month. Alexandre Mondlane had worked for CIM for 12 years and still earned the minimum wage for loading sacks of flour onto delivery trucks for the city bakeries. Mondlane lived with his household of 11 on the city outskirts.

The main problem is food - food and clothing. A person eats badly, sleeps badly, dresses badly. In the house the blankets are poor, the beds are falling apart. With my 28,000 MT take-home I have to eat poorly to have money for clothes for the children ... The rations alone cost 15,000 MT. You can spend 10,500 on products and 2,600 on lunches at the factory. A person has to hustle. Women sell charcoal to have a sauce to go with the maize porridge. One sack of coal costs 10,000 MT. You have to scavenge outside the city. And outside the city there's war. Because of it we don't go to the farm any more. No cassava, no greens, no firewood, nothing.

The word at the grass roots is that the PRE brought to the cities the suffering that RENAMO created in the rural areas. There has been a return to the disparities between privileged and impoverished so well known in the colonial era. The Economic Recovery Programme, PRE, is seen to go hand in hand with what

people ironically call the "PRI," the *individual* recovery programme. A small group of traders, larger farmers, private entrepreneurs and officials in state and military structures are visibly prospering. One Nampula trading family with new interests in Maputo and Inhambane provinces and a trucking fleet travelling regularly to Swaziland and South Africa indicated that they had earned more profit in the first two years of the PRE than in the entire previous decade.

In the cooperatives and literacy centres, there are jokes about the frequent messages to "tighten your belts." Belt-tightening is all too real for urban workers - there were complaint voiced at the OTM Congress that workers would break in two if they tightened their belts any more. It has another meaning for peasants producers, for whom a "belt" is more likely to be a string holding up pants from used clothing distributions. The belt adjustment of increasing concern to those at the bottom, however, is the belt-loosening going on at the top, where expanding girth seems often to be a mark of "PRI" status.

Crossing the riot threshold

Early 1990 saw a wave of strike action throughout the country, with significant groups of workers out in all of the major cities. Workers at Tempo Magazine and at the steel rolling mill, CIFEL, were the first to strike. By January, strikes had spread to the railways, the bus companies, Maputo Central Hospital, the Maputo City Council and APIE, the state housing authority. Workers in glass, tire and textile factories also went out on strike. By late January, health workers and construction workers in Beira, bus drivers in Nampula and coal miners in Moatize in northern Tete province had joined their southern colleagues. As the school year began in mid-February, school teachers also decided to strike for improved wages and working conditions.

structural adjustment

As each group went out on strike, adding its particular demands to the general plea for higher wages, the weakness of management structures became highly visible. Railway workers demanded back wages already two years in arrears. School teachers demanded full payment (\$30 per month) for teaching a second class of 50 children instead of the 60 percent being paid. Health workers demanded pay for over-time and week-end shifts. Workers complained that new pay scales linked to professional career categories and job classifications had not been implemented. They plaintively observed that while price or fee increases were implemented immediately, wage increases suffered indefinite delays.

The first wave of strikes were peaceful with two exceptions. Health workers shocked even fellow-workers with their disregard for maintaining vital services, resulting in deaths of intensive care patients.

Riot police were sent in to attack a peaceful teachers' demonstration. Indeed the teachers are still bitter about this and, like the health workers, have begun to operate on a virtual slowdown, albeit not formalized as a tactic. National Teachers' Organization officials drew my attention to the article and photos on riot police attacking teachers in their new journal, "so our provincial members really know what happened."

Manuel Golias, National Director of Education, spoke forthrightly of the deep resentment felt by the teachers. According to Golias, a typical teacher saw it this way. "We were forced to become teachers. We are poorly paid. We organized a peaceful demonstration. They beat us up. Only administrative responses. The lack of respect for us is total." Golias estimated that by 1991, most Maputo teachers would earn five times more from private tutoring than from their monthly salaries, and even then have diffi-

culties paying food, rent, water and electricity bills.

Civil society in the making?

The shifting configuration of power and privilege has clearly opened up new spaces of action for business and related interests. Creation of an enabling environment for the newly espoused private sector and market economy involves donor conditionalities around issues of governance. One of these conditionalities is political pluralism, with multi-party elections now firmly on the agenda. Autonomy is the watchword for business, labour, cooperatives, professional and women's organizations. New associations of all kinds are emerging, from development NGOs and housewives clubs to burial societies and a Rotary Club.

Ironically, these top-down pressures for political pluralism urged on by external dictates also create important new room for manoeuvre for organizations taking up the issues of the poor. Labour, cooper-



Striking teachers outside a Maputo secondary school, February 1990

structural adjustment

ative, community and professional organizations find themselves in a situation of new-found autonomy at the same time that they are being pushed from below to take up more militant positions.

The labour central, OTM, was until recently subordinated to party and state. It is now struggling to catch up with workers' demands. Its first official statement on the strikes affirmed the demands as "justified" and OTM took immediate action to produce a manual on strike and grievance procedures. OTM General Secretary for Maputo city, Alberto Sebastião, gave a press-conference in January 1990 pinpointing the PRE as a central factor.

At the start of the PRE, the workers were able to express their concerns in an organized way through the correct channels ... but they received no satisfactory response from the relevant authorities ... from this experience workers drew the conclusions that the methods recommended by the Frelimo Party "don't work and don't bring solutions."

(AIM - 16/1/90)

Government response to the strikes seems to have been one of surprise, although senior government officials have quickly made the link between the PRE and the PRI. Veteran Frelimo leader Sergio Vieira, now directing the Centre of African Studies, commented during a debate on spreading corruption at the People's Assembly, just before the strikes began:

... when sacrifice and austerity are for everyone, then everyone is motivated - that was our experience in the past. But when a handful of people grab benefits for themselves by illegal means, then we lose confidence and motivation.

(AIM 18/12/89)

Labour leader Sebastião, when interviewed half a year later, expressed enormous concern over the situation of workers and how weak the labour movement was, without budget or staff to service work-

ers' needs even minimally. Strikes were ill-prepared, with no staff to work with locals to negotiate packages of demands with real substance. The wage and price study done by the OTM office in Maputo showed clearly the impossible economic conditions.

Between the war and acceptance of the IMF, our people are living by begging. ... There is widespread discontent and desperation. The strikes were not a political response but an economic response. The workers were fed up and needed an escape valve. Otherwise they would have exploded.

The final months of 1990 brought yet more strikes. Action by seasonal workers on sugar plantations near Beira resulted in both death and property damage. Other strikes included media workers, industrial workers at the foreign-owned Tudor battery company and public employees in state construction and bus companies. State bus company workers in Nampula rampaged and destroyed furniture with the decision to sack 126 of the 184 workers two months after resolution of a prolonged strike.

Other workers have resolved financial problems with direct action. Busworkers in Beira left without wages for four months took to pocketing fares without issuing tickets and refusing to provide change to entering passengers. Instructors at the teacher training college in Beira refused to release exam results until their foreign currency supplement was paid.

The second national OTM conference in November 1990 spent two full days debating the PRE. Clearly the emergence of autonomous trade unions adds a new dimension to the situation. As Sebastião had indicated a few months earlier:

It is now a moment of transformation. We [the OTM] emerged as part of the party. Now we have to speak with our own voice. Many of us are not ready. Now it is the market

that dictates. Managers take decisions and do everything. The OTM was not prepared for this. ... We need internal transformation within the organization.

With the riot threshold crossed, labour militance becomes a serious factor for structural adjustment managers.

Bottom-up pressures from peasants

Proponents of orthodox Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) claim shock tactics, including suppression of urban incomes, as standard medicine for getting an economy moving again. The remedy for agriculture is "getting the price right." PRE policies, however, show little signs of jump-starting agriculture. For one thing, peasant producers continue to flee from RENAMO terrorism in the countryside. Furthermore "getting the price right" in Mozambique, as elsewhere, is much more complicated than the structural adjustment pundits acknowledge. Even with significant price increases for cereals, the terms of trade for peasant producers continue to be very negative. In 1986, Nampula peasants needed 10.4 kilos of rice to buy a meter of cloth. That same meter of cloth cost 33 kilos of rice in 1988, two years into structural adjustment.

The network of Portuguese traders tucked away in remote rural localities during the colonial era supplied peasant producers with everything from seeds and sacks to needles and bicycle parts, with transport and storage thrown in. The state marketing board, AGRICOM, has certainly not replaced it. According to Cardoso Muendane, General Director of the food complex, CIM: *AGRICOM is totally discredited as a marketing structure, both in terms of rural producers needing a marketing mechanism and a buyer like CIM needing a steady source of raw materials ... AGRICOM does it all backwards, asking everybody to sell on credit, from the local producer on through district and*

structural adjustment

provincial structures. What we need is a marketing structure that can work with the rhythms of an agricultural province, with a chain of cash payments ready for the smallest producer with a few tins of maize through to the large trader.

The real constraints on peasant producers go well beyond market prices. A coherent family agriculture policy is needed that addresses broad issues of land, social organi-

cooperatives and the family sector had been abandoned in favour of big agro-industrial projects. Despite the Congress decision to reverse this policy, combined pressures of war and scarce economic resources have meant a *de facto* cooperative continuation of that neglect.

The contraction of the cooperative movement has left fewer, but potentially more viable, cooperatives. The most developed cooper-

Some people, arguing as ever that we are illiterate, incapable, ignorant and above all, almost all women, sum it up by saying that we don't know how to manage our property, our land. They say that with the PRE, what is important is private initiative. But there are many ways of developing private initiative. As poor people, we feel the need to unite and work together in cooperatives.

While the urbanites have no demonstrated capacity to organize agricultural production, they do bring formidable "know-how" and "know-who" in making land claims. Cooperatives functioning under the, until recently, little defined cooperative legislation, have had to hire lawyers to secure their land. In the Maputo area, the UGCAPM has urged family sector producers to organize into peasant associations and affiliate with it as a way of defending their land.

The cooperative movement, then, is emerging as an important force. In Maputo, the UGCAPM alone now has an impressive membership. There are also construction material cooperatives in Maputo city and active agricultural cooperatives in rural districts like Maracuene, near the capital.

In Nampula, the cooperatives have also taken on new life in recent years. The General Union of Agricultural Cooperatives (GUAC) now functions as a service agency, offering its 41 member cooperatives first claim to inputs like seeds and boots, credit, tractor and transport services. It also services the general public, a significant source of revenue. It has become a modest but real producer-controlled market force, offering prices competing favourably with private traders and the state marketing board.

Formal membership in the Nampula cooperatives was historically mainly male, with female labour remaining invisible. Women have now organized for independent membership and plot allocation. A new



Teachers march through Maputo for wage increases, 1 March 1990

zation and the gendered division of labour as well as technical questions of soils, seeds and storage.

By the late 1980s, there were bottom-up stirrings from peasants with revitalization of some of the already existing cooperatives and emergence of many new peasant associations. Cooperatives had been created from above in the late 1970s as part of a broader "socialize the countryside" policy. Few were able to withstand the difficult economic turns of the 1980s. Many existed in name only, coming together for sporadic distribution of inputs or to meet visiting delegations from one of the multiple party/state structures to which they were subordinated.

The critique of agricultural policy made during the Fourth Congress in 1983 stated clearly that

atives are in the urban and peri-urban areas of Mozambique's major cities. The support channelled to them from northern NGOs has been a factor in their development in recent years.

Land has become the central point of contestation in the new economic context of privatization. Urban cooperative and family sector producers have to fight hard to maintain their farms against the encroachment of an emerging urban business class. President Celina Cossa gave a strong warning at the 1990 Annual Assembly of the General Union of Agricultural and Livestock Cooperatives of Maputo (UGCAPM) that anyone trying to steal land from the cooperatives in the Maputo Green Zones would have a struggle on their hands.

method of preparing cassava flour has been introduced, resulting in growing sales of cassava breads and cakes on local markets. Peasant associations are forming in the city outskirts and seeking affiliation along with cooperatives still alive in Nampula's rural districts. GUAC president Jose Mussagy indicated his own commitment to the cooperatives saying, "I never dreamed I could be part of an organization like this, fighting to build something with others like myself."

Churches — a voice for social justice

If cooperatives and unions are emerging as important voices for the impoverished, so are the churches. They have taken up social action at community level and provide a significant voice in national debate. Since the early 1980s, they have undertaken emergency relief with the Christian Council, Caritas, the Lutheran World Federation and the national Islamic organization all registered as NGOs.

The international linkages of the churches have tended to draw them into networks debating vital questions from gender to war toys. In November 1990, for example, Southern African Protestant churches held a workshop on "Theology and Economics" in Maputo covering such topics as South African destabilization, the debt crisis and food shortages. Mozambican church leaders exchanged experiences with people like Jay Josie of the Zimbabwean Council of Churches who spoke of a "theology of oppression" and the highly negative role of the IMF and World Bank in perpetuating African underdevelopment.

Church leaders are also linking up with other citizen initiatives for community action. Denis Singulane, Bishop of the Anglican Church, is responsible for programming in the newly-formed Community Development Foundation. The Foundation is committed to "national solidarity" to support poverty-stricken rural and urban communities strug-

gling to improve their living standards. Headed by former Minister of Education, Graça Machel, the Foundation is also supported by other government leaders. At its opening seminar, Finance Minister Magid Osman indicated that the market economy towards which Mozambique was moving as a result of the PRE "does not guarantee harmonious economic and social development, much less social justice."

The churches, then, are strongly supporting the emerging civil society. Christian Council official Samuel Machava put it this way:

The promotion of Mozambican organizations is very positive. They are needed for the socio-economic development of the country. But this socio-economic development cannot be directed from above, dictated. There needs to be a space for the creative initiative of various groups without the state giving directives. These groups are good. There will be links of mutual aid emerging without any party orientation.

Dangers and openings

Clearly structural adjustment and its "conditionalities" have brought about profound social and political changes. The PRE has created conditions for the emergence of new social forces within civil society. The most visible is the new class of businessmen with a coterie of bureaucrats, technocrats and consultants alongside. Yet ironically, as we have seen, the PRE has also legitimized a multiplicity of new forces at workplace and community level. The IMF/World Bank's urgency to dismantle the role of the state is operative across the boards — and has included the promotion of autonomy for labour, cooperatives and community organizations whose agendas are shaped by pressures from below.

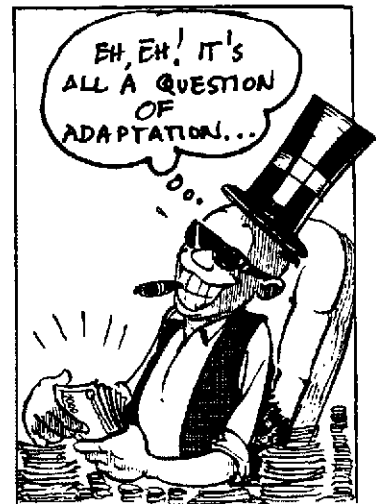
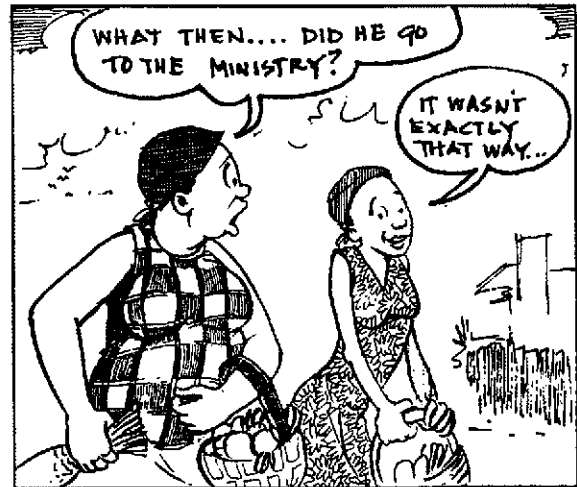
The fact that "civil society" cuts both ways creates a difficult terrain for those committed to a genuine process of democratization in Mozambique. They are faced not only with huge organizational tasks

on the ground. They also have to contend with the prevailing tendency to rewrite history. What was valuable in Mozambique's pre- and post-independence project of social justice and popular participation is being erased in conformity with a global script on the theme, "totalitarian regimes discover democracy."

This is not to side-step the fundamental weaknesses that did exist in Mozambique's earlier efforts of democratization. There were always strong tensions between Frelimo's promotion of decentralized institutions and programmes, on the one hand, and the perpetuation of the command style of the armed struggle (with the mass organizations as cheer leaders) on the other. Democracy was premised on "collective" definitions — "people's power" or a "worker-peasant alliance." But this remained a somewhat amorphous, at times even dangerous, group concept without a strong commitment to individual rights or political pluralism. The seemingly endless war of destabilization and economic collapse in the 1980s exacerbated the centralizing tendencies and command style even more.

A new context for democratic practice may now exist in Mozambique. The challenge of the 1990s for the most popularly rooted expressions of the new "civil society" is to find ways to operate effectively in this new context. How can they establish a genuinely democratic practice as they tackle the awesomely difficult problems of their workplace and community constituencies? How do they fight back against emerging interests whose constituencies are much more narrowly defined in terms of power and class privilege?

As we have seen, these are the kinds of questions popularly-based organizations are beginning to pose for themselves. The challenge for labour and social movements outside of Mozambique is to find creative ways to interact in solidarity with them as they find the answers.



"Deeper in Debt" What Are Our Alternatives?

BY JOHN LOXLEY

John Loxley chairs the Department of Economics at the University of Manitoba. He has worked with many African governments in the negotiation of their structural adjustments strategies. This article is based on a February 1991 presentation made to TCLSAC members interested in the ABCs of debt and structural adjustment and how solidarity work for the 1990s might be shaped to take up these issues.

Structural adjustment is a new form of imperialism in Third World Countries. It consists of economic policy direction imposed on countries which turn to foreign loans and grants as a way of meeting their own economic crises.

Governments seek external resources to resolve their economic crises, for two main reasons. First, the inherited colonial and post-colonial structure of their economies creates a dependence on imported goods which can only be financed by foreign exchange. Second, a central feature of structural adjustment is the debt relationship. Assistance in meeting existing foreign debt servicing commitments is only forthcoming if governments agree to enter into further debt relations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and increasingly, the World Bank (WB). The conditions that are attached to lending policies of donor institutions define "structural adjustment."

The economic agenda is now externally directed in most of sub-Saharan Africa, with over 40 countries conditioned by the IMF/WB in sub-Saharan Africa since the early 1980s. While conditional lending has existed since the late 1960s, IMF conditionality is now more perva-

sive than previously. Even more intrusive and detailed is the recently added WB conditionality. The Bank usually demands several pages of conditions, with up to 20 conditions a page, as the price for providing structural adjustment loans. The large-scale reliance on the Fund and the Bank, along with the depth of intrusion, effectively undermine any semblance of national economic sovereignty, except in a very superficial sense.

Formally, of course, these countries themselves turn to the international financial institutions, enabling the outside agencies to argue, "They don't have to take these loans nor invite us in." But the crisis in Africa is so deep and the alternatives are so few that increasingly countries have been compelled into these agreements.

Why structural adjustment?

The main object of structural adjustment is to reintegrate the Third World countries into the global capitalist economy, but only within narrowly defined roles. It is not to turn Tanzania into another Japan which will compete with the US, but to return most African countries to the role of supplying primary products for the world market. Only a few exceptions, including South Africa, Zimbabwe, and some North African countries linked to the European Community, would have some opportunity for exporting manufactured goods.

A second object is to dismantle state control of the economy and reduce the role of the state; structural adjustment programmes are very market and private enterprise-oriented. In practice, however, there is some tension over the institution of these programmes. On the one

hand, they substitute the market for important levers of national control of the economy, such as state involvement in ownership of enterprises and state control over factors like prices, subsidies, licensing, exchange control and import control. On the other hand, the programmes need a fairly strong state to implement the reforms and recoup social service expenditures.

In the productive sector, productivity and profits are placed before welfare and people. The IMF and the Bank make the debatable case that it is only through such programmes that you can provide a good standard of living and jobs for people.

Debt – the real starting point

Since it is debt that is driving structural adjustment, dealing with the debt crisis would at least theoretically pose a number of economic options for countries. Countries are constrained by debt because for every dollar that sub-Saharan countries earn overseas, they spend from 25 cents to \$2 on debt servicing – Mozambique 200 cents on the dollar, Sudan and Zambia 100 cents each, Ghana 50 cents. Breaking or reducing the tie of debt would release resources for growth.

An obvious response is for countries to repudiate debt. This line has been argued by Nyerere and Castro – though Tanzania and Cuba meanwhile scrupulously paid their debts! Even though collective repudiation is not going to happen (since the leaders of countries like Zaire simply get bought off when the issue arises), it should always be placed on the table. This is so especially in light of conditions in Latin America, where refinancing of debts has been less generous than in Africa, and where

there is a very close relationship between debt servicing and the massive, measurable increase in poverty. Witness the increasing numbers of street kids in Brazil, death squads cleaning up the streets, and rising infant mortality rates. Taken together, debt servicing by Africa and South America removes \$100 billion a year in interest alone.

Another alternative is for donor countries to write down debt, a prin-

middle and high income developing countries and debt of the Export Development Corporation (EDC). Since the EDC credits are a tool for promoting Canadian exports, they represent commercial transactions. The government opposes writing off the loans of a commercial corporation since they would have to be subsidized and the practice would therefore set an undesirable example. Moreover, the banks would

The banks have already made provision for at least two thirds of the debt owed to them. Since 1990, under pressure from the US banking system and Citicorp, in particular, banks have moved to take some of their profits and build up a reserve which covers roughly two-thirds of that debt. They get tax write-offs for forty-five percent of that debt.

But significantly, the banks have not written down the debt after making the reserves and getting the tax breaks. The Brazilian debt and its servicing, for example, should have dropped by two-thirds. Instead, they are still charging Brazil 100 cents interest on the full debt outstanding. Done across the world, the \$100 billion worth of interest payments currently flowing out of the Third World would decline to \$33 billion, making a massive difference.

The banks have been able to cover themselves on all their loans, because there is no market mechanism at work. If bank debts were sold on the market, the market itself would have written down the debts to 30 cents on the dollar, as happened in the 1930s. At that time, when they went down to 15 cents or 10 cents, the governments themselves bought the debt because they could afford it. But that won't happen now because the banks and the monopolies don't allow it.

Repudiation with a human face

My own view on debt is that the most likely course of action is not collective repudiation but one that could be called conciliatory default. It could well become more common, and should be encouraged. This is default with a smile, whereby governments restrict the proportion of the export earnings they are going to pay in debt servicing. Started by Peru, followed by Nigeria and Zambia, it consists of saying, "We're not going to give more than 10 or 20 percent of export earnings for debt servicing." We should remember and perhaps return to a rule of thumb



ciple accepted by the UN over ten years ago. Canada has done some of this, at no real sacrifice, however, since there was no expectation that the money written down would be repaid. The Canadian policy has been to write off what used to be aid debt to the lowest income countries and to some of the middle income countries in the Caribbean. All new aid is in the form of loans rather than grants.

The debts that remain to the Government of Canada are loans to

pressure government not to support write-offs of commercial loans because it would otherwise set a precedent for the commercial banks.

But if the debt were written off, Third World countries could then alter their relationships with the international organizations if they wanted to, and other options might become feasible. In the meantime, we should remember that so far only \$5 billion of Africa's total \$220 billion debt has been written off.

structural adjustment

from some years ago that said that any country paying more than 20 percent of its export earnings in debt servicing had a massive problem.

The advantage of conciliatory default lies in debtors indicating to creditors that they recognize the debt commitment, yet restrict their payments to their ability to pay. Otherwise, lending countries tend to retaliate, for instance by cutting off foreign aid and new money.

The disadvantage is that you get creditors knocking on your door, sending over missions trying to get their money, which ties up a lot of government time. The difficulty for African governments is to choose who to pay. Obviously they might choose to pay those who look like they will be ready to give further assistance when needed. Alternatively, they might decide they are not going to get anything more from a country like the Soviet Union which is cutting off its aid. Or again, they may decide not to pay for arms shipments when there has been a change of government.

Are there effective alternatives?

Any consideration of alternatives must start by distancing itself from the present practice of externally imposed solutions. At present, technocrats are flown into countries in a series of missions. Ghana, for instance, has one or two missions a

week. Such intrusions involve the major sectors of the economy, from agriculture to industry, from the financial sector to mineral development to export promotion. This poses clearly then, the need to regain national sovereignty.

Second, there is the question of how the debt programmes are put together. Even alternative programmes tend to be developed by three or four senior politico-technocrats who do not answer to anyone, as happened in Ghana in 1983. This issue is linked to democratization and empowerment, which may include opening up the national power scene to multi-party systems and other ways of expressing views. It should also include empowerment at more local levels. In Grenada, for example, the budget was taken out to every small set of townships for debate.

A third issue is the kind of content that should be in these programmes. The starting point ought to be the programmes developed by African governments themselves, such as the African Alternative Programme adopted by African Ministers of Economic Planning and Finance in 1989. The AAF programme puts basic long-term development goals in the interests of the majority first. Servicing the foreign debt is not a primary goal to which everything else is submitted.

Hunger - the bottom line

Any alternative should start by tackling the major cause of death and suffering - lack of food. Some notion of food self-sufficiency should be central. This is the big thing missing in the IMF/WB programmes. They deal with food only indirectly. There is a logic to this. Food is not ignored. Their argument is that if countries get food prices "right" by allowing market forces to operate, then ultimately the "right" level of food will be produced. But if it takes any time at all to get the prices right, and if there are other non-price impediments to production, serious food shortages may result. The "right" price for food, at least in the short term, might be prohibitively expensive for the poor.

The food question has to be approached on a regional basis, not just as a national issue. There could, for instance, be cooperation between Zimbabwe and Mozambique, guaranteeing food security for Mozambique until it is self-sufficient. There is also the question of the best economic policy to help people produce their own food. The best access to consumption grows out of access to production. This means looking very carefully at the crucial factor of land-holding systems in Africa, which is intimately linked to access to food. And beyond that, it is necessary to look at technologies and support systems for peasant farm-



ing. When there are alternatives, it is important to analyze them and let people know they exist.

If the obstacles to food production are structural, as I believe they are, then there are other considerations. While price is important, the main obstacles concern the availability of land, the level of technology, and the demands made on family labour in peasant farming systems. The big weakness in WB programmes, even in countries trying to develop agricultural programmes, is their failure to address the complexities of the household labour system. Two major questions concerning the programmes are, who is to provide the necessary extra labour, and what is the gender impact?

Generating exports

Beyond food security, the second task facing African governments is to generate more exports, unless they are going to reduce their reliance on imports, a policy which can only be achieved over the long haul. Should they act as they are being encouraged to and abolish all barriers, letting world prices dictate what they produce? Or should they use state policy selectively and sensibly to examine and shape export opportunities?

In the case of southern Africa, one should look more at opportunities for exports within Africa than beyond the continent, and overcome the fragmentation of the last 100 years that has led to an outward orientation. The liberation of South Africa in particular opens up all kinds of opportunities for integrating Africa.

Expertise and social infrastructure

A central aim of any alternative programme should be to develop local expertise. This is in contrast to the current approach in which the expertise is brought in from the outside. An alternative programme should also focus on strengthening and improving policy in health, education and welfare, rather than compromising such services as orthodox struc-

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The IMF helps poor countries... to become poorer.

tural adjustment programmes often do.

Regional strategies

A key issue will be the unfolding relationship between South Africa and the neighbouring countries once South Africa is liberated. South Africa is so highly developed relative to the neighbouring countries that if an open market trading system with neighbours were simply adopted, it would probably wipe out most of Zimbabwean industry overnight, and a lot, but not all, of what remains in other countries.

The sensible approach is to be selective in developing commercial ties. Which South African products are very strong making it sensible for further specialization? For which products should South Africa promote production by its neighbours? Possibilities include integrating Angolan oil into South Africa and linking up coal deposits in Tanzania with Zambian heavy industry. In these ways, countries would specialize in certain commodities which South Africa would then buy. Some such linkages already exist.

Ultimately, almost all communications in southern Africa are go-

ing to have to be strengthened or built. One can see the possibility of creating new transport links East-West as well as North-South, of pipelines crossing from Angola to Tanzania and linking with the Tanzania-Zambia pipeline, or of extensions to the rail network and sea communications. These have been totally underdeveloped given the trading boycott.

Alternative adjustment programmes would need a long-term development commitment to enable this kind of integration. If that were made, the possibilities of cooperating, including in the areas of food, would be enormous. Such cooperation could greatly expand the possibilities that are open to countries in the region.

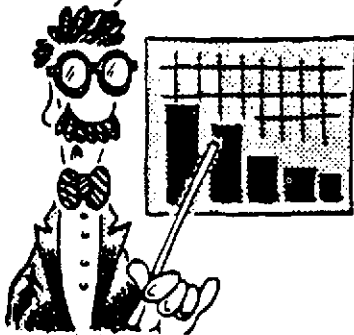
Structural adjustment globally

Structural adjustment in Africa is very much IMF/WB-directed. Meanwhile, in the rest of the world, structural adjustment is also taking place, following the logic of global capitalism. Canada is subject to it just as much as other countries are. Even though Canada is not under IMF/WB conditionality and is never likely to be, given the nature

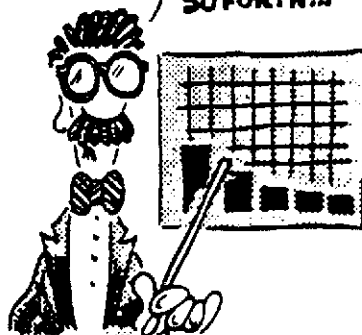
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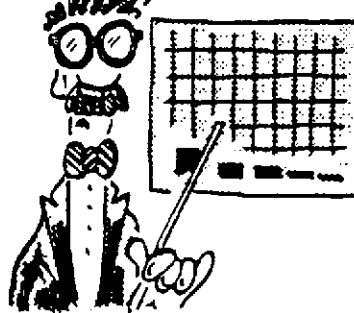
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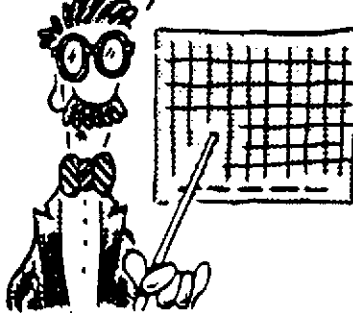
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...UNTIL WORKERS EVERYWHERE EARN NEXT TO NOTHING AND CAN'T AFFORD TO BUY THE PRODUCTS PRODUCED...



...THIS IS KNOWN AS FREE TRADE!!



*© HUCK
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of these institutions, we are nevertheless subject to pressures on the macro economic level from the IMF to deal more expeditiously with the budget deficit. Through the free trade agreement, we are also subject to pressures similar to those being put on a country like Zimbabwe at this point: pressures to open borders, to reduce tariffs and subsidies, and to engage in a "level playing field" against very strong competitors.

In Canada, it is not just the free trade agreement (FTA) that is at issue. The FTA, together with the government's economic policies of monetary restraint and a high

interest rate (also very typical of IMF conditionality) have led to a very high exchange rate on the dollar. This has undermined any ability there might have been to take advantage of the FTA.

In addition, the economy is being integrated globally through financial integration. We now have the dubious advantage of being associated with the world's biggest banking system, currently in a state of complete collapse. American banks are recognized to be technically bankrupt. This is a reflection not just of Third World debt but real estate and junk bond debt. Some of the biggest banks in the US are likely to fold

in the next twelve months. And this comes on top of the 500 billion dollars needed to bail out the savings and loan organizations. This is the banking system Canada has been integrated into, binding it more closely to the US.

The second stage of the FTA is now upon us, in many ways more important for the long term since it is likely to dismantle subsidies, marketing boards, and regional policy. The farming sector, in particular, is very exposed to being dismantled. One of the ironies of this movement to global competition is that it takes place within blocs, very unevenly. So while there is a powerful movement towards free trade, there is also the prospect of severe trade wars developing in fields like agriculture. And Canada, of course, is not protected from those just because we are close to the US. In fact quite the opposite. Canadian farming is under very severe attack, especially given the February 1991 budget which doubles the amount of money the US has available for subsidizing its grain exports.

Global integration and structural adjustment do not, then, create a uniform process that is driven by the market. There is a selective process at work, just as in the FTA. Through the FTA, the US allowed Canadian companies access to the US on the basis of very selective concessions. These were very significant concessions, however, like those on energy which mean that Canada can never again have a national energy policy. By going through the sectors we can see what was given up. It is an uneven process, but one moving towards affecting all aspects of the economy and the state.

Ideologically the movement towards the logic of structural adjustments and IMF kinds of policy imperatives is world-wide. There are identifiable trends in the Canadian economy along similar lines even without a formal IMF agreement. These include the movement towards privatization and the move-

structural adjustment

ment towards dismantling national economic and cultural institutions, in the name of privatization and the name of budget restraint. And we have a government that puts war before welfare. The cost of Oka, for example, for the Ministry of Defence was 60 million dollars. The cost of the Gulf war was between \$600 million and \$1 billion. Money for these expenditures is coming out of programmes throughout the country in health, education, welfare. It reflects a consistency of approach which puts concerns other than people's welfare first.

Finally I would argue that the majority of people in western Canada who opposed Meech Lake did so because they saw the agreement as the next step in dismantling the country by decentralizing power. This ultimately would have strengthened ties to the south rather than between east and west.

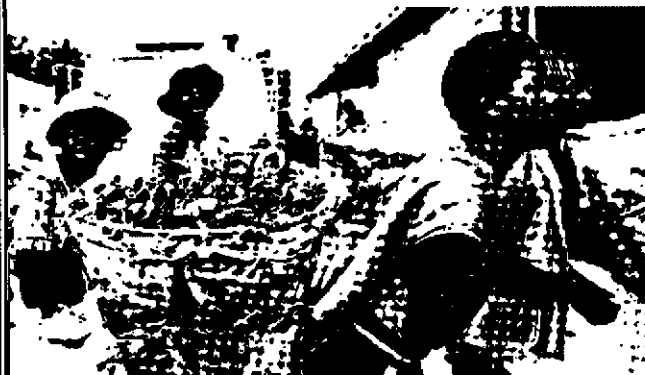
The danger for Canada is that the FTA might play a constraining role in limiting Canada's options similar to the role structural adjustment plays in the Third World. The FTA ties our hands, and will do so even more in the second phase of the

agreement. Third World countries have to deal with debt in order to get out from under it and we, somehow, have to come to terms with how to deal with free trade.

Structural adjustments, then, are also taking place in Canada, creating an economic agenda very similar to that you find in many Third World countries. Solidarity work in the 1990s could and should be centred around making those links, with labour and social movements sharing information and strategies for more effective ways to fight back amidst these global changes.

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“What We Need Is Mass Action” Zimbabwean Trade Unionist Interviewed

We have reported on structural adjustment in Zimbabwe in a previous issue (Lionel Cliffe, “Were they pushed or did they jump: Zimbabwe and the World Bank,” SAR, vol. 6 no. 4, March 1991). To obtain a Zimbabwean response to these developments, Patrick Bond recently interviewed Morgan Tsvangirai, General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).

Tsvangirai pinpointed problems of local mismanagement and misdirection of investment as contributing to the crisis that has spawned structural adjustment, but emphasized his union’s view that the whole orientation of the structural adjustment programme was askew. “Why have externally-oriented development rather than internally-oriented development?” he asked. There must be better ways to activate industries now running at 30% of capacity in a country where popular needs cry out to be met. Of course, he acknowledged, a key problem in kick-starting local manufacturing is lack of foreign currency and the amount of it required merely to pay off accumulated debts.

PB: Does the ZCTU have a position on foreign debt?

MT: The whole question needs a collective approach. One country alone is not able to defy this debt – it should be the whole Third World, which should make a collective decision. For example, no more than 5% of foreign currency earnings should go into debt servicing.

But you know what happens. It’s like workers – if one worker tries to do things on his own, that worker is smashed. And unless the countries are organized with a collective approach, there will not be progress.

PB: Why was that idea not discussed seriously by government officials during the 1980s?

MT: The Third World is very fragmented. There is a tendency to have individual considerations. At the time of Zimbabwe’s leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement (1986-89), this was our worst period for debt servicing. We paid 35% of our foreign exchange earnings to the banks. But the government’s priorities of that time were misplaced, so we missed the opportunity to lead the Third World.

PB: Is there an alliance of sorts here between the government and international finance? Finance Minister Bernard Chidzero seems to be the glue of such an alliance.

MT: Chidzero is the key to making sure these issues are not taken up, from a Third World point of view. He’s heavily linked to international finance capital. I think what he has done in this country is to ensure that debts are repaid, that Zimbabwe’s credit rating is very high, at the expense of meeting our internal needs. There is a linkage between the neo-colonial state and international finance.

Chidzero has not been targeted yet because our impression is that politically, he did not have much influence. But he has now gained leadership, because of the economic problems. The political powers in Zanu (PF) cannot challenge him, because they do not have those skills.

Earlier, if Chidzero had advocated that the government should be cut by a quarter, the president would not even have listened to him. But at this time he has the clout to

tell the president that if you don’t do A, B, C, D, then this programme will collapse. And, he will say, you are already sitting on a time bomb, which is the unemployment crisis, which leads to greater popular discontent.

He has capitalized on that, and used it to make sure that the political arm of Zanu (PF) is cowed. So at this stage it seems he can dictate anything.

PB: Which sectors of the economy will be hurt by trade liberalization?

MT: I can foresee very serious devastation of the engineering sector. They are using old-fashioned equipment. You can also look at international competition in the clothing and textile sectors. Will we have enough foreign currency to refurbish these sectors? I don’t believe it.

PB: There are predictions of at least 20,000 lost jobs in industry. What will be the impact on organized labour?

MT: The labour movement has been weak, for various reasons. But the ZCTU will mobilize workers against some of the actions that will be taken. I’m going this whole month to address workers on the impact, to explain to workers these are the issues. It’s part of the programme of trying to institute some mass action, and it will assume different forms in different areas. Price increases, hoarding, shortages – these are the areas where we must educate and inform the workers.

But what we need is mass action. The government can do whatever it wants. But we believe that the workers are at that level of consciousness where if ZCTU engages in

structural adjustment

direct shopfloor contact, the labour movement has the capacity to deal with things through mass-based action. And that's what Chidzero is always afraid of, because he has not created a safety net.

PB: Now, he says that there will be Z\$20 million in a safety net fund.

MT: It's essential but it will be ineffective. The problem is that they are all rushing to something that is not there. They are raising people's hopes, and we know that they are not going to achieve it.

Already on the ground, the situation is very serious. Four or five months after introducing the programme, it is already having an impact. The lower-income urban families cannot afford basic things. People are moving back to rural areas. Sixty percent of the people are below the poverty line. In fact people are worse off, in terms of real income, than they were in 1980. When the subsidies are removed from education and health care, people will just go. We also have people facing tremendous shortage of housing. They are unable to afford stands, and there is a shortage of construction materials. At the end of the day, the Zimbabwe dollar has lost its value.

PB: Does labour have an alternative economic vision?

MT: There is, of course, the United Nations Economic Commission on Africa, which proposes to stop devaluation, and to have import controls to promote interregional trade, and to improve, or save, local industry. They call for serious cuts in defense, and this would cut a major foreign currency commitment.

There is also a need for targeted investment. As long as parastatals have political interference, there will not be efficiency of investment. We have suggested that the parastatals must have tripartite bodies running them, like we have got in the social security scheme, to stop this political interference and corruption.

If you look at investment priorities, has there been any major investment in production? You see the airport, the airlines, all at the expense of urban commuter transport, which would make the workers come to work earlier and be more productive, instead of waiting many hours for very poor transport.

PB: Do you have allies?

MT: What we are looking for in Zimbabwe is a democratic space. Because what is going to be sacrificed in this programme is democracy. When people go to the streets, complaining about these things, the state will be forced to use power to quell these riots, and in fact one of the ironies is that we are arming our own people – the police and the army – to turn against our people.

Who do we have as allies? The cooperatives are part of our movement. Intellectuals are important, and have helped our movement take a greater leap. Students are allies, though sometimes unreliable, depending on how the situation develops. But that alliance is very important. In 1989 the student movement and the workers movement created a very serious challenge. In Africa you must be very careful, because if you are seen as a movement that tries to topple the government, there will be trouble. The peasants are still on very shaky ground, but there is some linkage now with the peasant association. It will be necessary, in future, to have allies like peasants.

And there will be other marginalized sectors in the economy – the small businessmen, local industrialists – and we have been trying not to talk on an ideological basis but to talk about serving our interests, together. At the end of the day we become the marginalized group, because the government has put itself in a position so that it cannot take a stand against the IMF.

The only way to defend against international capital further marginalizing the indigenous busi-

nessman, the worker, the peasant, is to have all these groups together.

We cannot rely on the state-controlled media, because it's just a parrot. Anything the government says is the bible, and not properly analyzed. There is a need for greater information and coordination. People don't know what's happening.

So we have to go on this mass campaign to inform, educate and communicate with the workers. Things will be very crucial in two to three years time. The effects of structural adjustment will be devastating. Already there is a lot of disgruntlement amongst different classes, and this must be channelled into the proper political programme. There will not immediately be any flashpoints, you will have a lot of dropouts. The real flashpoint will be the combination of those social effects, and the declining standard of living, and unemployment. As everybody says, it is a timebomb.

PB: Looking south, what lessons do you have for South African workers, who may become increasingly subject to the World Bank and IMF as well?

MT: The first thing that international capital will do is to target the nationalist leadership, and coopt them one by one. At the end of the day, the whole of the leadership will have been coopted. The nationalists will only be your allies for a certain period. You must retain your independence, because the next thing is that you will have a petty bourgeois neo-colonial state, whose first target will be the trade unions.

The IMF and World Bank usually do not take a visible role, they use other forces. Once they have destroyed your sovereignty, your ability to resist international finance capital, they will come to you and say look you are in this mess, we can help you out of this mess. Once you are in the deep end, the IMF comes in and says we can bail you out, and that comes in the form of structural adjustment.

Selling Structural Adjustment in South Africa

BY PATRICK BOND

Patrick Bond is a South African development consultant and journalist, and the author of Commanding Heights and Community Control: New Economics for a New South Africa (Johannesburg, Ravan, April 1991).

While the International Monetary Fund continues its underhanded tradition of supporting the South African government, the World Bank is courting the democratic movement in what may be a unique approach to preselling structural adjustment. The ANC has adopted a "pragmatic" approach to both, consistent with its current low-key economic rhetoric. And during the Bank's April visit, union and community activists and some progressive researchers were also drawn into the path of this financial juggernaut.

How is the post-apartheid programme of the Bank and Fund shaping up, and what are the implications for the much-debated formation of a South African "social contract"?

These are very serious matters indeed, for it would not be hard to imagine, in a decade's time perhaps, enormous power exercised over the South African economy from Washington, DC. The Pentagon and CIA would relax, the buck having been passed to their neighbours at the Bank and the Fund.

Two recent Bank documents circulating in the democratic movement provide some hints, especially of the Bank's surprising (though not whole-hearted) capacity to draw from progressive ideas. One report covers the economy at large, while the other focuses on the "urban sector."

A "NIC" growth path?

Post-apartheid South Africa would ideally follow the classic Newly Industrializing Country model, though with a few substantial concessions to social contract formation. According to the Bank's national economic policy document ("South Africa: Post-Apartheid Economic Options"), Malaysia is apparently the country to emulate, with Argentina and Zimbabwe cited as rather more unbecoming prototypes. The low gold price and agricultural debt morass have put South Africa in a bind from which only manufactured exports can release it.

But to overcome the legacy of an inward-oriented industrial economy based on whites' consumables is an extremely thorny matter. Shoddy South African manufacturing products are decidedly uncompetitive in anything except cash-starved African markets, as even the South African Chamber of Business now concedes. And South Africa has one of the world's fastest growing – and militant – trade union movements.

"What is the role of industrial relations and the union movement in national economic policy and industrial restructuring?" the Bank asks frankly. The answer, it seems, is a centralized relationship between big business, big labour and big government along the lines of Sweden, Netherlands or Mexico. The reason: "because coordination may be necessary to manage the relationship between national wage and price adjustments and to avoid wage push from selected groups of workers."

In return for what will nearly certainly be a continued decline in workers' real wages, the Bank offers

Cosatu the important verdict that South African corporations are too capital-intensive (ie, too many machines relative to workers), which is certain to go down badly with businesses aiming for high-tech retooling. The Bank even slates, backhandedly, South Africa's big conglomerates for protectionism and monopolistic practices. And for the repressed black petty-bourgeoisie, the Bank has encouraging words.

Put it all together and, in theory, this may be a coherent approach to South Africa's problems, except that in practice at the micro level, the Bank programme will run into some big problems.

Housing and the cities

Judging by its solutions to the housing crisis, which is perhaps the country's single biggest development challenge, Bank concessions won't be enough to establish a beachhead for structural adjustment.

On the one hand, the Bank team is headed by a former South African Communist Party cadre and detainee (Geoff Lamb). So there is sensitivity to the fact that renowned South African *urban social movements* present a special threat to free market medicine and the stability of a capital-labour-state accord. This means that there may be other offers to the emerging national grouping of township civic associations, including an expanded state role in provision of urban housing and services.

These also have national (not merely local) economic implications, of course, because there is a consensus emerging between enlightened capital and the democratic movement around the need for an immediate post-apartheid mass housing programme to "kick-start" growth.

structural adjustment

How to pay for it? While visiting the Reserve Bank in April, even the Bank's urban team was reportedly concerned at the brazen Chris Stals' suggestion that several billion dollars should be borrowed from abroad – even though the import content of cheap housing here is close to zero. (Stals, who is South Africa Reserve Bank Governor, wants the cash to guard against balance of payments problems.)

Such deals are regular Bank practice, but it seems care is be-

ing taken at this stage in acceding to the ANC's official view "that the main emphasis on financing the reconstruction should be placed on domestic resources."

However, expect the Bank to give with one hand and take with the other. Its huge urban *Aide Memoire* assails Pretoria's brand new R750 million subsidy for site-and-service provision, from both the left (opposition to possible developer profiteering) and the right: "Proposed levels of subsidies and the standards

associated with them, appear to be higher than would be desirable if the goal is to reach the broadest population of eligible households." This leads the Bank to clamour for a reevaluation of the site-and-service scheme.

The South African left, meanwhile, argues quite reasonably that the R7,500 per person subsidy is profoundly flawed because its requirements for site servicing are too low, not too high (they don't include electricity, for example, in

Financial Sanctions: Still Intact?

Before the Bank and IMF can move their programme from the drawing board to implementation, the most important short-term barrier – "financial sanctions" imposed on the Bank and Fund by the US Congress – must be removed. The Bank seems to have few qualms about waiting, since there is an enormous amount of work still to be done in persuading the right parties to sign up.

The IMF is another matter. M.D. Michel Camdessus paid a visit here during his February southern Africa tour, met with ANC officials, yet still gave his staff the go-ahead to help the South African Finance Ministry design its regressive Value Added Tax. And last October a Fund team warmly endorsed the regime's current hard-core strategy of monetarism and export-orientation, to the glee of big business. Ironically, it is only a dated amendment by right-wing US Senator Phil Gramm that today prevents the IMF from a renewed lending engagement with South Africa.

The IMF's record on apartheid is a dreadful embarrassment. Its US\$1.1 billion no-strings-attached loan in 1982, supported by the US, Canada and Europe, followed loans of several hundred million dollars in the immediate wake of the 1976 Soweto uprising. "The IMF played an important role in supporting the apartheid state in times of political uncertainty," says University of Durhan-Westville economist Vishnu Padayachee.

South Africa Reserve Bank Governor Chris Stals, who successfully beat back an intense ANC-led financial sanctions drive in October 1989, makes no secret of his desire to borrow US\$6 billion from the IMF. This enormous sum is necessary, even in the short-term, in order to phase out the "financial rand" (the cut-rate currency Pretoria uses in many foreign exchange deals in order to discourage disinvestment), which would allegedly entice back foreign corporations. Thankfully, the ANC seems to retain enough international clout to veto this prior to a political transition.

Indeed, earlier this year, the ANC reiterated its position that "the most efficient and practical means of bringing international pressure to bear on the South African economy today is to focus our campaign on the maintenance and tightening of financial sanctions on loans and credits, while not abandoning the other areas."

The US Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union took heed of this in April, and in a short, sharp campaign aimed at mighty J. P. Morgan via the Massachusetts legislature, forced the US's most secure big bank to terminate its primary South Africa business.

Morgan was a co-founder of Anglo American Corporation in 1917, a faithful lender until the 1985 debt crisis, and the major player in the US\$1 billion New York market of South African stocks. In order to remain eligible to underwrite Massachusetts bonds, Morgan sheepishly announced its "deference to sincere and strongly held views on a uniquely sensitive issue," and no longer will touch the stocks. The campaign, which occurred just as De Klerk was lining up bank support during his European tour, demonstrates again the vulnerability of even the world's biggest financial institutions to concerted pressure.

And early last month, the Washington-based Investor Responsibility Research Centre reported that 84 anti-South Africa shareholder resolutions were put to US corporate annual meetings in 1991 by progressive religious activists and local pension fund officials, attracting record support. The strongest support was registered for resolutions calling on banks to sever ties with South Africa.

But beyond the US, whether the international anti-apartheid movement still has the gumption to monitor the activities of financiers, – as was done so well in the mid- and late-1980s – is not clear. This is a crucial matter, for the spectre of running up against financial sanctions is a key reason the Bank and IMF have not yet fully cemented what would otherwise be a pernicious relationship with the present regime.



Inside a house in Gugulethu Township, Cape Town

spite of the state electricity corporation's (Eskom's) huge *overcapacity* problem). The Bank is seeking much more rudimentary self-help housing, which as an answer to the immediate 2-3 million unit shortage in South Africa is all too reminiscent of Latin American examples aimed at lowering the cost of reproduction of labour power.

In South Africa, existing "self-help schemes" also serve as a basis for removing urban problems to a new set of wretched dumping grounds long distances from cities, because that is where land is available – and how apartheid geography is logically extended. This the Bank says it doesn't want to see happen, but words come cheap, and inner-city land is dear.

Apartheid and socialism

At slightly higher income levels (above US\$400 per month), the

Bank turns to market-oriented financing of housing via the big banks and building societies. It is in promoting this so-far fruitless strategy (new township lending has all but dried up) that the Bank is capable of a serious ideological slip-up:

One of the most evident features of housing policies for non-whites (sic) in South Africa has been their resemblance to the housing policies of the command economies of Eastern Europe and other socialist countries. In such countries, an ironic consequence of the determination that housing was a "right" rather than a commodity, and, as such, a product confined to the "non-material" and "non-productive" sphere of economic activity was that housing markets were not permitted to develop.

This is a tactless, clumsy, and perhaps self-destructive metaphor,

since, after all, the very forces the Bank most needs to win to its side will take greatest exception to the faddish neo-conservative equation of apartheid and socialism.

Township civic associations and trade unions generally take seriously the maxim "housing is a right," and vapid lectures from well-paid Washington technocrats won't change that.

Conciliation or circumspection?

Such mistakes will be the exception, though. Complains University of Durban-Westville economist Vishnu Padayachee, "The more liberal reconnaissance personnel who are likely to have been sent to South Africa, are extremely sophisticated proponents of their art. They will paint a picture of the kind of assistance they can render that will not convey any sense of the potential costs and dangers."

The brutal costs of structural adjustment are self-evident to tens of thousands of exiles now coming home from independent Africa. Add to this the fact that no other progressive force in history has so successfully challenged international financial capital to behave in a constructive manner (ie, the sanctions pressure applied to Pretoria in the late 1980s). Thus the World Bank – whose ultimate loyalties are as policeman and debt collector for New York, London and Tokyo financiers – should logically be the subject of intense hostility.

But do the current round of exploratory talks between the Bank and democratic movement signal a mood of conciliation with this potentially lethal institution? Under pressure of repaying the US\$20 billion apartheid debt, will the movement drop the most heart-felt Freedom Charter demands? Could a quick delinking be organized at the first sign of external financial interference?

Few argue for disengagement at this stage, but, warns Padayachee, "the liberation movement has begun these critical discussions without adequate preparation, and without clear understanding of the dangers of IMF and World Bank intervention."

If there is a path through the financial fog, it may be treaded first by Ben Turok's Institute for African Alternatives, which has a new Johannesburg office. IFAA is hosting a major conference on the Bank and IMF in Soweto this month. And a variety of other strategic discussions within the democratic movement are being held.

But that doesn't mean international social movements and NGOs already struggling against Bank/Fund conditionality and structural adjustment across the Third World should not begin to take heed of the opportunity and the challenge South Africa offers. With the Bank anxious to have close relations with South Africa's first democratic government, could

this ultimately stymie a unified approach to the Third World debt problem? In which case shouldn't all the energy international solidarity inspires be channelled into contact and cooperation with progressive South Africans?

This appears, now, ever more crucial, as the Bank eagerly prepares to articulate and possibly implement its vision of an isolated social contract island, South Africa, surrounded by a sea of structural adjustment misery.

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L. to R., Marcelino dos Santos, Polly Gaster, Bruno de Ponte, Samora Machel, Ruth First, Judith Marshall, 1981

The Frontline States in the New Era in Southern Africa

The Ruth First Memorial Lecture

BY VICTORIA BRITAIN

Victoria Brittain is on the editorial staff of the Guardian and is a regular contributor to SAR. This lecture was presented at Durham University in May 1991 in memory of Ruth First, the South African activist who was murdered in 1982 by South African security forces.

I have two personal memories of Ruth – both relevant to this talk, both illustrating her capacity to be, at the same time, journalist/activist/academic. It is a rare capacity and one more necessary than ever today. We are in a period marked by a New World Order that

is devastating for the Third World and for the marginalized continent of Africa, in particular; it is marked, too, by an almost total capitulation to power by the intelligentsia and the media in the west.

The first picture – it must have been in January of 1981 in London – is of her extreme and unveiled impatience with one of those interminable ANC meetings in which a platform full of men in suits read long, dull speeches with no concrete facts and many pious hopes about the situation in South Africa.

The second, during the same visit to London, is the fastidious

precision with which she rewrote chunks of an article about her research at Eduardo Mondlane University. Ruth had agreed to put her name to the article in *The Guardian* provided I did the draft from a long conversation we had. Her open scorn for the western press, and her scepticism that I could possibly get such an article published in a mainstream newspaper, rather wounded me and I was determined to prove her wrong.

In both incidents I was struck by her cheerful honesty in saying something uncomfortable and unwelcome – the bigwigs of the ANC were certainly dull, and certainly evading

uncomfortable facts, but no one else was saying it openly. The western press, even its liberal wing, is indeed so lazy, conformist and Eurocentric in its preoccupations as to make it virtually incompatible with the interests of a writer like her. (The closing down a few years later of the Third World page of The Guardian - where her article did appear - in fact proved her point. She would have smiled to see today's Guardian, declaring that the Third World is 'dead' in political and economic terms. Dead meant something more literal in Ruth First's work.)

How would Ruth have told the story of what has happened in the Frontline states - in Mozambique and Angola above all, which is where I have concentrated this talk - in the years since her death, and particularly in the last two or three years? I think I can be sure that she would have told it with all its sadness and all its awkward ugliness, defeat and compromise, so far from the dreams of the early post-independence days and the years when she committed herself to work in Mozambique.

Ruth was an example of that rare breed - an independent intellectual. One of those who accept that however uncomfortable it will make their lives, intellectuals have the duty to tell the truth; anything less makes them state intellectuals. It is the specialty of the liberal democracies of the west that the establishment co-opts most intellectuals and makes them craven in their capitulation to power, but it happens too with the state intellectuals of Third World governments or parties, not just of dictatorships. Co-option though, even for the best of political reasons, was not even a possibility for Ruth.

South Africa's long undeclared war against the Frontline states, a war that made Angola and Mozambique particular targets and that killed Ruth First by a letter bomb, is a part of our immediate past history which has been forgotten too soon. The media hype about the

new South Africa of President De Klerk - the man of integrity, as Nelson Mandela called him - and even, in the last week or so the grotesque treatment of Savimbi as the new political saviour of Angola, are examples of obscuring history to put a different gloss on the present. The South African war was largely invisible this past 15 years because the western media was lazy and complacent and because South Africa's powerful allies in the west allowed, and in the case of the U.S. encouraged, destabilization to transform the political scenario of the whole region.

Before looking at today's southern Africa, it is important to remember the atmosphere in the region in the late 1970s in the wake of independence in Angola and Mozambique. The guerrilla wars against Portugal had been fought at immense cost, involving not only the two countries themselves, but the guerrillas' back-up by others, such as Tanzania in particular, but also the Rhodesian guerrillas, Zambia, Guinea and, on the side of the FNLA and Unita in Angola, Zaire, the CIA, British mercenaries and South Africa. The victory of Frelimo and the MPLA symbolized an African triumph over the most backward of colonizers and their powerful friends in Pretoria, Washington and London, it symbolized African dignity after the years of colonialism's indignity and subjugation.

The word progressive today has an old-fashioned ring to it, but then it was a literal word; it meant the hope of progress from illiteracy, from subsistence farming in villages unchanged through generations, and from lack of horizon. It meant progress by education, by new ideas such as multi-racialism and socialism. It meant being led by nationalist governments organized on marxist-leninist models learned in the schools of eastern Europe, where students from both parties got an education way beyond the dreams of colonial Africa. (Of course, much of

that education proved inapplicable, and the experiences of racism many endured made this learning a mixed blessing; but without it there would be an even more desperately impoverished leadership in both countries today.)

In the early 1970s, Basil Davidson wrote after a long trip in liberated Angola that there was now a chance to break from "the development of under-development" on the neo-colonial model. "As matters stand today," he wrote, "any kind of reformism can only confirm and reinforce the dependence of the weak upon the strong, the poor upon the rich ... all the African experience demonstrates this, and there is no evidence that demonstrates the contrary ... the centre of the scene in Africa in the 1970s has come to be held by movements, parties, or governments that have turned toward the finding of non-capitalist methods of making the major transition their countries need ... and so it is that the liberation movements in the Portuguese colonies, remote and relatively unimportant as they may appear at first sight, acquire their full meaning and historical stature."

I quote this not to mock the prediction of Professor Davidson, who I consider to be the foremost historian of the period, but to illustrate the flavour of the time and those high hopes. Overnight the Portuguese-dominated culture of fatalism and bleak under-development was overthrown and it was a time when anything and everything seemed possible. Or as the Canadian professor and friend of Ruth's, John Saul - who worked in Mozambique from its earliest years of independence - wrote recently, "it was a time of high promise of progressive, even socialist, transformation that spurred so many, even beyond the African continent, to align themselves with Frelimo and the Mozambican revolution."

As a first priority, enormous efforts were made to introduce basic education and health care to the

peasantry and the effects were acknowledged as stunning by many outside agencies. With Zimbabwe's independence in 1979, the region believed itself poised on the edge of a new era in which independence for Namibia and majority rule in South Africa were inevitable within a very short period. The Non-Aligned Movement had the flavour of this excitement and confidence in its calls for a New International Economic Order, and it was backed by European statesmen like Olaf Palme and Willi Brandt who believed such ideas were the only logical and moral way forward for the international community.

But the excitement and high hopes (though still not the pride in what was being achieved) was short-lived and by 1981 destabilization was beginning to make its impact felt, and South Africa's internal crackdown was underway in parallel.

In fact, the 1980s were a tragically wasted decade for the region, and for Mozambique and Angola in particular. The U.N. figure of \$60 billion as an estimate of the cost of destabilization is out of date by now and no one will ever know the true costs, either in economic or human terms, nor the political cost of South Africa's 'total strategy' against the region.

The traumatic defeat by imperialism of the hopes and ideals of the Africa of 1975 - for that is what we are experiencing today - has been slow to sink in; trauma always is.

In the last few years, there were some key moments when clear signals of what was coming were not interpreted with sufficient detachment - not by me certainly, nor by senior officials in the region, including the military, nor by the Cubans.

One was the Nkomati non-aggression pact which South Africa never kept, never intended to keep, and is still not keeping, but which Samora Machel, with a different moral code about agreements, accepted at face value.

Another was the repeal of the Clark amendment in 1985 which legalized the then covert U.S. support for Savimbi. I was in Angola that year and I well remember the outrage (not, of course, that it made much media mileage outside), but in Luanda people shrank back from the realization of how it demonstrated the total commitment in Washington to get Savimbi into power. It seemed then inconceivable that with his long record of collaboration with Portugal, with South Africa, and after the terrorism which was bleeding Angola, he could seriously be a candidate for power. The inconceivable is today's reality.

In Harare in 1986, the Non-Aligned summit was a third misinterpreted moment, just after the massive South African-led Renamo invasion from Malawi which aimed to take Zambezia province and cut Mozambique in half. Many of us believed that the organization's new focus on the region, under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, would swing world public opinion around. The involvement of men like Rajiv Gandhi and Alan Garcia in the Non-Aligned Movement's Africa Fund seemed like a symbol of a world determined to see that the nightmare of Mozambique and Angola must be ended. It offered hope that South Africa and the U.S. would be confronted and their aid for Renamo and Unita ended. This should have been the first step to abolishing apartheid which was taking another nightmare toll among the majority in South Africa itself and in occupied Namibia. Tanzania and Zimbabwe, with great chunks of their budget draining into their military presence inside Mozambique, Zambia, with its thousands of refugees to care for and its hosting of the ANC headquarters, were also paying a price which could not be sustained indefinitely. But the international appreciation of all this slipped away within months.

In the defiant and moving speech which set the tone of the moment,

President Fidel Castro said that Cuba would remain in Angola until the end of apartheid, and as though to underline that commitment, he left for Havana via Luanda where he received a saviour's welcome. Throughout the region, the Cuban troops in Angola were the key symbol that the minority regime in South Africa was not going to win.

A fourth such moment was in the aftermath of the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in March and April of 1988 when Cuban troops decisively beat back the most ambitious South African invasion since the pre-independence strike towards Luanda in 1975. That battle, and the U.S.-brokered negotiations which followed, brought Namibia its independence, but Angola paid the price - the linked withdrawal of the Cubans. That withdrawal timetable, which ends on June 30 this year, has been scrupulously adhered to. But at the same time, the U.S., contrary to all agreements and to international law, continued to supply Unita with the military means to avoid a settlement, to bolster Savimbi diplomatically, to refuse diplomatic recognition to Angola and to freeze the country out of emergency and development aid programmes. In the last year, the long stalemate began slowly to move in Savimbi's favour as his support from the U.S. compensated for what he lost from South Africa's Namibian bases. Many of us believed, as did senior Angolan and Cuban military officials, that without Namibian access, Savimbi's operation would wither. No one assumed that Zaire could become such a major supply route. But the balance of forces implied in the peace formula at Ghadolite two years ago (which removed Savimbi from politics for two years, absorbed Unita into government structures and ended external support for Savimbi), was a temporary one. Savimbi didn't accept it because he knew he was at a temporary moment of weakness and that the U.S. could still be counted on. He was right.

The contrast between the post-independence days and today is sharp. As one of the former FNLA leaders now back in Angola said on television recently, "the President has changed so much there is no reason to stay out." Next month, all Cuba's soldiers, teachers, doctors and engineers will leave Angola. The new peace process which will give Savimbi the right to return, to control half the national army and to organize for elections before the end of next year, is about to get under way, with international supervision. Frelimo's peace negotiations have started in Rome with Renamo, which is backed even at the negotiating table with the best brains the Heritage Foundation and other right-wing American business lobbyists can buy. (Their goal, they say, is to turn Mozambique, the poorest country in the world, into the Hong Kong of Africa.) Such an unreal negotiation would have been unthinkable even a year or two ago, but the eight governments now monitoring it have accepted the fiction that Renamo is negotiating with Frelimo, rather than the reality of the shadowy backers from South Africa, the U.S. and Portugal deciding when and how to call off their war against the people of Mozambique.

Under pressure from the west, Angola and Mozambique are now multi-party states and both, like other FLS states such as Tanzania and Zimbabwe, are committed to classic IBRD and IMF adjustment of their economies and their opening to western and in some cases South Africa investment. In a recent meeting, Mozambique's finance minister, Magid Osman, gave a speech which was a classic of the new politics, in which he said that what was needed for dramatic structural transformation was "a dynamic and enterprising entrepreneurial class," what he later called a "national patriotic bourgeoisie." The effects of new policies such as private medicine, and the introduction of school fees can be seen in an increasing social differentiation which is taking

Frelimo far from its original ideals, but nonetheless being defended as "realistic" by senior officials. You can hear the same rationalization in other FLS states too as education and health budgets are slashed and the poor get poorer. In addition, the emerging bourgeoisie is far from always being "patriotic" as Magid Osman hopes, and is even described by other senior officials - not only in Mozambique - as "unredeemably parasitic."

To understand this political transformation, it is necessary to take a long hard look at destabilization. History is being written to portray this period as one of failure by the newly-independent governments, failure of competence and failure of their ideological project, with their eventual embrace of the wave of democracy emanating from the events in eastern Europe over the last two years. But that version of the last decade can not be allowed to become the orthodoxy because it is not true, and because it perpetrates a myth with powerful political implications for South Africa, for the region, and for the rest of Africa.

There were, of course, many policy mistakes made in the early years in both Angola and Mozambique - Ruth was one of those who warned that collective farms in Mozambique were not working, for instance. And as one Frelimo leader put it to me this year when discussing the Naprama phenomenon of unarmed peasants successfully seeing off Renamo in parts of Zambezia province, there was a major error by Frelimo in disregarding some of the root beliefs and practices of a backward peasant society in the attempt to create overnight the 'New Man'.

The capacity for such self-criticism and for policy reversals remains one of the strengths of the best of both Frelimo and the MPLA, but the combination of the terrible personal costs of destabilization, with the corruption in the military and security services which has so discredited both parties, makes their future uncertain.

No one, even leaders inside these parties, pretends they can predict their future because there are so many variables outside their control - in South Africa and Washington. These outside influences have been the determining factor in creating through destabilization the catastrophic conditions which defy description in both Angola and Mozambique today - famine is widespread, hundreds of thousands are displaced, the social infrastructure is near collapse.

Why did this happen to them? The parallels with both Grenada and Nicaragua are inescapable. They were, as Oxfam titled their book on Nicaragua, "The threat of a good example." They were regimes which put social justice first and, as Basil Davidson said, believed that the neo-colonial pattern of development could not offer it. If their socialist, multi-racial, non-aligned project had succeeded, we would be looking at a different South Africa today.

One Mozambican official told me this year, "even if we had not made all the mistakes we did, even if we had made even more political concessions than we have, we were never going to be allowed to succeed, and our greatest mistake was that we didn't understand that from the start."

Despite that really horrifying realization, neither he nor others I spoke to wish they had done something different with the last fifteen years of their lives. "We tried to jump a phase of history and we failed - inevitably; but we did succeed in creating a country and later generations will have to develop its politics in the climate of the day." That future climate will depend very largely on what happens in South Africa itself and there the balance of forces remains to be tested in the negotiations now due to start. Whatever the outcome, the region will need its current and past history written by scholars, journalists and activists who aspire to Ruth's standards of rigorous honesty.

Face to Face with the "New" South Africa

BY ROSALIND BOYD

Rosalind Boyd, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Developing-Area Studies, McGill University, Montreal and long-time activist was invited to South Africa to attend the Conference on Women and Gender in Southern Africa at the University of Natal in Durban. She used the opportunity to visit some of the townships.

Nothing really prepares one for the entrenchment of apartheid as a daily living experience. In spite of over two decades of anti-apartheid work and participatory research in several sub-Saharan African countries, I still found myself shocked and unprepared for what I experienced. The starkly differentiated living conditions hit you first as you move in and out of township areas. I can still smell the stench of the garbage, squalor and filth in Alex, parts of Soweto and of Iuanda, only minutes

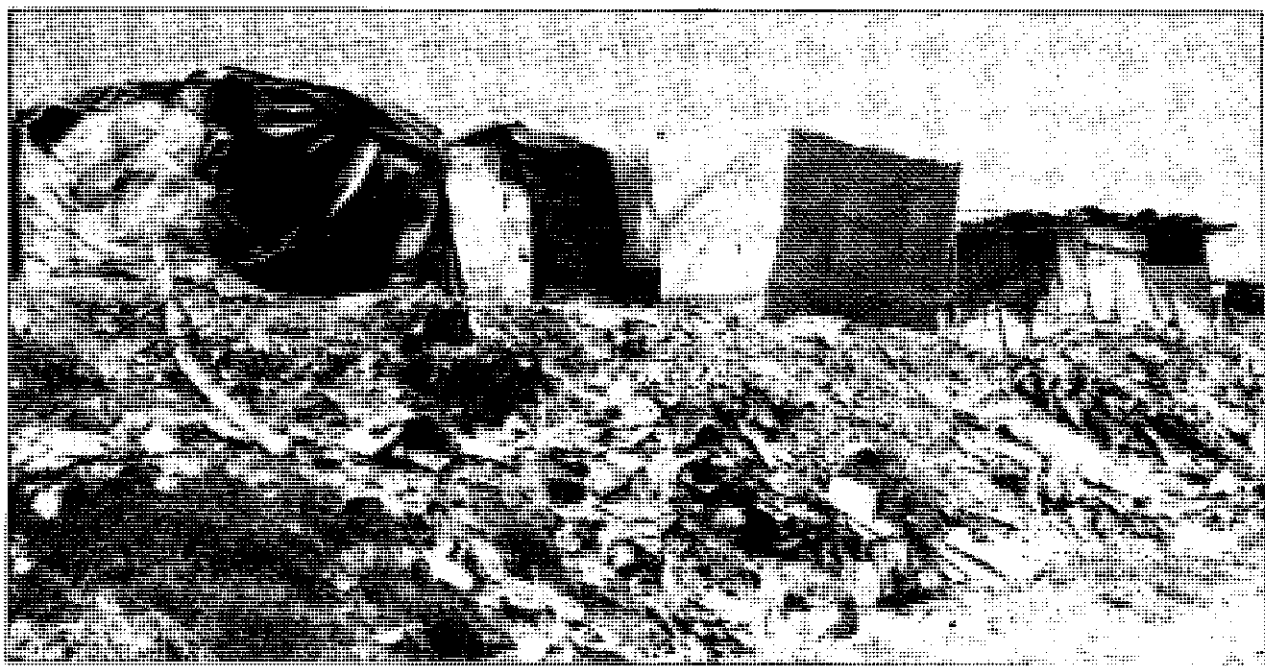
from the splendour of lush tree-lined streets with their palatial houses and modern amenities. What is significantly different about poverty and the appalling living conditions for Blacks in South Africa is that whites do not have to see it; they can live their whole lives with all the amenities of a completely "developed society" without visiting a township.

Over and over as I visited areas around Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Johannesburg, people asked me to let the outside world know that life, for most people at the base, was not changing, that harassments continue often under a new guise (11,000 people were arrested through Operation Thunderbolt during one week of my stay) and that talks of reforms are a sham.

Repealing the Group Areas Act will not alter the material condition of most people, which is ap-

palling. The repeal of the Land Acts with its emphasis on private property and purchase of land within the framework of the "land market" will not undo the monopoly over land ownership and access by whites. The majority of the Black people are poor, without resources, educational facilities and literacy skills. They have never voted and still cannot vote. Albertina Sisulu, member of the leadership core of the ANC Women's League with whom I visited mainly creches in Soweto, summed up the situation:

"There is no change as far as Black peoples' lives are concerned. It is a deception to the international world. We feel isolated and neglected. We need people to come here and see for themselves; we need solidarity and resources. Please tell the 'mothers of the world' that they must not forget us."



Shanties built on garbage dump in Alex township, Johannesburg

Rosalind Boyd

Shakes Cele, the ANC Secretary for Natal Midlands in Pietermaritzburg, expressed a similar sense of isolation and scepticism about change. "We are being attacked daily. My life is just like it was seven years ago. I live in daily fear with no protection, and although I don't expect to be detained, as the ANC is now legal, they could just cut me up. It is not just Inkatha that burn down our houses; state soldiers assist them."

Change or transformation is a complicated and complex process. The ambiguities and contradictions of the process are everywhere apparent in the current situation in South Africa. We cannot deny that South Africa is at a moment of some transition - the release of Mandela, the legalisation of the ANC and other popular organizations, the proposed repeal of racist laws, the unconditional release of political prisoners, the phased return of exiles and so on. But we also need to keep close to the pulse of most people's reality and the possibilities it suggests - the struggles around housing, health care, child care facilities, educational improvements, working conditions and of course the struggle to eradicate violence.

Leading these fights for change on the ground are the local ANC cadres, the trade unions, the civic organizations, women's groups, and other popular forms of protest and organization. We must be very sceptical of narrow state-led or elite-defined notions of "change." They cannot and will not be allowed to circumscribe the boundaries of real struggle for change which is presently taking shape. So while the repeal of obnoxious racist laws is an essential part of the dismantling of apartheid, the real sites of struggle and the ultimate transformation of the apartheid system lie within the wider problem of entrenched practices, daily living and working conditions where structured inequalities persist.

Daily living conditions

In touring the industrial area around Jacobs and the townships around Durban (Umlazi, Chastworth, Isipingo, Phoenix, KwaMashu, Inanda, etc.), the living reality of apartheid was evident in the deplorable differences in housing conditions among the racially divided populations. The so-called coloured communities are extremely dispossessed with high unemployment and crime. Pervasive deprivation characterizes their communities. In the midst of residential areas, a giant refinery is located, spewing out its toxins. Alliances between residential groups and environmentalists have begun to form to fight the polluters. But the might of industry was fully evident. The oil refineries and storage depots are heavily guarded and highly strategic in their location just behind the ridge from the sea. Tanks, security posts and six types of fencing surround one of the largest refineries in the southern hemisphere.

While there has been much talk about the development of class stratification in some of the black townships (for example the twenty or so smart bungalows on the East Bank of Alex township), it is the squatter shanties or shacks everywhere evident in the communities around Durban and Johannesburg that tell the real story of the housing crunch, the desperate flights from violence, and the unemployment crisis. Over one-fifth of the black population lives in shacks or temporary shelters and their numbers are increasing.

For the first time in most people's memory, a shanty community, Canaan, of about 450 shacks has sprung up in the midst of a residential area of Durban, visible from the main highway. Approximately 1,500 people live on this small area of land, judged unstable for housing, and without water supplies, electricity, toilets, telephone or any other amenities. According to Wendy Anneck, about 60% of the people here

previously owned houses destroyed from the violence in the townships around Durban; others have come looking for work and fearing possible violence. In the discussions to relocate on more secure land, most people want to be on a site near to the dumps in order "to be sure of some means of living"!

One of the oldest townships, Alexandra or Alex, established at the turn of the century just 10 minutes from the splendours of the fully developed wealthy suburbs of Jo'burg, now has a population ranging between 200,000 and 400,000 people with massive overcrowding. Once you are inside the township, the shacks go on for miles, everywhere visible, built on garbage dumps, stinking with open sewers, no electricity or water. At the entrance to the township, there is one small Health Centre and University Clinic to serve this entire area and beyond. It is staffed by a qualified doctor, two qualifying "registers" (residents in training) and about 45 nurses. Moses Mayekiso, president of the Alex Civic Organization, and Sizakele Nkosi, of the branch of the ANC Women's League (formerly General Secretary of the Alex Women's Congress) are two well-known popular leaders living and working for change in this community.

Soweto which is far larger than Alex with approximately four million residents is spread over a vast area about 30 kilometres from Johannesburg. It has similar housing divisions: permanent dwellings, residential areas, male migrant hostels and then rows upon rows of shanties or shacks without water, electricity, or toilets. Walking around one section of migrant workers hostels for single men, there was tension in the hot dusty air. An Inkatha sticker was neatly placed on the entrance to a door in one of the hostels which also had a small *spaza* (shop). My companion, Monyaola Mothibeli, ex-miner, now a researcher at Wits and resident of Soweto, chatted with the young men off work that

day. The poverty and general neglect which pervades the living environment within the townships make the situation ripe both for opportunistic exploitation and for popular struggle.

An important area of struggle in the townships is the much-neglected child care facilities for the black working class. COSATU's National Child Care Campaign in September 1990 successfully highlighted the lack of proper care facilities for black children. The campaign also agitated for recognition of both parents' responsibility in the care of children. But the presence of creches for black children is usually an indication of organization among women themselves. Certainly that was the situation in the five different creches that I visited with Albertina Sisulu in Soweto. All were organized by working women. Two were in private houses, two in churches and one a small dwelling owned by the ANC. All were overcrowded, with over 100 children being cared for by 5 or 6 women. However, because the church facilities offered more space, they appeared better than the private houses. The staff in these creches lamented the difficulties of caring for so many children in such crowded conditions and with only minimal resources.

Jacklyn Cock among others has stated that "the neglect of black childcare in South Africa must be understood in terms of the state's unconcern with the conditions under which black labour is reproduced generally." It is linked to the general neglect of state policies on housing, education, health, pensions and any welfare services for the majority of the population.

This neglect was borne out again in the condition of the Veritas Secondary School in Soweto. All the windows were broken, the rooms appeared stripped of all but shared chairs and desks; many students were just milling around as teachers often do not show up for classes. The morale of both is understand-



Women carry belongings from houses abandoned after attack by Inkatha in KwaMagoda, Richmond

ably low. According to Albertina Sisulu, since the 1976 uprisings, most schools have not really functioned and there has been no attempt to rebuild. Many children are not seriously attending school. The grand ten-year state plan of 'equal education for all' was simply scoffed at when mentioned in Soweto.

Violence in Natal

During the five years of violence in Natal, the nature of the conflict has changed, from sporadic attacks on people and property to a full-scale war and into rural areas, often out of sight and unprotected. Before touring the Richmond township, I discussed the situation in Natal with Shakes Cele, ANC Secretary for Natal Midlands in Pietermaritzburg. He was anxious about the series of attacks on KwaMagoda of Richmond which culminated in one major assault just three days earlier, killing six people and destroying over 150 houses. Over half the residents were now fleeing the area to temporary shelters arranged by the ANC with the assistance of the churches. He echoed the concern of others in the ANC that on the ground, violence is continuing with the complicity of the state security. He described the province as in a state of civil war and expressed

scepticism about the negotiations. "Meetings need to take place at the local level. People are very cynical. Look at our people's living conditions. We are being attacked daily. The ANC is counting dead bodies each and every day. ... We have only stones against Inkatha who are assisted by the state security. See for yourself." He also expressed how difficult it was to raise material support since the ANC had been legalized. Paradoxically, when operating through the United Democratic Front underground, there was lots of support. Now they need immediate resources for the women, children and old people displaced by the violence and little is available.

Mzwandile Mbongwe, an ANC cadre from Richmond, accompanied us to the area of the recent attacks about 35 kilometres from Pietermaritzburg. He explained that this was the first time Richmond, a known ANC stronghold, had been attacked by Inkatha. About 300 men from three areas - Mkhobeni, Phatheni and Sitebheni - formed themselves into a unit for attacking Richmond residents. Those who died were mostly old people unable to run away. Most attacks occur early in the morning before the security forces are supposed to arrive. This one had occurred early Sunday

morning after the Saturday burial for Comrade Sigijima Nzimandee, who had been hacked to death on Thursday.

Compared to other townships, Richmond is more visibly rural with inadequate roads and almost no transportation. As we entered the township, large Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) reverse swastika symbols could be seen on deserted township buildings next to ANC slogans. Residents stated that these had been painted by the security police.

Deeper into the township, there was an eerie quiet to the place as we walked the final kilometres (the car being unable to pass as the road was so bad) to reach the sight of what had been a battleground just three days earlier. Many houses had evidence of bullet holes, broken windows and smashed doors. In some yards, thatched-roofed rondavels had been torched and burnt out. Most houses had been abandoned; just a few women were carrying mattresses and other household items on their heads out of the area.

Upon our arrival in the township, we had passed a security vehicle with four white soldiers leaving the area; three hours later when we were leaving, they came back.

Update: Arrest of ANC spokesperson, Mzwandile Mbongwe, for murder

Since February, the violence in Richmond, a known ANC stronghold, has continued to escalate. On 29 March there were two serious attacks on ANC comrades in Kwa-Magoda (zone of Richmond township) by Inkatha. Many deaths occurred. On 2 April, riot police surrounded a group of comrades and asked them to surrender their weapons (knives, spears, pangas, etc.). Mzwandile Mbongwe (who had taken me to Richmond in February after the first attacks) acted as spokesperson and argued that they would be vulnerable to further at-

For most of the time we were inside, there had been no official protection. Yet we were told that the officials had confirmed they were going to provide 24 hour protection. Young men, stationed outside a deserted and heavily damaged store, keeping vigil against further attacks, were angry that the police were taking sides, disarming those in Kwa-Magoda while leaving the people of Mthobeni alone. They also reported a neighbouring traditional KwaZulu chief had been seen among the attackers. From my brief but detailed observations in this area, there were ample indications that the state, especially the security forces, do nothing to prevent these raids.

Towards real transformation

Some of what has been described above may seem obvious to the frequent readers of *SAR*, but "lest we forget" and be carried away by the applauded pronouncements about change or about preparations for post-apartheid society or even the successes of the popular heroic struggles, I wanted to inject a note of caution through some observations on the actual material conditions that people continue to face.

It is precisely at the moment of transition - when there are strong glimmers or indicators of hope for

tacks from the Inkatha. A Captain Vosloo, the commanding officer, assured him that no further attacks would take place.

The comrades reluctantly disarmed but were ordered by the police not to disperse. A few minutes later, another police van pulled up with a group of Inkatha members. They identified fifteen comrades, who were then rounded up together with Mzwandile (because of his role as spokesperson) and were detained without reasons being given, for 24 hours. The following day, twelve people were released, Mzwandile and three others (M. Manjwa, S. Mshengu and P. Nzimande) were charged with murder, appeared in court and only

change - that the anti-apartheid movement needs to be vigilant, careful not to abandon its course but to strengthen its organizational work with those on the ground. Support for the mass popular organizations, the trade unions, women's groups, as well as for the ANC, the legitimate leader of the anti-apartheid movement, should be improved. Economic sanctions, which have clearly made a difference in South Africa, should be intensified. It is a serious error to suspend sanctions when only small signs of hope for change have been suggested. Such moves now will simply restore the system that has begun to fracture due to the efforts of international pressure and popular struggle in the process towards real transformation.

Finally, attempts to counter media interpretations about "black on black violence" should be stepped up. The complicity of the security forces with Inkatha is uncontested. As well, exposes of the actual material conditions on the ground after years of deprivation and neglect under apartheid, contribute to opportunistic exploitation of this violence. Until the majority Black population has the right to vote, to take charge of their lives as full participants in a non-racist, non-sexist democratic society, talk of change is premature.

Mzwandile was released on bail of R500.

No murder victims were actually named and the accused believe that the prosecution has no case. They suggest that this may just be another form of intimidation. They appeared in court on Friday (19 April) but the case was remanded at the request of the police who want more time to conduct investigations.

Meanwhile, Mzwandile has moved out of Richmond as he fears for his life; his house was burnt down prior to the 29 March attack. Mzwandile, now 23, was detained for 18 months in 1988. He had planned to return to university in Pietermaritzburg this session.

Sports Boycott Crosses Finish Line

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.

The 30-year old sports boycott is rapidly being brought to an orderly and successful conclusion.

In recent months, the De Klerk government and the white sports establishment have agreed to the minimal conditions set by the ANC and the coalition of forces which has kept South Africa out of international sport for so long. These include:

- the "abolition of apartheid" (*i.e.* the repeal of the Group Areas Act, the Population Control Act, the Land Acts and other legislative "pillars of apartheid")
- the abolition of racially-organized sports bodies (in sports like rugby, there have been as many as three racially-defined governing organizations as well two anti-apartheid, non-racial associations) and their replacement by a single, democratic, non-racial governing body in every sport
- the creation of anti-discriminatory by-laws in every sport
- the obligation to mount a major campaign of sports development for black athletes and communities

These conditions are effectively those developed out of the liberation movement's "two-track strategy" over the last few years ("Adjusting the Sports Boycott," *SAR*, March 1989) and endorsed by the 4th International Conference Against Apartheid Sport in Stockholm last September ("Not Yet De Klerk," *SAR*, November 1990).

The idea has been to hold out sport-specific conditions for the end to the international moratorium in order to draw the Olympics-starved white sports establishment and the

collaborative black sports leadership into the anti-apartheid alliance. The recent progress has been far more rapid than anyone dared to imagine. In November, in Harare, the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) won acceptance for these terms from the two white South African umbrella sports federations – the old South African Olympic Committee (SANOC) and the Confederation of South African Sport (COSAS). ANOCA then created a coordinating committee – made up of SANOC, COSAS, the National Olympic Sports Congress (NSC), the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC) and the South African Council on Sports (SACOS) from the anti-apartheid movement and chaired by SANROC's Sam Ramsamy – to oversee implementation and got government backing.

In March, the International Olympic Committee reiterated its long-standing promise to make Africa's terms its own, and sweetened the carrot by announcing that if the above conditions were met by the end of June, a South African team made up of athletes from those sports where non-racial unity had been achieved would be invited to the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. It also recognized the Ramsamy-led coordinating committee as an Interim South African Olympic Committee, and promised them technical assistance through its office of Olympic Solidarity.

The IOC has arranged to meet ANOCA and the Interim Committee in Lausanne in early July to determine whether the conditions have been met. In frequent and well publicized statements, IOC president Juan Samaranch has nurtured the widespread expectation that the verdict will be favourable, and the moratorium lifted, encouraging a growing number of international fed-

erations to prepare for that result. For example, the International Amateur Athletics Federation (which governs track and field) has said that if the conditions are met, a South African team will be invited to its world championships in Tokyo in August.

Under these circumstances, nothing short of a complete turn-about by De Klerk on his declared legislative agenda is likely to extend the moratorium beyond July. The tight schedule gives Ramsamy, ANOCA leader Jean Claude Ganga (who led the African walkout from the 1976 Montreal Olympics), and their colleagues only a few more weeks to wring further concessions from the sports establishment and firm up the articles of unity. The ANC, which has played a pivotal role in the negotiations all along, has decided not to link the conclusion of the sports campaign with the progress (or lack of it) in the overall transfer of power. Presumably, sometime before the meeting in Lausanne, the ANC and the anti-apartheid sports leadership will announce that the agreed-to conditions have actually been met and call upon its international friends (most of whom are rigorously resisting the premature resumption of contacts) to lift sanctions.

Not everyone is pleased with this schedule. The Pan-African Congress and SACOS, which led the domestic campaign until the mid-1980s under the banner "No normal sport in an abnormal society," would have preferred universal suffrage to be the condition for ending the boycott. They also wanted to wait for the confirmation of implementation before publicly entertaining the possibility of international competitions. SACOS is being held in line by the threat that it will be dropped from the leadership of the new structures if it persists in public criticism.

But veteran international boycott leaders like Ramsamy and Ganga are convinced the timing is right. They feel that the promise of international competition will give an enormous boost to black efforts in soccer, track and field, boxing and those other sports where participation is strong. Certainly that is how the prospect is being taken in the townships, where it's regarded as a major victory for the ANC. One has to remember that there have almost never been any black South African representatives in international competition. It's always been successfully resisted by the whites in control.

The leadership has also calculated that they could not maintain the boycott very much longer. While their own creative interventions and the militancy of the anti-apartheid movements put most of the sport sanctions in place, it's been governments and the international federations which have enforced them day-to-day. That support is quickly evaporating, as more and more governments and western sports leaders accept the De Klerk regime's version of change. The overthrow of the Stalinist governments in eastern Europe has eliminated an essential source of support. It used to be that whenever South Africans were invited to a major competition, the whole Soviet bloc would threaten to withdraw. The new leadership in many of these countries is eager to play South Africa, no questions asked.

Behind the scenes, Samaranch has been pushing relentlessly for the moratorium to be lifted. How much of this is motivated by other considerations, such as his oft-rumoured ambition to win the Nobel Peace Prize, or his desire to have the first mixed South African Olympic team in his home town Games, to offset the protests expected to mark the 500th anniversary of Columbus' sailing from Barcelona, is unclear. But he has met secretly with the South African Ambassador to Switzerland,

and talks as if De Klerk is "our man in Johannesburg." Through his power to steer international resources (through Olympic Solidarity and commercial sponsorship, both vital sources of funds and equipment for impoverished countries) he has been heavily pressuring the African IOC members to hurry along the deal.

The agreement on which the conclusion to the moratorium hangs is nevertheless a good one. Both practically and symbolically, it constitutes a major advance. It promises to end racial discrimination in South African sport, open up new opportunities for those blacks already competing, and turn the symbolism of Springbok teams into a powerful argument for non-racial meritocracy. At the same time, it legitimizes organizations like the NSC which have linked sports to the larger challenge of constructing a democratic society. As long as the liberation movement faces such agonizing difficulties on other fronts, it would be inappropriate to pop the champagne. But the end of the sports boycott should be properly noted as a worthy outcome of the long years of heroic agitation and self-denial by anti-apartheid sportspersons and their many international supporters.

This is not to say that there is nothing left to be done. On the contrary, without the muscle of the international campaign it will take a great deal of tenacity by progressives to eradicate the deep roots of racism at the community level. There is already considerable pressure to "take the new sports bodies out of politics." (The South African government used this line in an effort to keep Ramsamy off the Interim Olympic Committee, but ANC wouldn't play: it insisted he be in the chair.) Given the distorted provision of opportunities under apartheid, whites will dominate most of the new sports bodies. Very little change will occur unless there is substantial redistribution, not only in sports but in

education, employment, health, and housing. There are actually only ten sports (out of some 60 nationally organized) where there is any significant degree of black participation. This is why the Interim Committee will not send its first team to the Winter Olympics next year - blacks are not involved in any of the winter sports.

But overcoming the continuing inequalities will require different strategies. Those who would maintain the boycott against them forget that the shortcomings of the structures being created (*i.e.* an emphasis on institutional protection from racial discrimination, rather than the provision of genuine equality) are not unique to South Africa. In Canada, despite three decades of state funding ostensibly to improve opportunity, national teams are now drawn from a higher class base than ever before. Canada has been one of the staunchest supporters of the boycott, but no Canadian government would support it if the target shifts to a broader definition of equality.

The sports boycott has been extremely successful in achieving what it set out to do - combatting legal racism in sports. In the process, it has forced the international sports leadership and the South African sports establishment to embrace the anti-apartheid cause, which includes not only the fight against racism but the advancement of third-world interests across the board. Within South Africa, it has swept away the divisive 'multi-racial' structures in all the major sports and enabled the non-racial leadership to shape the creation of new structures in their own image. By bringing it to a close at this juncture, the leadership has been able to maintain their command of the agenda so that in the dynamic of change in the months and years ahead, they will be favourably placed to advance democratic interests even further.

That is a remarkable accomplishment.

Readers' Forum....

The M.A.C. "A Luta Continua" Conference: A Different View



16 April 1991

In her account of the "A Luta Continua" study conference held in London by the Mozambique Angola Committee last December (SAR, March 1991), Victoria Brittain interprets the debate that took place there as having been between those favouring democratic discussion and those publicly "toeing the line." Yet to many, it was a welcome airing of differing views on the role of solidarity following changes in the two countries, some putting in question relations with Frelimo and the MPLA and others believing that there is no cause for diminished solidarity. The fundamental change in MAC attitudes that she describes was not noted by many others who attended the conference.

The account confuses the issue by placing MAC within the sole context of solidarity with the southern African region, as part of the "anti-apartheid movement culture." This overlooks its historical origins in one of the support groups set up in various countries, in close coordination with the members of the then-CONCP (Conference of Nationalist Organizations of the Portuguese Colonies) - Frelimo, the MPLA and the PAIGC (Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde) - all leading armed struggles against Portuguese colonialism. Only after the separation of Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau in the early eighties and lack of contact with them, were relations solely with Frelimo and the MPLA.

Solidarity has always been specific to the countries, strengthened

by more than two decades of personal contact and the work experience in Mozambique or Angola of many MAC members. Far from representing a "diet of myth and half-truths for years" - a most unfair assessment - MAC conferences have, uniquely, benefited from the detailed knowledge of British economists, agronomists, doctors, teachers and others who have worked directly with the peoples of those countries.

The dramatic changes in the region - positive developments in South Africa and Namibia's independence - have naturally led to a re-thinking of the Anti-Apartheid Movement's activity. But those changes, to which Frelimo and the MPLA contributed decisively, are very different from those taking place in Angola and Mozambique. There the operative factors have been war fuelled from abroad, severe economic difficulties and a suddenly new international balance of forces.

John Saul's quoted statement that "this is not the future we aligned ourselves to ten or twenty years ago" in an undeniable reality. Nor is it the future Frelimo and the MPLA had envisaged.

It is utopian to conceive of an African country building socialism in isolation, irrespective of the model. Apart from the erosion of political and diplomatic support, the new situation in Eastern Europe means the ending of preferential soft or barter terms of trade, with devastating effects on fragile economies. Soviet oil exports to Mozambique,

henceforth to be paid for in hard currency, are just one example of this.

To suggest that structural adjustment has been "embraced by Frelimo" is to ignore the fact that acceptance of IMF and World Bank conditionality is mandatory for countries needing to reschedule their external debt. African countries have no choice. Should they rather stop all investment and cease imports of raw materials, machinery and other essential goods? True solidarity means understanding these factors. It also means understanding and supporting efforts being made, despite western pressure, to lessen the negative impact such measures will have on the population. Angola, for example, is maintaining state subsidies on basic foodstuffs and seeking to limit the extent of currency devaluation. These acute difficulties and pressures are added to a heritage of underdevelopment and illiteracy, to war, mistakes and other factors.

Why should Frelimo not discuss the role of national entrepreneurs? Should the state continue to subsidize the losses of enterprises and pay the wages of workers who do not produce? This has been the case with both state-owned and cooperative ventures. Who is to run such enterprises? Should the state thus continue to waste resources needed for social investment and strategic sectors of the economy, also maintaining the top-heavy administrative structures implied? If I remember rightly, President Machel once said that selling matches was not the role of the state. Who is to run retail trade? In the colonial era in Angola (which I know better), apart from street and market vendors, it was the exclusive preserve of settlers. Should it be handed over to the multi-nationals? This is an eminently practical problem faced by those who have to deal with reality, not theory. Emotionally charged phrases like "producing

a new entrepreneurial bourgeoisie" do not address the issue.

When [Mozambique's] Ambassador Panguene, during the conference, appealed for continued solidarity with Frelimo, there must have been few people there who thought he argued against support for the newly-autonomous trade unions or women's movement. His very broad statement seemed rather to apply to new organizations which have emerged, many of which, according to all reports, are tribalist, regionalist and racist in character, therefore not so far removed from Renamo.

I am somewhat mystified by the purported "difficulty of evaluating competing claims for aid" created by the existence of autonomous organizations. In Angola, for example, aid has always been channelled to all kinds of bodies, much going through churches which then distribute it. The important thing is that people receive it.

Neither the MPLA nor Frelimo lays claim to "magical correctness." Indeed, the only way to avoid making mistakes is not to do anything at all, or to remain in the realm of pure theory, not working with real people, with their failings, or real problems. The MPLA and Frelimo themselves provided the political and legal framework for the emergence of new bodies, some progressive and some decidedly not, all of which are part of the "civil society" referred to by one or two speakers at the conference. Victoria Brittain refers to forces that might "counter the anti-people line of part (what part?) of the leadership" in Mozambique. The disagreement here is not on the importance of progressive grass-roots sectors of "civil society" but on the assessment of the record of the MPLA and Frelimo and whether they should be discarded for other forces in society.

They fought for independence and continue to defend it. Their major strength has been their truly national policy, opposed to tribalism, regionalism and racism. In this

they have been historically progressive, in keeping with the process of forming one nation out of diversity. They have tried, against fearful odds, to guarantee food, education, health and social progress for their peoples. To blame them for not building socialism is ungenerous, under the circumstances. One cannot lightly brush aside "whatever may have produced the present situation" and cite only subjective, as opposed to objective, factors.

Those who know the countries well will agree with Ambassador Panguene that the MPLA and Frelimo have the most progressive people in them. Their fight for independence has been followed by a battle for national reconstruction in the face of intervention by forces which have long sought to annihilate them. Most MAC members, notwithstanding criticisms or forebodings many may have, are convinced that this is not time to weaken solidarity in what is a continuing struggle, perhaps the hardest part of that struggle.

Marga Holness
London

THE EDITORS REPLY:

Marga Holness' response to our reports on the two European conferences held late last year ("A Tale of Two Cities: Debating Solidarity in Europe," SAR, vol. 6, no. 4, March 1991) is welcome, but we think that she tends to confuse the issues raised and reported.

For instance, the history of the Mozambique Angola Committee's past relations with Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau is not relevant to discussion of the current state of political life in Angola and Mozambique. Nor does the fact that MAC conferences have had reports over the years alter the present difficulties many in the solidarity movement are having in assessing the dramatic political changes in Angola and Mozambique.

The problem Holness does not tackle is that changes - away from

socialism, away from the ideals of twenty years ago and towards the haloing of an World Bank-led "new entrepreneurial bourgeoisie" - are being embraced enthusiastically by many Frelimo and MPLA officials.

It would indeed be ungenerous not to discuss the formidable difficulties that have confronted both Frelimo and the MPLA in recent years. But this has not, by and large, been true of the debate that is now taking place regarding these countries. Moreover, Marga Holness is simply being disingenuous when she asks "what part" of the Frelimo leadership is embracing, in questionable ways, changes which are rapidly increasing social differentiation and distancing Frelimo from its former constituency. Some of those best known have actually been named in SAR and every other name is common knowledge to close observers of Mozambican developments. Many observers would also confirm the point that the recent record on questions of racism and regional solidarity of such leaders has become a sad travesty of the movements' erstwhile ideals. Much the same could be said for Angola.

It may well be that Frelimo and/or MPLA will prove to be the most progressive parties on offer in any forthcoming multi-party elections in their respective countries - and, in such a context, fully worthy of support. But critical observations as to the quality of their current political projects are not to be dismissed as mere subjective judgements. Often such observations must be taken as hard facts that have to be faced within the solidarity movement, just as they are being faced by many Mozambicans and Angolans.

This does not mean that we should weaken our solidarity with the peoples of Mozambique and Angola: who would suggest such a thing? Rather it suggests that it is, indeed, time to ask ourselves the most challenging questions about how best to express that solidarity.

When this little girl grows up...

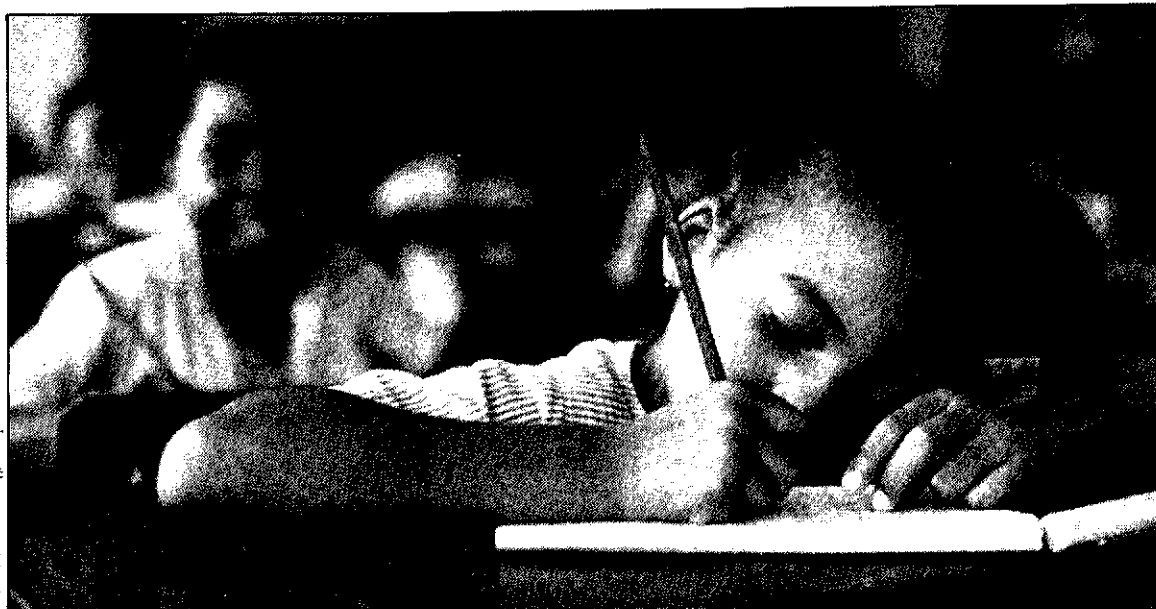


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