

# Southern Africa REPORT

Vol. 9 No. 4

March 1994

## New Rules of the Game Canada and South Africa

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Linda Freeman  
on Changing  
Canadian - S.A.  
Relations

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Judith Marshall  
on the  
Future of  
Solidarity Work

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Victoria Brittain  
Ken Wilson  
Wiseman Chirwa  
on the Region

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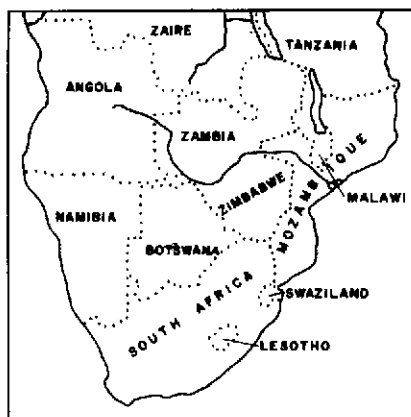


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## Southern Africa REPORT

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*Street children in Durban warming themselves by a fire*

## Who's Celebrating?

Well, we all are. Or at least expect to be when, in late April an ANC government is finally elected in South Africa. Of course, as Oxfam-Canada's Meyer Brownstone recently saw for himself (and recounts in the present issue) reaching that point will be no straightforward exercise. There are just too many actors - the right-wing, both black and white - who seem committed to violent disruption of the process. And yet South Africa is not a Sarajevo or a Somalia, either. There are also powerful forces behind the drive for a democratic settlement and they should see it through.

There's another question, however: who's most likely to be doing most of the celebrating once the electoral dust settles. In Linda Freeman's opinion, it could very

well be the Canadian business community, now, with vigorous Canadian government assistance, beginning to probe South Africa prospects in earnest. Indeed, Freeman's annual overview of Canadian policy really invites "Canadian anti-apartheid forces" to wake up and smell the coffee. The good old broad-based anti-apartheid alliance of the past is gone forever. Yet the black majority in South Africa "has much to lose in the new dispensation." Freeman knows this. Bishop Tutu knows this. ("After sanctions are lifted," Freeman quotes him as saying, "it must not be business as usual. [We need] a kind of investment that seeks to turn around the dispossession of power and empower the dispossessed.") Needless to say, it's not something the Canadian government is very interested in hearing.

Nor all erstwhile "anti-apartheid forces," for that matter. One recent celebration - an election fund-raiser sponsored in Toronto by the Voter Education South Africa Canada (VESAC) project on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of Nelson Mandela's release from prison - hinted at some of the problems in this respect. Nice to see old comrades from the numerous vigils, demonstrations, sit-ins and planning meetings held over the years, of course. Hugs and kisses all round (even for South African diplomats who had spent the last few decades denigrating the ANC and lying on behalf of their country!)

But what was one to make of Ann Medina, "media personality" now pressed into service as emcee for the occasion? In one of her introductions she observed - news to most

anti-apartheid activists in the room – that Canadian business had recognized the need for economic sanctions and had gone along with them most gracefully. She even managed to squeeze in a good word in this respect for SNC-Lavalin, long since fingered by Freeman (in her “Trapped by Past Gestures,” *SAR*, 8, #3-4 [January-February, 1993]) as a notorious sanctions-buster. Head table dignitary Mark Drake, President of the Canadian Exporters Association, clearly knew a good straight line when he was fed one. All very well, he averred, but because of sanctions the Canadian business community has a lot of catching up to do *vis-à-vis* the Japanese and others! Applause (although not from every table). As ANC representative Victor Moche said, somewhat sheepishly, to one member of the *SAR* editorial collective after the event, “It’s a new paradigm.”

What are left-overs from the southern African support network – those who are either too smart or too stubborn to welcome a “new paradigm” that simply hails uncritically post-apartheid South Africa’s embrace by global capitalism – to do? It’s a question much discussed in these pages in recent issues, of course. But Judith Marshall, long-time TCLSAC activist, does give some suggestive new spins to her own answer to the question. Locating TCLSAC’s current “South-South-North” initiatives (see *SAR*, 7, #4 [March, 1992]) within a provocative historical account of the committee’s evolution to date, she illuminates many of the challenges that the attempt by Canadians to forge effective bonds with new currents of resistance in southern Africa must face. She also suggests that links to the Action Canada Network – an alliance of opponents of Canada’s own uncritical subordination to globalism – may be one way of building a fresh base, beyond the celebrations, for southern Africa-related work on the Canadian left.

\* \* \*

Besides, what’s to celebrate in Angola? Perhaps only Jonas Savimbi has any excuse for doing so. After all, as Victoria Brittain describes the situation there after a recent visit, he and his UNITA movement have just got away with a most astonishing act of defiance of both the majority vote of the Angolan people and of the (ostensible) will of the international community...and come up smiling. Stop them before they kill again? Not likely, unfortunately. Small wonder that Tokyo Sexwale, the leader of a recent ANC delegation to Angola, could draw a sobering potential parallel between South Africa’s current situation and Angola at the time of the United Nations sponsored elections of 1992: “The similarity is the uncertainty, the fear that some may not accept the outcome of the elections and the dangers of the open confrontation that could take place.” For Savimbi, read Buthelezi. Let us hope not.

What are southern African activists to do about so intractable a situation as that presented by Angola, grave-yard (literally) of so many hopes? Or about Mozambique for that matter, where violence also continues. And where President Chissano, once one of Frelimo’s leading Marxist cadres, now proclaims himself a follower of the Maharishi Yogi and has helped organize extensive classes in “meditation training” for military and civil service officials and their families (“Beatles’ Guru Offers Nirvana to Mozambique,” *New York Times*, February 10, 1994). There is also talk of handing over to the guru’s “Heaven on Earth Development Project in Mozambique” some 49 million acres of land: all of which might be quite amusing if it were not so sad. “He who laughs has not yet heard the terrible tidings,” as Brecht once wrote. Here, then, is a leadership at the end of its rope, driven to a state of apparent political catatonia by the cruelties South Africa’s destabilization policy has inflicted on the country over the years.

Small wonder that we too snatch at such (less transcendental) hope as we can find in Ken Wilson’s article on Mozambique, included below. True, it presents a rather more benign picture of Renamo’s activities than we’re used to carrying – although even Wilson admits that this picture, from Morrumbala in Zambesia Province, is probably not typical of Renamo’s practices in many other parts of the country. But it is the image of a “people’s peace,” welling up from below, demanding settlement from both Renamo and Frelimo, that is most worth emphasizing from his article in any case. The Mozambican people both desire and deserve something better than recent southern African history has had to offer them. We cannot abandon them in their attempt to find it.

\* \* \*

For good measure, in the present issue, we also stir in a sobering account of the current plight of Zimbabwean farmworkers (by Blair Rutherford) and a sceptical view of the ANC’s announced environmental policies (by David McDonald). All this, and no sports or comic strips! Please forgive us, then, for raining on your parade.

And, of course, let’s do celebrate by all means. Certainly we’re all entitled to do so, not least because, as anti-apartheid activists, we made our own contribution (however modest) to despatching the apartheid state into the dust-bin of history. Think about it: who’d have predicted even five years ago that we’d be this close to marking any kind of victory in South Africa in March of 1994? Besides, victories anywhere are few and far enough between these days to warrant some dancing in the streets whenever we see one on the horizon. But let’s just keep our powder dry while we’re doing so. After all, we’re already living “the next round,” and some of it ain’t pretty.

# The New Rules of the Game

## Canada and South Africa 1993

BY LINDA FREEMAN

*Carleton University professor Linda Freeman, activist and writer, is SAR's Ottawa correspondent.*

In this, the final year of official apartheid, torturous political negotiations have borne fruit, a transitional executive council is in place and the date for the first non-racial democratic elections has been set. Mandela and de Klerk jointly share a Nobel Peace Prize.

One might hope that events are en route to delivering a new South Africa. However, securing an agreement has been difficult and messy: extremist groups from the ultra right white community have joined with the black right in their refusal to participate in the process. At the community level, the inhabitants of townships and squatter camps remained mired in poverty and beset by violence. The paradox continues of progress at the top and hope rather than tangible benefits at the base.

In Canada as well as South Africa it is the end of an era, with a dramatic switch in focus from the anti-apartheid struggle to full barrelled promotion of economic ties. In the process, political alliances have changed and economic sanctions are yesterday's news. The Canadian private sector is more than eager to make up for lost time, while cautious about the continuing violence and instability.

Within the Canadian government in the past year, there has been a fairly rapid rotation of senior personnel responsible for this issue. Three Prime Ministers (Brian Mulroney, Kim Campbell and Jean Chrétien) and three ministers of foreign affairs (Barbara McDougall,

Perrin Beatty and André Ouellette) have been in charge at the same time as the ground rules on policy towards South Africa have been transformed.

In any case, the corporate arena is fast replacing state action as the central focus of Canada's involvement in South Africa, albeit with very mixed results. Some corporations have jumped the gun in supplying products ultimately destined for the South African military; others have joined with the black private sector to launch projects of benefit to the new South Africa. One Canadian corporation's involvement in a mining project has become the centre of a national debate in South Africa on environmental issues, with the project's future very much on hold until a new government is in place.

### The end of economic sanctions

Here in Canada, the most significant development of the year came in September when the government officially lifted trade, investment and financial sanctions against South Africa. The decision was taken in consultation with the Commonwealth following Mandela's request. With characteristic modesty in announcing this development, Beatty suggested that "This is a great day for Canadian foreign policy," and paid tribute to Conservative Prime Ministers all the way back to Diefenbaker.

However, the effect of economic sanctions was always quite mixed: Corporations left South Africa for their own reasons before the government put a formal programme of sanctions in place. Financial sanctions were voluntary and, as the case of the Bank of Nova Scotia's \$600

million loan to a subsidiary of Anglo American in the late 1980s showed, they were ignored with impunity.

In addition, Canada's nominal two way trade with South Africa actually doubled in the 1980s over the 1970s, from about \$2 billion to \$4 billion. Given the slow or negative growth in the South African economy by the late 1980s/early 1990s, it is not clear that the rapid increase in Canadian exports would have been sustained. However, average annual two-way trade did drop by about 40% after economic measures were imposed (1987 to 1992) as compared to before (1980 to 1985).

Not surprisingly, both the Campbell and Chrétien governments lost no time in launching a series of initiatives to catch up with other countries that had already lifted sanctions. Despite her emphasis on restraint, Campbell's government decided to reopen a trade office in South Africa complete with new trade commissioners. The International Trade ministry organized a series of seminars across Canada to promote trade and investment with South Africa, and invited a team of South Africans from the private sector to tour Canada in search of new business opportunities. The person chosen to be the new Canadian Ambassador to South Africa, Marc Brault, is a seasoned trade official who argued vigorously in the 1970s against Canadian economic sanctions for South Africa. At the end of January, Chrétien's Minister of International Trade, Roy MacLaren, led a "blue-chip" private sector delegation to South Africa to revitalize economic relations and to reopen the trade mission in Johannesburg. On the trip an official

of the Export Development Corporation signed three separate US\$10 million letters of credit with South African banks to assist in the sale of Canadian goods to South African companies. A further \$60 million will go to the Alusaf smelting project in which SNC-Lavalin of Montreal has a substantial role (see *SAR*, January-February, 1993).

At the same time, the government retained the embargo on arms sales until a democratic government is firmly in place. Exports of dual purpose goods (for civilian or military use) continued also to be denied to purchasers in the South African military, police or intelligence forces.

#### Canadian engines for the South African Air Force

Characteristically, however, even at this late hour Canada's sanctions' policies were fudged, as Canadian

corporations were able to rely on the government's generous interpretation of the rules and tolerance of activities which formerly would have been prosecuted. In the dying days of sanctions, getting one by was a matter of a wink here, a nod there and a sleight of hand in interpretation.

Take the case of the sale of turboprop engines by a Montreal-based company, Pratt and Whitney, to a Swiss company, Pilatus Flugzeugwerke Ag. for trainer aircraft for the South African Air Force. The contract was significant, involving the sale of sixty PC-7 trainer aircraft for US\$165 million.

However, the end user was *ultra vires* according to UN sanctions and the trainer aircraft had been employed for military purposes in Burma, Iraq and Angola. Indeed, it was the potential use of such

aircraft in the South African military's continuing covert support of UNITA in Angola that provoked international protests about the sale. The South African Air Force was also well known for its regular violations of the air space over Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe.

In addition, certain features enabling military use were being built into the planes at the South African Government's request: six special underwing handpoints for fitting pods were constructed to carry two 125 kg bombs, to mount machine guns or to carry missile launchers. Also special ejector seats were fitted. None of these features were needed for the purportedly peaceful use claimed by Pilatus and the South African Air Force.

Despite international efforts to get McDougall to intervene, Pratt and Whitney's sale went ahead



Angered Inkatha members in front of their burnt hostel in Bruunville near Pietermaritzburg (1993)

Kunimori Takajashi - Impact Visuals

with Ottawa's full knowledge and approval. In the view of the Canadian government, selling the planes to South Africa was still illegal but Switzerland's purchase of engines was not. As John Schram, Director of the Eastern and Southern African Relations division of External Affairs (now Foreign Affairs), explained, the key distinction in this case was whether an item was specially designed for military specifications and not the fact that the end user was the South African armed forces. If the engines had gone directly to South Africa, however, permission for export would have been denied.

In the government's view, "the responsibility for the sale of the completely assembled aircraft lies with the country of final assembly." Although the Canadian government "conveyed its concern to the Swiss authorities that the proposed sale by Pilatus violates the UN arms embargo," it was itself unprepared to stop the sale of Pratt and Whitney's engines. Yet Schram still insisted that "Canada continues to advocate strict observance of both the letter and spirit of the UN arms embargo..." Advocate, perhaps, but not practice. A classic case of trying to have your cake and eat it too.

This approach took advantage of a major loophole in Canadian export controls, the question of ultimate destination. This issue had been raised by the interchurch Taskforce on Churches and Corporate Responsibility (TCCR) in 1987 and also by the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Arms Exports in 1992. The Subcommittee recommended that the government ensure military component exports weren't re-exported to prohibited destinations. However, External Affairs argued that attempts to control final destination would involve extraterritorial application of the Export and Import Permits Act which, in their view, had no basis in international law.

Obviously, officials were now moving briskly with the times: their

primary interest was in putting the corporate case. Pratt and Whitney had a longstanding contractual relationship with Pilatus to supply engines for a wide range of aircraft. Schram argued that regulations controlling re-export would harm such links, and foreign companies would look elsewhere for their components.

#### Canadian corporations in the new South Africa

Sanctions, even arms sanctions, were soon to be a thing of the past in any case. Already the chief issues had become stopping the violence, supporting the transition process, and helping South Africa prepare for free and fair elections. These are central questions, it is urged, for economic recovery as well as for successful political transition.

Indeed, on his return from a visit to South Africa last September, Mark Drake, President of the Canadian Exporters Association, said the lifting of sanctions provided only limited opportunities for Canadian companies; and that the time was not right for big investment. "The situation is still very rough out there," he said. "Our recommendation would be to go have a look, do what trade you can, but don't put your money on the table until you see the violence is being brought under control."

Despite these warnings, a few Canadian companies have taken the plunge. Cott Corporation, a supplier of no-brand soft drinks, has begun a programme in South Africa to develop local "own brand" capacity. It claims not only to be offering employment and a cheaper product for the mass market, but also to be allied to one of the largest black companies in South Africa. Current reports show that Cott is doing "extremely well" in South Africa.

Of even greater significance, in December a consortium led by Lardel Holdings made the first major post sanctions Canadian invest-

ment in South Africa in a new R500 million regional commuter airline, South African Express. Operating in partnership with Thebe Investment Corporation, an ANC-linked company designed to empower black business, the regional airline will operate as a feeder service in co-operation with South African Airways.

With experience in developing Air Creebec with the James Bay Indians, the President of Lardel envisaged a short term partnership to take advantage of "niche opportunities" in South Africa. "We're not here for 10 or 15 or 20 years," he said. "We're here to start a business, to optimize the business profits, to transfer skills and some time within the five year period, get out." In addition, the airline's order of twelve de Havilland Dash 8 airlines at a cost of \$195 million will keep 2,600 people working at Bombardier's Toronto plant for a year.

#### Canadian corporate strip mining of the St. Lucia dunes

While Cott and Lardel might represent the positive potential of future private sector involvement, a second Canadian company with a long history in South Africa has become the centre of controversy. Quebec Iron and Titanium (QIT) had profited from the apartheid era, entering into an agreement in 1973 with public and private capital in South Africa to establish a beach sand mining and smelting operation at Richards Bay in Natal. It was one of the few Canadian companies that declined to join the corporate exodus from South Africa in the 1980s and stayed on.

Recently through its holdings in Richards Bay Minerals company (RBM) (and in partnership with the transnational Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ)), QIT decided to mine titanium on another section of the northern coast of Natal, a decision which has stirred up a storm of national and international protest, primarily but not exclusively over

ecological issues. QIT supplied most of the technology, and was to import 94% of the titanium. The other product of the mine, monazite, is the only alternative nuclear fuel to uranium.

The questions raised by this project reflected general concerns in some quarters of opinion in South Africa about the need for guidelines to govern corporate behaviour in the new South Africa. As Archbishop Tutu put it, "After sanctions are lifted, it must not be business as usual. There has got to be a code of conduct for business in South Africa for a kind of investment that seeks to turn around the dispossession of power and empower the dispossessed." The ANC set up a voluntary code with an emphasis on development of indigenous black business and union recognition. In July the South African Council of Churches produced its version which included "environmentally sound practices and technologies."

Yet RBM was to mine unique dunes in the ecologically sensitive coastal area of St. Lucia. The umbrella organization opposing this project, the Struggle for St. Lucia (SSL), claimed that strip mining would radically affect delicate ecosystems, destroy pristine dune forests, flood wetlands and cause erosion. Opponents of the project also argued that ecotourism made better economic sense than the mining project, not least in providing more jobs and ones that would last.

RBM officials charged that the opposition was willing to sacrifice large foreign currency earnings "on the altar of a white elitist spiritual yearning for a wilderness experience..." However, an economist with the SSL pointed out that, in fact, the owners of RBM would be the prime beneficiaries. Over the life of the project, the state would receive about R90 million for mining rights and R1.3 billion in taxes, while RBM would earn about R7.65 billion.

When the first comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment

study concluded in 1992 that "no irreparable damage to the dune ecosystem and its hydrological functions will result from mining," the battle intensified. In May 1993, renegade shareholders of RTZ challenged the corporation's plans for the St. Lucia dunes at its Annual General Meeting. In November, delegates from 27 countries at a conference in Norway signed a resolu-

Panel decided against the project because it was incompatible with conservation and ecotourism. However, the Cabinet did not rescind prospecting and mineral rights extended to RBM, so the question is not finally resolved. While Inkatha supported the project, ANC officials said only a government of national unity could grant mineral rights; yet the ANC never officially opposed the project. The question of land rights of those people forcibly removed from the area in the 1950s and 1960s is also at issue. The result has been a stalemate, with a decision to proceed awaiting the outcome of the April elections.

### Transition, violence and the elections

Much then is at stake in the next few months. With the shifting terrain has come a new appreciation in Canada of the key players and, in particular, their relative strength. With polls predicting ANC support at 65% and Inkatha's at about 5%, Buthelezi's star is finally beginning to wane in Canada too. In the past, Canadian officials periodically extended invitations to meet with him, treating him as an equal of Mandela. He was a regular on the speaking circuit, sponsored by the likes of Conrad Black. Among Canadian newspapers, the *Globe and Mail* distinguished itself by its fawning support. Remember its editorial "For Chief Buthelezi" (11 December 1986) which described him as "the best hope, if not the only hope, for the emergence of a moderate black leadership from the ashes of apartheid"? How the mighty have fallen. By June 1993, *Globe* editorials had begun to blame Buthelezi for his inability to come to an agreement with Mandela and de Klerk. By November, the "best hope" had become "the spoiler," the man who, in trying "to save his skin," could wreck the whole process. Wasn't it a long way down?

Officially, of course, the Canadian government retains a strict impartiality and its focus has been on

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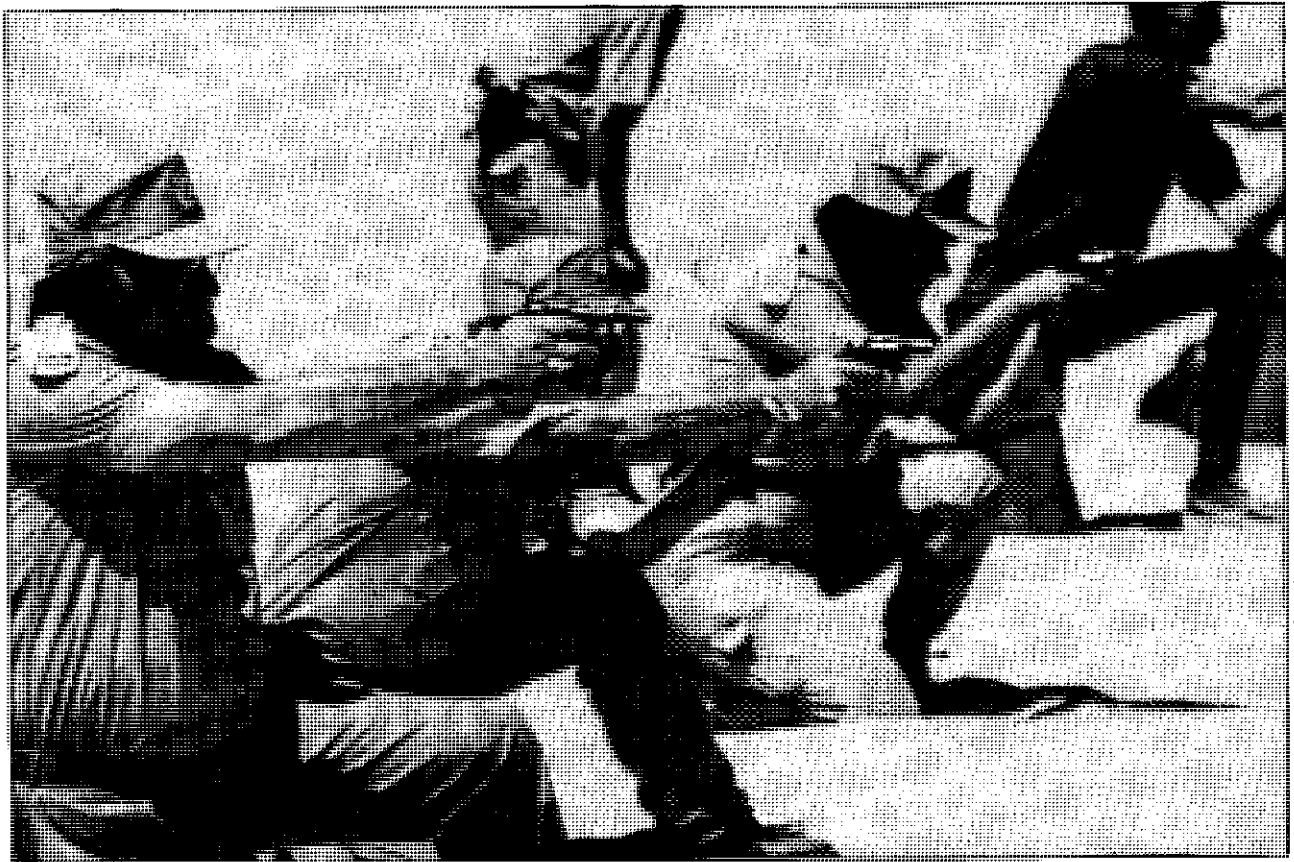
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tion against the project and 200,000 people (including Nelson Mandela, Helen Suzman and other prominent South Africans) signed a petition calling for the plan to be cancelled. An earlier petition had collected 300,000 signatures. Local black opposition to the project turned violent, and two officials of RBM were murdered.

In November, following hearings in St. Lucia and Durban, a Review





Right-wing military training camp, Western Cape (1993)

Eric Miller — Impact Visuals

helping South Africa through the democratic process. South Africa's black population has had no experience in fighting elections, and local organizations need all the help they can get to prepare and educate a population, two-thirds of which is illiterate. The fact that violent incidents increased dramatically in 1993, with deaths averaging 350 a month also casts a worrying shadow over the April 1994 elections.

Throughout the past year, a number of Canadian initiatives have been underway: Retired RCMP officers took part in a successful Commonwealth initiative to monitor the violence in Natal. Ron Gould, the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer in Canada, is one of five international members to sit on South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission, the body that will oversee the elec-

tions. Canadian church groups have had people inside South Africa monitoring the violence and working on voter education for some time. Also, in late 1993, Oxfam Canada sent a high ranking delegation (including Flora Macdonald, Ed Broadbent, Iona Campagnolo and Sunera Thobani) to assess the form which Canadian assistance to the elections should take [see Meyer Brownstone's account of this visit elsewhere in this issue]. Shortly after their return, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, announced that the Canadian government would provide \$2.5 million for voter education and Canadian election monitors.

This assistance to South Africa's political transition builds on past CIDA support for non-governmental parties involved in negotiations, training for a post-apartheid civil service, the promotion of dialogue

among South Africans, an education programme, a special development fund for non-governmental organizations and aid to black business. (Note that Canadian government assistance to South Africa increased dramatically from only about \$1 million in Mulroney's first year in office to about \$13 million in 1992/1993. Of course, such a figure must be set in perspective: annual Swedish aid to South Africa is currently running at about US\$32 million or three and a half times as much. Nevertheless, throughout Mulroney's period in office, Canadian assistance to South Africa amounted to over \$65 million as compared to only \$8 million for all previous governments.)

#### The economic policy debate

While the blossoming of Canada's aid programme in South Africa

has been helpful in propelling the transition, a crucial aspect of its future contribution will be the nature of its input into debates on socio-economic policy and the form that reconstruction will take in South Africa. In the past, the Tories were given some credit by the *Globe's* Jeff Sallot "for weaning the ANC away from the idea that a post-apartheid South Africa should be built along Marxist lines." Of course, what he himself approved of was the neo-classical orthodoxy which has emerged in Ottawa and in Washington as a new fundamentalism.

Yet the issue is not that simple. For the black majority which endured conditions making apartheid South Africa the most unequal society in the world, this approach offers little change in the short term. For those in charge in a post apartheid South Africa, the balance will be tricky - to provide conditions which will rejuvenate the economy and yet to give hope of better lives for the majority, without which peace and reconstruction will be impossible.

All the more important, then, that other voices than those wedded to the discredited formulae of structural adjustment programmes continue to stay interested, active and involved in South Africa. In particular, it would be a shame if anti-apartheid forces were simply to fade away. They, too, need a form of transformation so that they may champion those whom the orthodoxy would ignore in their solutions - in Canada as well as in South Africa. For if the struggle against apartheid meant anything, it meant support for the black majority, which has much to lose in the new dispensation. The spotlight must stay focused on the activities of the Canadian state and private sector in order to ensure that the interests of that majority are not lost sight of in the drive for a renewed economic relationship between our two countries.



Open air barber shop, Alexandra Township, Johannesburg

Santu Mofokeng — Impact Visuals

# Keeping Pace: Solidarity Work and the New Globalism

BY JUDITH MARSHALL

*Judith Marshall is a writer and educator who has been associated with TCLSAC since its founding. She now works for the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.*

In 1993, the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa was renamed, some thought more modestly, as the Toronto Committee for Links between Southern Africa and Canada. The change in name reflected a decision to seek out a post-apartheid politics of solidarity based on connections between progressive forces in "civil society" in southern Africa and Canada around the new issues posed by global restructuring. Crafting these new politics of solidarity, however, is proving to be a complex process.

TCLSAC consulted African activists about its new directions in 1991, bringing together old organizational friends plus enough others to form a group broadly representative of progressive forces in the southern Africa region. From Canada activists in the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice (ECEJ) joined, along with the Institute for Social and Economic Analysis (IBASE) in Brazil. A South-South-North Network began to take shape.

Preparations for Network meetings included systematic reflection by each group in its own organizational history. For TCLSAC, this meant recovery of its own political trajectory over 20 years. What issues and interventions? With whom in Canada? With whom in Africa?

When TCLPAC formed in 1972 as the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Portugal's African Colonies, there was insistence that solidarity politics was as much about Canada as about southern Africa. TCLPAC saw itself as part of a broader, independent left, complementing the nationalist movement's analysis of Canada as both colony and colonized. Liberation support work was an integral part of building a social change movement in Canada.



The 1970s - liberation support in its heyday

The "certainties" of the 1970s seem almost quaint viewed from the 1990's talk of "global competitiveness." "Imperialism" as a world system was the problem. People's struggles in the third world - Vietnam, Mozambique, Angola, Nicaragua - were "lopping off its tentacles." The corporate elite was tapping into "open veins" of the third world, sucking out mineral and agricultural resources for fabulous profits on the basis of cheap labour. The "development of underdevelopment" and "dependency theory" were new concepts. Nationalist movements fought to control their

own resources as the basis for self-sustained development. Solidarity work in the 1970s seemed straightforward. Our interventions were threefold - information, campaigns on corporate and government targets and material support for liberation movements. Information was key. TCLPAC published a regular bulletin, occasional articles and liberation movement documents plus a book on corporate and government involvement.

Leverage campaigns and boycotts targeted the points where corporate Canada and the Canadian government were giving support to colonial and white minority regimes. High points were the campaign against Gulf's investments in Angola and Canadian banking investment in South Africa.

The Gulf campaign revealed as much about Canada's colonized status as about Gulf's huge profits from oil in war-torn Angola. Gulf enjoyed substantial Canadian government grants to "launder" that Angolan oil in Nova Scotia before it hit American markets. Normal corporate practice in the "borderless" global economy? At the time it had church and university share holders protesting at Gulf AGMs and Gulf nervous enough to plant a corporate spy in TCLPAC. The bank campaign saw TCLSAC's broad activist base inserting look-alike deposit slips at their local banks with information about banking on apartheid.

Material aid in those days was not just humanitarian assistance for the liberated areas. TCLSAC also adopted the "in your face" approach of boots and blankets for the liberation fighters. St. Paul's

church was the scene for annual African liberation festivals with vats of peanut soup and anti-imperialist children's games in the basement.

African links were directly with the national liberation movements at the beginning — FRELIMO, MPLA and PAIGC. Zimbabwe with its contending liberation movements proved more difficult. Liberation movements which came to power in Mozambique and Angola in 1975 treated solidarity activists as honoured guests. TCLPAC even got the official invitation to Mozambican independence.

With whom we did we work in Canada? The early 1970s was an era of left activism. *Cinema of Solidarity* was TCLPAC's flagship — a Sunday evening cinema series promoting not only new third world films but also a political space. Each week drew 300-400 people — other solidarity activists from Chile, Viet Nam, Argentina and Brazil, the women's movement, trade unionists, native people and Canadian nationalists. African struggles were linked with other liberation struggles, far afield and in Canada.

### 1980s — the mainstreaming of anti-apartheid politics

The shifting discourse of the 1980s clearly put solidarity politics into a very different context. Information and leverage campaigns continued, but with a change in content and a new Ottawa focus. "Humanitarian assistance to liberation movements," aid to the frontline states under South African siege and, later, funding for "victims of apartheid" became CIDA-matchable categories.

The late 1980s brought an era of NGO coalition work in Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe. On balance, TCLSAC probably played a positive role in the Mozambique consortium — Cooperation Canada-Mozambique (COCAMO), tilting its direction in Nampula towards an emphasis upon the agricultural cooperative movement and upon the



David Hartman

empowerment of autonomous, indigenous NGOs. Consortium life, however, meant strong tensions, at times pitting the value of dollar inputs over against inputs of lobbying, education and analysis. At other times the tensions revolved around differing conceptions of partnership. Were these "funding partnerships" or were they partnerships between Canadians and Mozambicans involved in common endeavors from literacy centres to agricultural cooperatives?

Canadian NGOs like Oxfam and CUSO and WUSC who had been one set of players among many in the 1970s became central players in the 1980s, particularly in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. They commanded budgets and field staffs that encouraged them to take on increasingly dominant roles. Meanwhile, the Canadian government itself became a significant player in the anti-apartheid movement, with Canadian Embassy staff in Pretoria funding groups in the townships and becoming well connected to COSATU, UDF and later ANC leaders. With the much higher economic and diplomatic stakes in

South Africa, the Canadian government by-passed some NGO players and induced others into existence, (the South African Education Trust Fund) while keeping a firm hand on the reins. Only a few grumpy voices like TCLSAC's persisted in pondering aloud whether the \$7 million Mozambican package so ardently embraced as a triumph by the NGOs who had lobbied for it was really a victory. Or had the NGOs merely been drawn into an IMF-World Bank game plan with western aid packages as the carrot for countries reluctant to adopt orthodox structural adjustment programmes? Equally to the point: Was the Canadian government enthusiasm to dismantle apartheid genuine, or was it better understood as a strategy to preempt more revolutionary transformation?

### The 1980s: partners, African and Canadian

With whom did we work in Africa? As the eighties progressed, the liberation movements throughout southern Africa had become parties and governments. By and large, they proved to be more comfortable acting in the name of their "povo" than

in opening up democratic spaces for genuine popular empowerment. The government departments in Mozambique and Angola promoting popular involvement in cooperatives, literacy, health, water and housing quickly reverted to top-down command structures. This left few popular organizations working on the ground for solidarity activists to link up with. (The South Africa situation had a different direction, of course. There a highly articulated mass democratic movement — still balked of power — entered its second decade of existence, with strong labour and community groups and significant coalition politics and this did begin to provide some new openings for solidarity work.)

By the end of the 1980s, our links with the Frelimo Party in Mozambique and the MPLA Workers Party in Angola had become weak, while TCLSAC never had had strong connections with the Zimbabwe movements. The relationship with the ANC was solid but not without its tensions. TCLSAC's original commitment to "critical solidarity" rather than "cheer-leaderism" had been reinforced by our experience of the dramatic shifts taken by other liberation movements once in power. But this style of critical support and asking difficult questions was not always appreciated in ANC circles. At the same time, as regards southern African NGOs and popular organizations, TCLSAC had begun to develop working relations with a range of groups, particularly in South Africa.

In Canada itself, however, working links with other solidarity groups, native people's struggles, the women's movement and poverty groups in Canada had become less prominent. These groups often were still connected into southern African issues as the anti-apartheid issue hit the mainstream, reinforced by rock stars and mass media attention. But what was increasingly lost was the sharper resonance of a left solidarity politics that went beyond liberal

repugnance at racism to a deeper critique of the workings of international capital.

### Solidarity work in the 1990s

TCLSAC entered the 1990s with the anti-apartheid movement winding down and serious questions about its future. Some argued for a final boisterous party to celebrate two decades of solidarity work, followed by a dignified good-bye. The voices that prevailed argued for a new form of north-south solidarity to link together progressive forces in "civil society" in Canada and southern Africa around the new issues posed by the "globalization" of the economy.

The last three years have shown, however, that creating new kinds of working relationships *cum* strategic alliances with organizations in southern Africa is complex. Linking activists in Canada and southern Africa brings with it a need to displace an existing discourse and structuring of international relationships as "funding partnerships" that had begun to emerge strongly in the 1980s. The fundamental concept in that discourse was "development" and with it come a way of talking about North-South relationships and the articulation of a chain of well calibrated institutions ranging from international financial bodies like the IMF to CIDA and other dispensers of official aid to the multiple NGO bodies.

These institutions are all involved in funding relationships with southern governments, NGOs and community groups. Under their aegis, north-south relationships are increasingly mediated through "projects," through "field staff officers," through funding criteria. The rough textured, fast-changing world of social movements, grass-roots groups and labour organizations in the south has had to be honed into a sequence of activities and budget lines that meet project criteria in order to fit in with the north. While the lan-

guage of solidarity may prevail in the education and action face of the development agency, the highly asymmetrical power relations of a "funding partnership" and "donor-beneficiary" relationship continue to be the most powerful operational forces.

In southern Africa, this world of NGO "partnerships" is a relatively new phenomena, least developed in Angola and Mozambique and more articulated in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania. Popular participation by African organizations and citizen action in "civil society" are being actively promoted by northern governments and NGOs as part of a push towards political pluralism. Both northern and southern NGOs face the grave danger, already apparent in the 1980s, of being instrumentalized to service an agenda that is not of their own making.

In South Africa, for example, activists find themselves being drawn into new kinds of north-south relations. The world campaign to end apartheid created special funds for "victims of apartheid" with substantial amounts pouring in to political activists in the townships, community groups and labour organizations. With Mandela's release and the beginning of an official dismantling of apartheid, these labour organizations, civic groups and the new social movements around gender and environmental concerns found themselves highly dependent on northern funders who, for their part, announced the end of funding for "victims of apartheid" and the dawn of funding for "development." South African activists with whom I met in 1990 were asking in consternation, "What is development? Does our community newspaper or women's programme qualify? Or must we all go into income-generating activities?"

The prevailing "North-South" relationships, then, are dominated by funders. The more progressive of them do try to downplay the power of the purse, taking up advocacy in the north on policy

issues like debt and structural adjustment and ODA, of course. But even though these are eminently worthwhile areas of action in and of themselves, the real danger is that these progressive NGOs skew north-south dialogue and strategic alliances by filling the northern side with northern NGOs primarily concerned with the south as primary focus for their own work. What tends to get blocked out, however, is the possible creation by those in the south of working alliances by with northern activists who are working on domestic issues here at home.

The 1992 NGO Forum on IMF and World Bank Structural Adjustment Lending in Washington was a case in point. Northern representation was almost entirely from international development agencies. Feed-back on the agenda was the first item and the critique from the south was basically: "Where is the north with whom we came to exchange experiences?" While assuring their affection for northern NGO funding partners, the southern delegates indicated clearly that those whom they really needed to be talking to in order to get a handle on the global economy were northern poverty activists, trade unionists and women fighting NAFTA. For they saw structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in the South and trade agreements in the North as related pieces of the global puzzle that needed to be put together.

Despite this, TCLSAC efforts to create a South-South-North Network of activists to do some of that piecing together finds itself bucking a strong current. In most forums, North-South power relations are still rarely put on the table. As noted, existing networks are ones formed by northern NGOs to bring their southern partners together around policy issues: the northern voice belongs to development agencies whose task in the north is to lobby their own government on policies affecting the south such as debt or aid policy. It is still something of an anomaly to have a Canadian woman from NAC or the National Farmers' Union as the northern partner, eager, for example, to put on the table NAFTA's effects on women in the Canadian labour force!

Carving out new links in Canada is equally fraught. The 1990s find solidarity activity in Canada at a low ebb, be it in relation to South Africa, Nicaragua or El Salvador. On the positive side, Canadian organizations like NAC and the teachers' federations and the unions are feeling a new need to connect internationally as they confront the global economy. This results in a wish to carve out "international desks" for more sustained connections, a positive development but one that changes the role of solidarity organizations. So one set of questions for a group like TCLSAC is whether alone,

or through the COUNTERPOINT Resource Centre on Global Analysis, TCLSAC can find a role in helping to service and to enhance the international work being done by other organizations.

And what, in any case, would be the forums within which the relevant connections might be made between a solidarity organization like ourselves and these other organizations? With the links of the 1970s long in the past and the organizational fellow travellers of the anti-apartheid movement from the 1980s now either defunct or into promoting business and investment in South Africa, TCLSAC finds itself disconcertingly unconnected. Meanwhile old colleagues, travellers on the left have themselves regrouped, many brought together in opposition to the Free Trade Agreement with the US. Then, after the Mulroney government went ahead with the FTA, the movement regrouped to fight against the extension of the FTA to Mexico through NAFTA. A broad-based national coalition, Action Canada Network, has emerged, along with provincial and local social justice coalitions affiliated to ACN.

On the face of it, Latin American solidarity activists can more readily link with Action Canada Network as they confront hemispheric initiatives to extend NAFTA throughout the Americas. Yet, at base, NAFTA is best understood not so

## New Diplomatic Asset!

Another small cluster of coalitions can be identified which are somewhat different. These evolved from working groups within CCIC that had been created initially to mobilize pressure on CIDA and the government over Canadian policies in southern Africa. The leadership in these instance came from solidarity groups like the Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa and the from the few politically radical NGOs such as Oxfam (Canada) and CUSO who had long been active in southern Africa. When nationalist governments finally came to power in these countries, the Canadian government which had been very reluctant to extend even non-military aid to African liberation

movements, scrambled to improve its political image. These Canadian NGOs had long had good relations with the new leadership. They were suddenly a Canadian diplomatic asset.

In another context, relating to aid to Southern Africa, CIDA induced into being the South African Education Trust Fund because it did not trust the strong NGOs already active in regard to South Africa to be sufficiently sensitive to Canadian foreign policy concerns ...

[Tim Broadhead and Cranford Pratt: *Canadian Non-Governmental Organization and CIDA; Paying the Piper*. Forthcoming]



much as a single trade agreement as an epitomizing a more global corporate agenda. Within the neo-liberal model, structural adjustment programmes provide the shock treatment, using debt/deficit as the club to force deregulation and open up economies. SAPs are then followed by trade agreements to lock that outward orientation into place. Clearly, in these terms, southern Africa is being restructured using the same orthodox models as are being applied to the rest of the world.

Therefore this shared vulnerability to the "logic" of globalism provides a good base for solidarity. Still, finding a new practice of promoting practical solidarity actions linking activists in southern Africa and Canada continues to present a serious challenge. There is, as

we have seen, the task in southern Africa of countering the world of "donors" and "beneficiaries" locked into "funding partnerships" with an alternative practice premised on "solidarity action" between "strategic allies" making common cause against corporate greed and environmental devastation. There is the additional challenge in Canada of finding an effective way of working with others struggling for economic justice, shaping and being shaped by the forums where social movements in Canada play out their politics. There is a need to reconnect with the political vision of our early years and to rediscover the creative tension of solidarity politics that can make it as much about fighting for democratic spaces and human liberation in Canada as about fighting for economic

justice and respect for diversity in southern Africa.

Can TCLSAC's recent decision to join the Action Canada Network provide a place where TCLSAC/SAR's left politics can connect? Time alone will tell, but one thing did at least seem clear during our own vigorous internal debates on the issue: without structural connection of some such kind and a commitment to choosing our issues and connections in southern Africa in ways that strengthen popular struggles in Canada, TCLSAC/SAR runs the risk of losing the particular blend of, on the one hand, involvement with the social change movement in Canada and, on the other, southern Africa experience and expertise that marked its beginnings.

# Elections and After: Oxfam in South Africa

BY MEYER BROWNSTONE

*When the Oxfam-Canada Pre-Election mission arrived in South Africa late last year, national negotiations to set the framework for elections were just being concluded. Or so it was thought.*

*But the process of transformation in South Africa is still very contentious and conflict has been escalating as the enormity of organizing elections runs up against the problem of too little time to get everything done. Some aspects of the electoral framework, as we go to press, are being renegotiated in an attempt to induce recalcitrants such as General Constand Viljoen, head of the Afrikaner Volksfront, and Mangosuthu Buthelezi, head of the Inkatha Freedom Party, to join in the April election.*

*Meyer Brownstone was a member of the Oxfam-Canada mission. Despite the rapidly changing scenario, his comments on the urgent need for international support both for the electoral process and for the broader ongoing project of democratic transformation in South Africa remain valid and timely.*

The negotiating process has defined a fully adequate and generally excellent legal structure for the April election. The specific institutions to be involved are the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) with overall responsibility and specific responsibility for security, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) which is to administer the process, and the Independent Media Commission (IMC) which is to regulate media behaviour and to facilitate access to media. There is a new Electoral Law which replaces all existing electoral legislation.

The election will determine representation at both provincial and national levels. The electing system is proportional, that is parties will

succeed in direct proportion to the proportion of total votes received. When the Oxfam mission was in South Africa the agreement was that the first elections for both provincial and national legislatures would be conducted with a single ballot — a matter which was a source of controversy and considerable questioning by foreign observers. The argument for the single ballot was the need to introduce as few complications as possible in a first election, given that the vast majority of voters have never voted before and many are illiterate. Both the single ballot, the system of electoral divisions and the particular proportional system chosen tended to favour the chances of the ANC and to minimize pluralist decentralizing possibilities — at least for the transitional process. [In late February the decision was changed to allow for a double ballot — that is, voters could vote for one party at a provincial level, another at national level. Several of the nineteen political parties registered exist at provincial level only.]

The electoral structure as defined in the Electoral Law is well designed although there may be some question regarding the number of polling stations contemplated and the average number of voters per poll which is higher than international practice. Potentially this may mean limited access for voters and crowding at the polls if plans go ahead to have a one day vote. [It has been agreed that voting will take place over three days, the first for "special" votes, and the 27-28th for the main voting exercise].

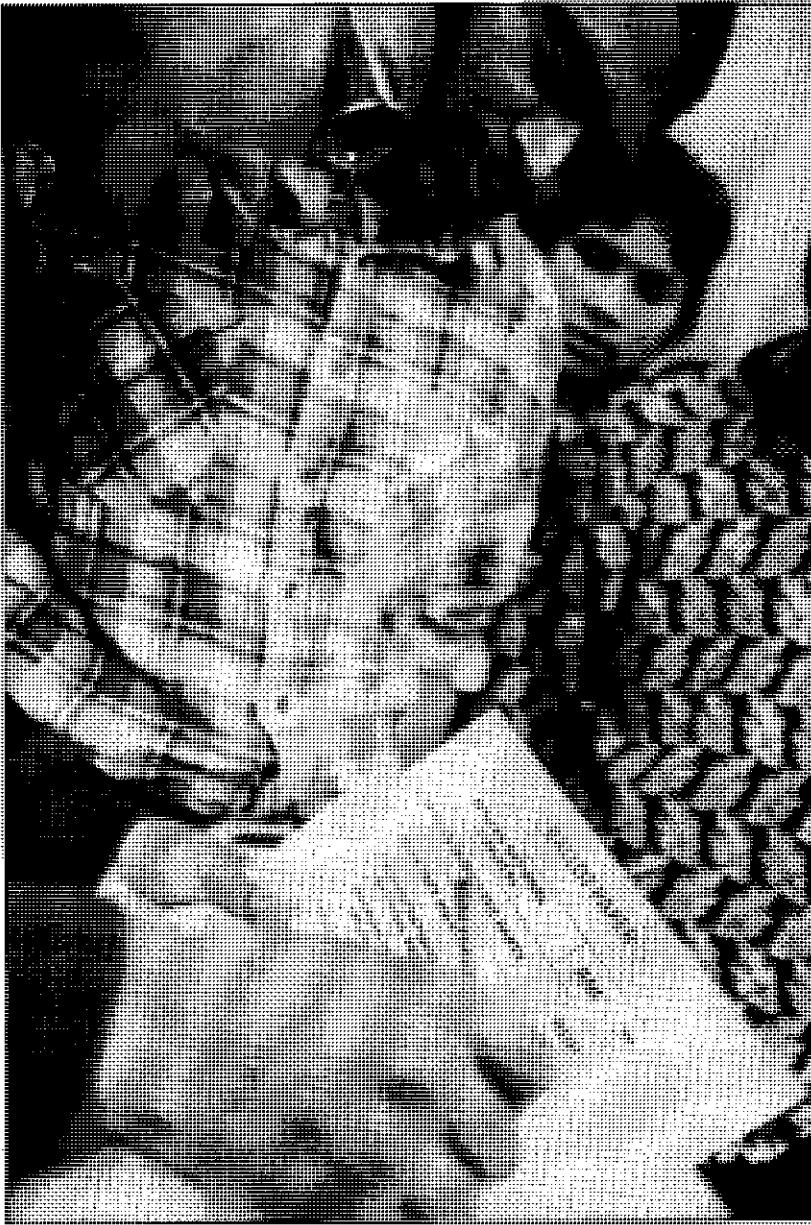
Staffing the polls and counting stations will be a challenging process. The available machinery in the

present Department of Home Affairs is both inadequate and inappropriate since, as a key agency of apartheid, it lacks credibility for most South Africans. To staff the 8,000 polling stations and some 300 mobile stations, as well as counting stations and other parts of the system, will involve over 100,000 people. But this whole process should also be a constructive and integrative experience, providing an opportunity for multi-racial and gender-equal participation. Other countries such as Nicaragua and Eritrea have met this kind of educational and organizational challenge very effectively. South Africa begins with a core of electoral expertise.

Even more importantly, it also begins with a high degree of NGO involvement in voter education, a crucial determinant of electoral effectiveness. Not surprisingly, voter education has been a focus of aid from Canada and other countries. Much more needs to be done in this area but the process awaits the design of specific electoral procedures and instruments by the newly appointed Independent Electoral Commission, itself faced with a staggering schedule. But voter education also needs peaceful and open access to eligible voters and this is by far the most intractable issue.

We visited the community of Grootville in Natal for its first session in voter education organized by the community and the Women's Resource Centre. The session was delayed for two hours because a community leader was dealing with a violent incident in a neighbouring community. The session itself was an outstanding example of the powerful role that women can play in





Rodger Bosch — Impact Visuals

*Election rehearsal in shopping centre, Mitchells Plain, Cape Town (1993)*

the first steps towards a new South Africa. Their approach to education and training puts to shame some of Canada's more mechanistic and huckster techniques. It was rooted in the songs, the dances and the understanding of the community — and conducted with patience and warmth. But the people live under

constant threats of bombs, battering and intimidation. They welcomed our standing with them, reducing their isolation. At the same time, they were scrupulous about our security.

The complexity of the issue of violence left the strongest impres-

sion on the OXFAM-Canada mission. Not only is there a transcending culture of violence inherited from the imposition of apartheid but there are many forms of violence with specific roots and manifestations. There is violence against women, there are taxi wars, urban street violence, there is violence generated in the hostels, Inkatha violence and to a much lesser degree ANC violence, fascist violence, homeland violence, black consciousness violence, and the general threat from aggregations such as the Freedom Alliance. This list could be extended with particular reference to violence emanating from and organized by the security and police forces of South Africa as was recently determined by the Goldstone Commission. This differentiated violence requires different means to ensure a non-violent election process. It also requires that those means be employed strategically since it will be impossible to deal with all of it everywhere. Given the pervasiveness of the violence that threatens this election, the mission was highly critical of the apparent indifference to and neglect of South Africa's pending elections on the part of the international community, compared, for example with its involvement in the cases of Namibia, Eritrea, and to a lesser extent, Nicaragua and El Salvador. There seemed to be a tragic hiatus between the strong international posture on the issue of apartheid and this first step towards its effective dismantling.

The mission issued a strong recommendation to both the UN and Canada for immediate action through international participation in the reduction of violence. Internally, the treatment of violence will depend on a number of factors. These include mass voter education and voter consciousness, a significant expansion of indigenous violence monitoring (which although limited by resources and people is

nevertheless a well advanced and highly competent NGO activity), the rapid installation of the Electoral Commission with an overall responsibility for monitoring and the major involvement of international NGO partners in the entire electoral process. The need for a peacekeeping or electoral police force to anticipate and stop major acts of violence and to ensure a non-intimidating climate during the campaign and the voting-counting process, is very apparent. There is, in fact, provision for such a body under the direction of the TEC - the National Peacekeeping Force (NPF) but setting up the NPF as a viable body will be difficult to achieve in the short run available and particularly in time to secure the election itself. As indicated above, this nascent force faces a complex realm of violence. There is a staggering level of arms in the country, including significant sales of arms from Mozambique combatants, as was reported to us in Natal. Under these circumstances the dispersal of peacekeeping forces during the election will probably need to be strategic. An international response to support the Peacekeeping Force is vital.

The Electoral Commission is taking steps to integrate and coordinate the approach to violence as well as other aspects of the electoral process. It would appear now that it will absorb the current valuable NGO peace and monitoring efforts and establish a decentralized system of IEC monitors as the focal point of efforts in regions and locales. Official international participation will be integrated into this structure.

Threats to the election are immense and everyone predicts an increase in violence during the campaign. NGO monitoring and peacekeeping has enjoyed considerable success, and townships such as Alexandra and Soweto, the scenes of gross violence, have recently experienced a substantial reduction of violence. Unfortunately, this is not

true of East Rand or Natal and there is frequent news of violence in various parts of the country. Should the Freedom Alliance members decide eventually to participate in the elections, this may produce moderating effects. But these possibilities should not lull the international community into complacency. Proposals, including those of the Mission and supported by the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Canada, have gone to the UN - which has recently responded with a plan for immediate dramatic increase in monitors and observers to add to the virtually symbolic group of 50 UN monitors who were then in South Africa. Similar responses have not been made by the OAU, the European Community or the Commonwealth.

A proposal was made by the Oxfam mission to the Government of Canada for a major Canadian effort involving 200 observers. Part of this was submitted as a proposal by OXFAM-Canada which intends to recruit, train and place in the field an NGO observer group to work with the IEC and NGO partner groups in South Africa in the electoral process during late March and April. Anticipating a positive response to its request for Government funding, Oxfam invited applicants for the posts as election observers and received well over 400 responses from every region in Canada, representing a wide variety of groups and experience. With the latest cuts in the international aid budget however, the number of people that Oxfam is able to send has been reduced from approximately 60, down to an unfortunately low 20. In South Africa the OXFAM office in Durban has established a working relationship with the IEC, and its partner South African NGOs. A small Canadian advance group will go to South Africa in late February to familiarize itself with all aspects of the observing process and to participate in the training process in Canada.

### The broader context

Clearly, the elections are an important focus of our work with emphasis on the effective participation of those who are able to vote for the first time. But equally clearly, there is a wider context for these events.

The vast majority of South Africans have ample reason to distrust the state that designed and carried out apartheid policy. In forcing change, South Africans have developed an extensive network of community-based, regional and national structures that they are not willing to see relegated to inconsequence.

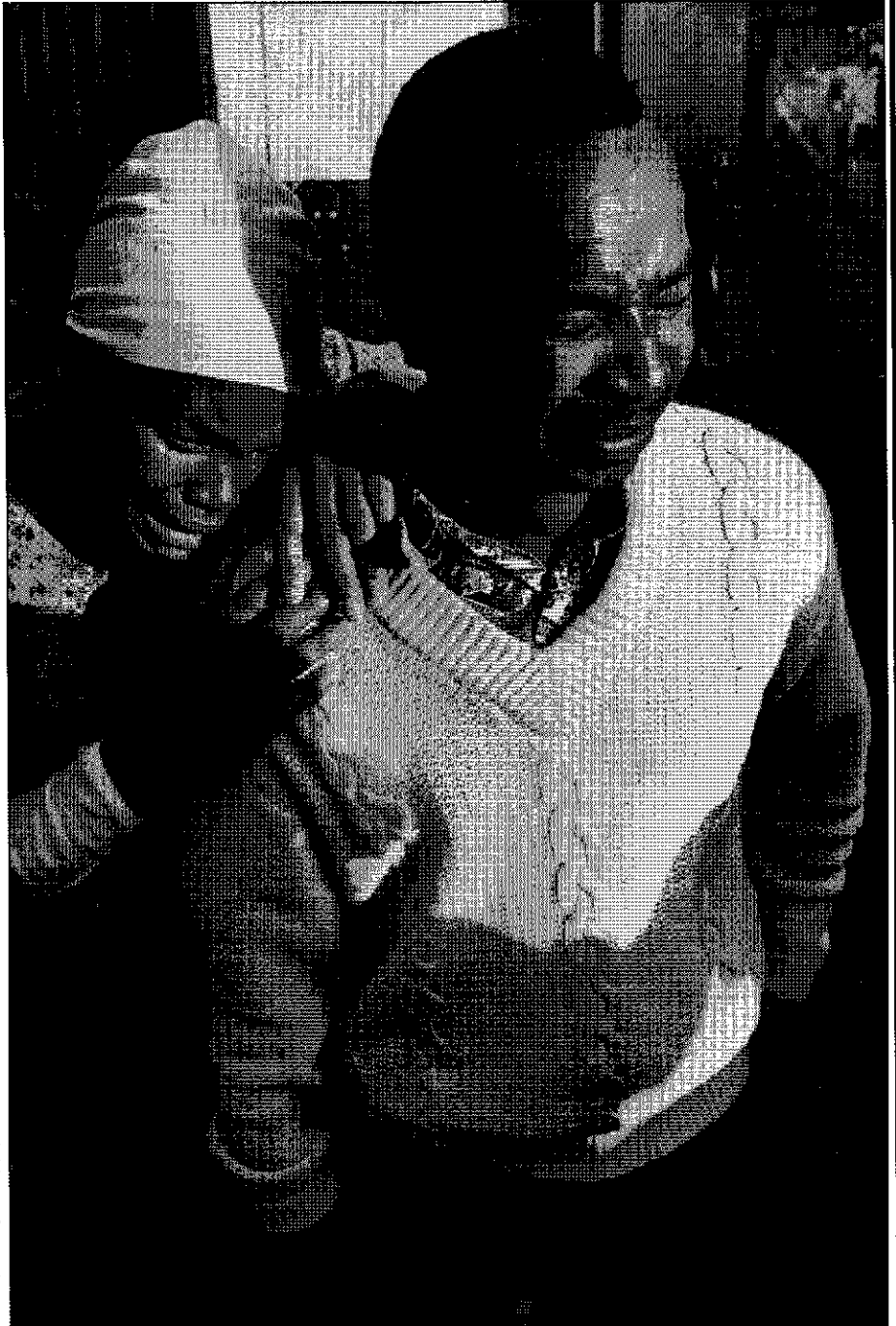
This is where, I believe, it is most important for Canadian NGO and Government support to be directed. OXFAM-Canada has, for example, determined with its South African partners, that it should be providing support to community-based organizations dealing with both the general issue of empowerment and appropriate development, together with a particular emphasis on gender equality. At the same time, Canadian support via IDRC is helping with the transformation of the South African public service. With these two thrusts, plus electoral support, Canada is playing a highly significant role in the efforts of NGOs and government working in compatible and appropriate areas.

But the real test lies ahead. Whatever the perceived and real empowerment experienced through the electoral process, it will not, by itself, remove the harsh reality and/or meet the overwhelming expectations of millions of Africans. Canada and the international community should not fail to support in South Africa a radically different process of development, one which focuses on the poor, on gender oppression, on the environment, on social issues and on the liberation of the long repressed capacities of the African people.

# Abdul Shariff

On January 9, Abdul Shariff, many of whose photos we have used in *SAR*, was shot in the back and killed while covering an ANC delegation visit to Katlehong near Johannesburg. A member of the Impact Visuals co-operative, Shariff was hit by fire from a hostel occupied by Inkatha supporters and apparently directed at Cyril Ramaphosa and Joe Slovo. A native of Johannesburg, Shariff is known for documenting the violence and oppression of apartheid, often focusing on the perspective of township residents and black workers. He had worked for Impact Visuals for three years, originally as part of the photo collective Afrapix. From his early documentary projects for activist student publications, the Natal Indian Congress and the UDF, Shariff's photography in the last few years has appeared regularly in South Africa, Europe, Canada and the US, in major news publications that include *The Weekly Mail*, *Der Spiegel*, *Newsweek* and the *New York Times*, as well as our own. "I see my pictures contributing to the documentation of our history," he wrote recently. Shariff had fought against apartheid all his life, starting with the student political movement while in high school, where he was a coordinator of the nationwide school boycotts.

In Shariff's memory, a fund has been established to provide a grant for South African documentary photographers from needy backgrounds. Tax deductible donations can be made payable to "The Africa Fund," noting "Abdul Shariff Fund" on the cheque, and sent to: The Abdul Shariff Memorial Fund, c/o The Africa Fund, 198 Broadway, New York, NY 10038, USA.



*Survivors of the Boipatong massacre (1992)*

Abdul Shariff — Impact Visuals

# Getting Away With It Who's Backing Savimbi?

BY VICTORIA BRITAIN

Victoria Britain of the Guardian is SAR's Angola correspondent.

Sambizanga is Luanda's largest shanty town, a community of 100,000 people even before refugees in the last year began to swell the Angolan capital's population to double what it was five years ago. Sambizanga's dirt tracks are pitted with potholes, lined with heaps of stinking rubbish, and until recently, there were only three standpipes bringing water to the community.

This city within a city – where jobs, education, and health are increasingly the stuff of dreams – has long been a symbol of how South Africa's destabilization crushed Angola's hopes after independence. It is a symbol, too, of how the MPLA lost its way from the passion for social justice which spurred the war of liberation from the Portuguese, finally spawning a government acknowledged as corrupt and incompetent even by those who voted for it in 1992, worked for it for decades, and still fight for it because the alternative offered by Unita is so much worse. But Sambizanga also demonstrates the resilience and self-sufficiency of Angolans at the grassroots who over so many years sustained an inspirational myth for the rest of Africa by their resistance against the war fired by the US and South Africa.

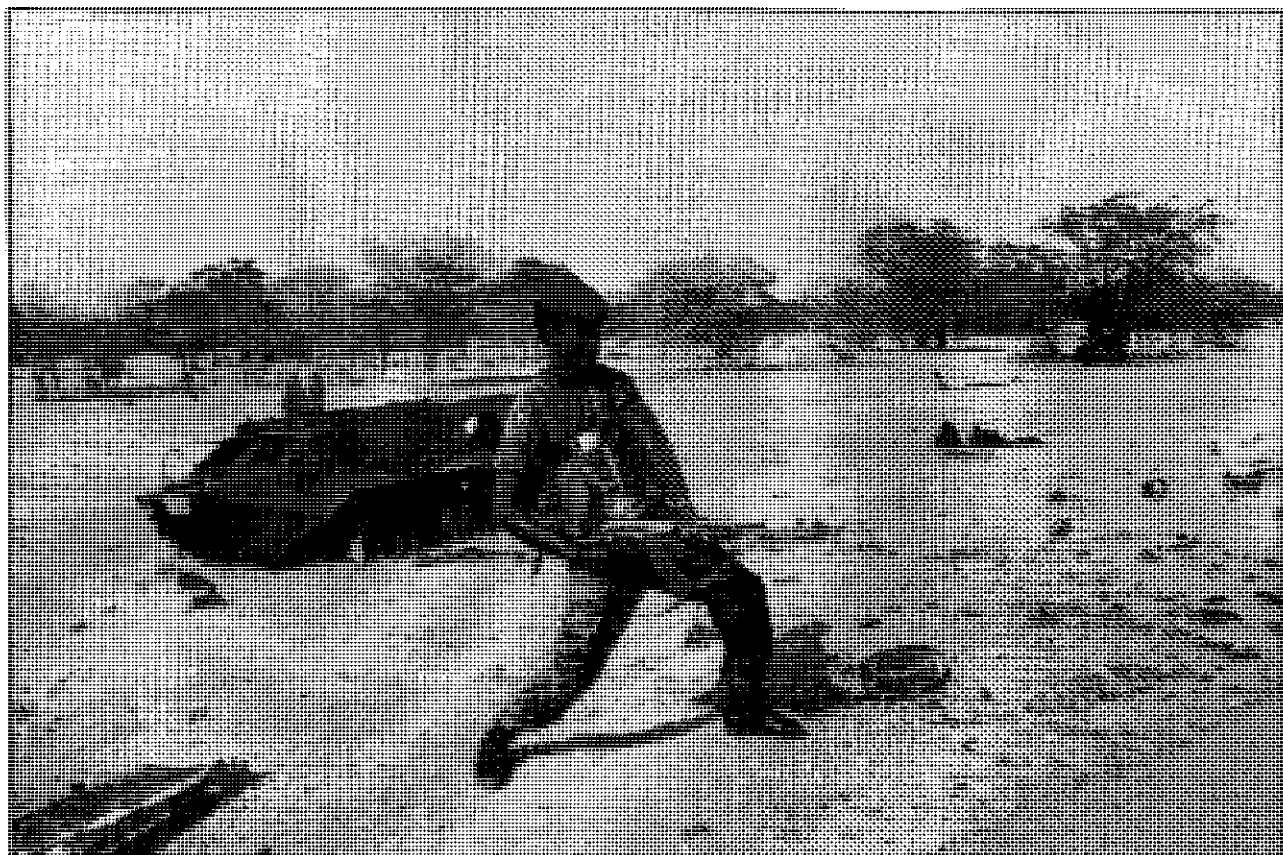
The local clinic at Sambizanga is built round a courtyard where *activistas* from community groups do street theatre at lunch time – making people laugh, and think, about hygiene and health as they wait for the vaccinations that are the main work of this primary health clinic. Alan Cain of the Canadian-based Development

Workshop (DW), which pays some of the *activistas*, and some key individuals from the collapsing state structures, has made this clinic a focus for a community that, against all the odds, has not collapsed. Maris Orchidea Saraiva, formerly with the Angolan Women's Organization (OMA) and now with DW, says never has she confronted a social situation so dire – malnutrition, abandoned children, refugees, mutilated mine victims and unemployment have brought needs on a scale that has defeated most of the international community in Angola. But despite the despair and tragedy which is the stuff of life in Sambizanga, this is a community where self-help development is vibrant – on a very small scale. A few kilometres down the road DW has a compound where six apprentices are making latrine slabs for sale in Sambizanga. Each youth, once he has mastered the skill, will go back to his community confident of making a living from a small latrine business, and he will be replaced by another apprentice.

The *activistas*, all elected from their own communities, travel their areas making family visits to check health, cleanliness and sanitation habits. DW's original partner in Sambizanga was OMA, but now it is a patchwork of community groups that sprang up after the 1989 Freedom of Association law was changed. Cain, Orchidea and a small team of *activistas* meet weekly to discuss their work and the siting and progress of new standpipes being put into Sambizanga by DW water engineers, and to assign different *activistas* the unenviable tasks of liaising with the city water company and the rubbish collection authority.

These people and their community organizations provide a focus of pride and purpose. The dismantling of the state under the liberalization imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in the mid-1980s has left the vulnerable, like those who live in Sambizanga, prey to a savage capitalism they are ill-equipped to cope with. And since Unita returned to war in October 1992, it has been an urban war like no other phase of struggle in Angola. The collapse of the economy and agricultural production, plus the distortions of the black market in foreign currency, have hit the swollen populations of Luanda and Benguela hard. The violence on the streets, the frequent riots in the port and around food warehouses, and the armies of tens of thousands of street children are signs of the social and economic catastrophe unleashed by the war and for which neither the government nor the international community has a survival strategy. Benguela has emergency soup kitchens run by Caritas, both cities have new hospital wards and overspill units for babies with advanced malnutrition, but such initiatives only touch the edges of need.

A recent World Food Programme policy paper that spells out the refusal to count these people among the estimated three million "war affected" is one expression of the United Nation's highly political, pro-Unita, post-election strategy that has compounded the complex humanitarian and political disaster. "The mission was confronted with requests that we consider these groups (the urban poor) to be 'war-affected' for the purposes of emergency assessment. Had we done so, we would of course have added many hundreds of thousands of



*Destroyed tanks in mine field in Angola. A FAPLA border guard poses (1990)*

persons to our estimated caseloads in the Government of Angola (GOA) controlled areas. In the end, however, it was the opinion of the mission that this problem was in fact of a structural and GOA policy nature, and not one that donors would consider an appropriate or fundable part of an emergency programme."

The mission's terms of reference define "conflict affected persons" as including returnees (former refugees), the internally displaced, and those who reside in their communities but are unable to feed themselves due to destruction and confiscation of crops or because of restricted access to markets. A substantial part of the population of Luanda is certainly within those terms of reference. It might more fairly be argued that the population of Jamba, who do receive UN supplies

are a "structural and policy" problem for Unita, but with the US dominating the UN operation, no one enters this political minefield publicly. "Uige, Cuito and Cuando Cubango are all getting massive UN food supplies, though the government is not fighting there and you could say Unita should be left to organize their civilian needs as they do their arms supplies," said one aid official. Under the same constraint, there has been remarkably little discussion of the UN aid operation to Cuito that began in October after a nine-month siege by Unita that reduced the town to conditions described as medieval by the first aid officials allowed in. They found, too, that, as the Angolan government had been reporting for weeks, between a third and half of the 100,000 population had died of hunger or shelling as Unita ruthlessly tightened the screws on

a town that was the key to their strategy of seizing control of the central provinces of Huambo, Bie and Benguela.

Unita offered a cease fire around Cuito and aid flights were allowed in under a deal which gave Unita 50% of the UN aid. The food for the government side was for the 50,000 or so people trapped in the town. Unita has brought civilians from many kilometres away to collect supplies from their store under the eyes of television cameras and some UN supervision, but there can be little doubt that Unita's besieging army is the major beneficiary of the deal. Supplies of fuel for Unita have also been brought in on the UN planes.

In addition, in flat contradiction of the guarantees of the sovereignty of the government given by Unita in

the Bicesse agreement and backed by the UN, Unita also was given an effective veto of who could go in or out of the town, only reachable through a Unita checkpoint between the airport and the town. Some international aid agency personnel have been refused entry by Unita. "I smelled a dead rat in this deal from the start," said one. "Unita were not interested in agencies they didn't already know and had relations with from earlier days." No Angolans were allowed either in or out by Unita, so a thousand seriously wounded people who the UN initially said it would evacuate were never flown out, and, as one experienced aid worker said, "they almost certainly all died."

The Cuito affair illustrates not only the power Unita has been gradually given by the international com-

munity, but also the independence foreign non-governmental organizations working in Unita areas have been given by the weak central government.

The UN is, according to Manuel Aranda da Silva, head of the UN humanitarian operation in Angola, trying very hard to mobilize NGOs to go to Cuito. For the UN, the NGOs are the only monitoring vehicle they have and the only executing bodies to fill the vacuum of administration in most of the country. For the Angolan government, unable to operate in 80% of its own territory, there is no choice but to accept the life-saving work done by the agencies.

But there is a political price to be paid and it is growing steeper by the week: Unita's increasing viability as an alternative administration. In addition, the obligatory silence

about Unita's character, methods and capacity from the agencies working in its control zone and anxious to safeguard their staff, is obscuring what will be key elements in the political future of Angola.

A recent Amnesty report on UN peace-keeping around the world relates directly to this awkward question. The report poses an important challenge to the UN to observe world-wide the principle agreed in Bosnia that human rights violations should be reported publicly. The report breaks new ground in publicly criticizing the UN silence in Angola over Unita's violations of Bicesse in the pre-election period. Amnesty holds this silence partly to blame for Unita's contempt for the process and therefore important in the post-election period when the UN has in effect, with its humanitarian aid and its mobilizing of NGOs, rewarded



*E.C. donated cooking oil distributed in Angola by the Red Cross (1991)*

Unita for the brutal sieges, the massive human rights violations inflicted on the areas taken over and the continuing military action despite repeated declarations of a cease fire.

A parallel appeasement has gone out in the political sphere where the long-drawn out Lusaka talks have provided the Security Council with an alibi for not strengthening sanctions. "Why should we sanction someone now in negotiations?" Alioune Blondin Beye asked me during an interview in Luanda in January. The Secretary General's Special Representative went on to say that he considered Savimbi, "a man of honour, a man whose word is his honour." In such a political context, UN silence over Unita's flagrant breaking of the toothless UN sanctions on arms and fuel supplies with regular flights into Uige, Gove, Jamba and several other airstrips under their control is not surprising. "It is completely impossible that the aid community does not know about this resupply, airports like Uige, for instance, are in regular use by UN planes bringing in food supplies for much of the northern region wholly controlled by Unita and supplied by truck out of Uige," said one army officer. "Of course everyone knows," said one western diplomat, "but no one here likes to buck US policy." US policy, with its roots in decades of support for Savimbi and the consensus among policy makers that he would win the election, has, over the last year, become ever more clearly UN policy.

The talks in Abijan in 1993 and Lusaka in 1993-94 (where the US sent their own Special Envoy, Paul Hare) reflected the policy spelt out in congressional hearings by such Angola experts as Chester Crocker: get a power-sharing deal for Savimbi, and along the way, gloss over Bicesse, the election result and the much-vaunted commitment to democracy.

The essential elements in the



*Searching for mines in Angola (1993)*

Lusaka talks, the details of which Mr. Beye insisted be kept confidential, were a UN force of "blue helmets" to oversee the withdrawal of Unita troops and the incorporation of some in the FAA and in the elite riot police; high cabinet posts and regional governorships for Unita; some special status for Savimbi. The pressures put on the government delegation included financial pressures from the IMF. The long-drawn out process has been the subject of total scepticism in Luanda where neither the Parliament, the Central Committee, the military nor the press had any insight into the concessions being demanded from, or given by, the President's negotiating team. Since the events of October and November 1992 when, in Luanda and Benguela, the government was saved from Unita's attempted coup by the thousands of volunteers who fought the pilot committees and the incoming armies hand to hand, supported only by riot police, it should be clear to even the most determined of US policy makers that it is politically impossible to propose bringing Savimbi back to Luanda.

However, the UN Secretary General's report to the Security Council on January 29, 1994 showed once again the dream world the UN has chosen to live in. While admitting that "the military situation continues to deteriorate," the report emphasized that "national reconciliation remains the primary objective of the peace process." Unita, Mr. Boutros Boutros Ghali stated, "has indicated its readiness to dismantle its military structure totally and become a purely political party." He urged its reintegration into government and state structures be achieved with flexibility and political will. In May 1991 in Bicesse, Unita made the same commitment. In the pre-election period, Unita was integrated into the army, while after the election it was offered government posts. For all those broken promises, Unita received no effective sanction, but instead, in return for 16 months of producing tens of thousands of deaths and destruction on a scale never seen here before, it has been given unprecedented international humanitarian aid and a *de facto* recognition of power based on military might.

Rodger Bosch — Impact Visuals

# The People's Peace in Mozambique

BY KEN WILSON

*Ken Wilson is a programme officer with the Ford Foundation in Harare. He has been conducting research in northern Zambezia for a number of years.*

In November 1993 one of the most senior United Nations officials in Maputo opened his off-the-record briefing with the sentence: "Well, the peace process goes remarkably well despite the United Nations, Renamo, and Frelimo." This is indeed the case. At the official level the process crawls forward painfully more than a year after the General Peace Accords were signed in Rome in October 1992. Though recent months have seen progress begin at last on the electoral and demobilization processes, conflict, distrust and ineffectiveness remain. It sometimes appears that only the will of ordinary Mozambicans, and the ultimately finite flow of aid dollars into the pockets of the participants, is maintaining the process at all.

At the grassroots level the desire of ordinary Mozambicans for peace has been the main factor propelling the peace process forwards. While the UN, Frelimo and Renamo have manoeuvred for political advantage, struggled with internal bureaucratic and political divisions, and revealed a limited capacity to implement what is agreed upon, ordinary Mozambicans – soldiers, churchmen, petty officials, displaced men and women, local chiefs – individually and collectively have grabbed the initiative and created their own "peace agreements" at the local

level. In what follows, we turn our attention to how a "people's peace" was created in the District of Morrumbala, an area of northern Zambezia Province.

## The situation at the time of the signing of the accords

Morrumbala was in the grips of a serious famine in 1992.<sup>†</sup> In Renamo areas there had been three years of inadequate rainfall. Agricultural production was already in serious decline due to the absence of marketing structures to maintain incentives and tool supplies. Difficulties were compounded by increasing taxation of food and labour on the declining population remaining in the Renamo zones. Renamo schools were closed due to the famine: the children had no strength to study. The situation was desperate.

In the camps around the Frelimo garrison of Morrumbala conditions were similarly grim. The crops in the field around the town were a write-off in 1991-2; even drinking water supplies were short. The few times the government sent food aid to this zone of low political priority and great military danger, most of it was stolen en route by businessmen with government and military connections. Furthermore, what food did arrive was often "diverted" by the local administration and soldiers just to keep themselves alive. Frelimo schools were closed because the teachers – virtually unpaid – had gone to the marshes of the Tchire river to search for water lily roots. By late 1992 the people of Morrumbala were living off gathered foods.

*in instituting an administrative regime which was less punitive and exploitative than in many other areas. Nonetheless, by the late 1980s Renamo too had succeeded in alienating much of its war-weary popular base, thus setting the stage for the "people's peace."*

Large scale famine mortality was imminent.

Thus, the pitiful irony at the national level was repeated locally. Famine facilitated peace. Morrumbala's administrator stated bluntly at the time "political questions have become secondary to the emergency situation."

## Preparing for peace

During September 1992 local Renamo units organized meetings through the chiefs, informing people there would be peace on October 1st. This was despite the fact that the senior Renamo generals had at that time no commitment to signing. When Renamo did sign the peace agreement, local "fumo" chiefs in Boroma immediately informed people there was freedom of movement, an end to all taxation of food, and freedom of commerce. In Derre, the Renamo commander told the population to immediately report any misdemeanour by his troops. Indeed, in Zambezia as a whole in the early weeks, only in Maqueringa base did a Renamo commander restrict out-migration from his area.

Meanwhile, on 7th August 1992 the government finalized its post-war plan for the district, specifying carefully the demands it would face – e.g. 100,000 returnees from Malawi – and noting the massive resources needed to deal with them in the short and long term. Resources it knew it would not get. These plans focused on a "peasant option": that is they sought to re-establish pre-independence private commerce, post-independence service structures, a network of key roads and bridges, and a cash cropping peasantry under a traditional leadership. The government would seek NGOs to support a rapid return to the land using canoes and boats on the marshes and minimal road transport: none of the grand

<sup>†</sup>Ed. Note: As Wilson has explained in some of his other writings, Morrumbala is an area that Renamo has dominated since the early 1980s. Taking advantage of peasant alienation from Frelimo policies, Renamo early on succeeded in establishing a popular base for itself in Morrumbala, and





Carlos Mula - AIM

United Nations plans for transit centres and roundabout convoy transport were considered in order. Peasants must get back to their own land, and "there must be an agreement with traditional socio-political structures for land allocations."

Six days after the signing of the October 1992 peace agreement, the Government organized a meeting in Morrumbala and the Administrator explained the provisions of the peace agreement, telling people they were free to move and to trade with Renamo zones. However, at a similar meeting for the displaced people of Derre, then living in the neighbouring District of Nicoadala, the people shouted down the administrator when he tried to persuade them to wait for government clearance and to accept transit or settlement camps before leaving for their homes in areas controlled by Ren-

amo. This is despite the fact that it is amongst the people of Derre that the government counts its strongest support in Morrumbala: by the mid-1980s most of the Frelimo secretaries in Derre were popular chiefs or their close relatives, some of whom, such as Rondao, played key roles in restraining the Renamo advance at that time.

#### **Making local cease fires**

It is widely believed that local commanders of Renamo and Frelimo troops in Zambezia as elsewhere in Mozambique, had in fact arranged secret and private cease fires long before the official signing in Rome. It is perhaps for this reason that ten days after the signing, and before parliamentary ratification, Renamo gathered at an abandoned mission, 10 km outside of the district capital, with their population another 5

km behind, and called for the government administration to come and discuss peace. The significance of the churches at local levels as symbolic foci of reconciliation mirrored their contribution in Rome.

After this initial contact the process was unstoppable. By mid-December 1992 the District Administrator had taken the initiative, establishing direct contact with Renamo commanders in 7 of the 10 localities in which they were based. By late January 1993 there was a Renamo official resident in Morrumbala organizing programmes with him.

These first meetings between Renamo and Frelimo were joyous. In neighbouring Milange the rival commanders got drunk together and danced, although some of the Renamo commanders would not dance, thinking it was immoral. Of a meet-

ing on 15th December in Morrumbala, Mozambican journalists reported incredulously "the Renamo soldiers greeted us as if we had known them for ages." Photos of Frelimo's Morrumbala district commander embracing the Renamo commander of Boroma were published in the Maputo weekly *Tempo*.

## The people's peace

People were on the move immediately in Morrumbala, just as elsewhere in Mozambique, declaring in quiet triumph the end of the war. Nearly everyone within a few days walk of their home visited it for an inspection. Confidence in the agreement as expressed by going home shook any possibility of the fighting continuing. Neither the government nor Renamo could challenge it.

Local soldiers also desperately wanted peace, and their enthusiasm helped make it possible. A Renamo commander stated to the Mozambique press in mid-December 1992: "I am happy that the war has ended, so I have in my head many projects which I want to do. If I can just get authorization to go to my home (he has a wife and three children in Sofala) I am really anxious to see it. Write there in your newspaper and tell my relatives who are in Manica that I am alive and I am awaiting orders to return home." And commenting on Renamo breaches of the ceasefire: "Here nothing has happened; when our commanders perceived the problems of Alta Zambezia and Nampula, they called our attention to not causing any confusions of that nature because the war had finished this time."

## Demobilization and banditry

According to the terms of the General Peace Accords the United Nations was to assemble the combatants, meet their food requirements and disarm them from 15th November 1992. In a less clear fashion the UN was supposed to secure the transportation routes and humanitarian aid. Of course, the UN failed

to do this in late 1992, and only began to make substantial progress with even the basic preparations in late 1993. The consequences of this in Morrumbala in the period immediately after the ceasefire were quite serious. Government troops without logistical support resumed their pilfering of aid supplies and taxing on the main roads. Meanwhile, Renamo soldiers were forced to obtain food once more by taxing the starv-



Alfredo Mueche - AIM

ing peasantry. A failure of cantonment and disarmament also facilitated a flourishing trade in weapons, threatening long term banditry.

In the face of these difficulties, the *ex-combatentes* were not idle. The Frelimo District army commander described to the press how he became aware of freelance bandits composed of deserters from both forces raiding on the Morrumbala road, and how within weeks of the signing of the peace agreement, (I quote) "in co-ordination with the [Renamo] commander of the central base of Chevele, ... we did an offensive against these deserters and we came out victorious." Fortunately he had not been stopped by the letter of the law. At the same time, in the face of delays in UN demining efforts (Zambezia not being prioritized in that programme), local soldiers of both sides did some useful work in demining the roads.

## Conclusion

The effectiveness of the peace agreement took all of us learned observers by surprise. We assumed that with an uncommitted leadership and weak international mechanisms and undisciplined armies it would not be implemented. How stupid we were. That very vacuum was what created the space for the "people's peace" to flourish. After all I had myself written of Morrumbala in early 1992: of the "striking energy ... with which Derre people envision a future peace"; cautioning "the constraints of the peace negotiations and the ability of a ceasefire agreement to end military activity and violence in Zambezia" notwithstanding. However, I had actually doubted "whether some kind of post-war euphoria ... would be able to transcend emergent social processes [the struggles behind and a consequence to the war]." Although during late 1992 and 1993 I was wrong, it is still too soon to consider the "people's peace" secure. Mozambique is currently the scene of unprecedented uncertainty and as yet unresolved struggle.

# "We Want Change" Cleaning House in Malawi

BY WISEMAN CHIJERE CHIRWA

Wiseman Chirwa, a Malawian himself, teaches at Chancellor College, University of Malawi

"On Wednesday night last week [1st December, 1993], two trigger-happy dumheads [sic] on sentry duty at the Malawi Young Pioneers Regional Headquarters in Mzuzu opened fire and killed three (others say two) soldiers in cold blood. Little did they know that they had shot themselves in the foot and sparked off a nation-wide 'Operation Chitedze' that was to culminate in the entire demolition of the MYP Movement" (*The Monitor*, 6/12/93).

The events in question – beginning with an incident at a pub popularly known as "Baghdad" in a dirty township of Masasa in Mzuzu in the Northern Region and culminating in the army's attacks on installations of the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) Movement, a paramilitary wing of the ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP), and its total disarmament – are important. Indeed, they may have serious implications for the transition process from a one-party state to a multi-party democracy in the country – especially if it is true that armed members of the MYP have fled into Mozambique and are in Renamo camps, possibly preparing for guerrilla war. In that case, Malawi's political transition could become very rough, with the security situation in the country deteriorating rapidly and the economic repercussions of a guerrilla war fought from a neighbouring country that provides access to the outside world potentially devastating.

## The events

Things started with a bar room brawl between a group of soldiers from the Third Battalion of the Malawi Army at Mzuzu and members of the MYP Movement. After the brawl, members of the MYP ambushed the soldiers, killing two and wounding others. The soldiers responded by burning a fence at the MYP Regional Headquarters and beating up a few Pioneers they came across in town. The news spread to the Second and First Battalions of the army in Lilongwe and Zomba respectively. Tension began to mount between the two rival security forces.

Between Wednesday night and Thursday evening, soldiers received no instructions from their Commander as to how to deal with the situation. On Friday (3rd December), middle-ranking officers decided to take charge of the situation themselves. They ordered the taking of revenge against the Pioneers in an operation dubbed "Operation Chitedze."<sup>1</sup> The first tar-

gets were a range of MYP installations in Lilongwe, including the Movement's National Headquarters and the Kamuzu Institute for Youth. The dwellings of MYP officers in suburbs and locations were also attacked and searched. On Saturday, the army's First Battalion in Zomba attacked the MYP Southern Region Headquarters, a few hundred metres from State House, the official residence of President Kamuzu Banda. And the following day, a number of MYP bases and offices in the Southern Region were attacked, including the heavily fortified Mountain View, used as the Movement's military training centre.

By Wednesday, 8th December, the operation had assumed a new dimension, aiming at the total disarmament of the MYP Movement. The operation's name was now changed to "Operation Bwezani": "Operation Return," (return the guns). In this effort, the army received political support from the opposition parties, the National Consultative Council (a body established last year to oversee the transition to multi-party politics) and the public at large. Wherever the army went it was greeted with shouts of: "we want change!" and "Payoniya paulendo! Paulendo! Paulendo!" (Pioneers on its way out! On its way out!). Almost all operations were followed by systematic looting of MYP property. The public was "getting back what the MYP had stolen" from them, and in some cases the army gave them a free

<sup>1</sup> "Chitedze" is a type of wild hairy bean that itches on contact. In Malawian popular culture, the term is used as a symbol for retaliation against some provocation. The MYP had provoked the army and were going to be "itched"

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hand – openly inviting them “to help themselves to their own property.”

When the disturbances ended, some 23 people were dead and not less than 120 injured. “Thousands” of MYPs were reported fleeing into Renamo camps in Mozambique to regroup and prepare for guerrilla war. This, in turn, gave an ominous new dimension to the “Baghdad” incident. The transition to multi-party politics that had started in 1992 faced the possibility of disturbance, if not total derailment.

### The Pioneers: a context

These events need to be understood within the context of Malawi’s political history. The MYP Movement was created by Dr. Banda in 1963 – copied from Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. Its aim was “to train young people in basic agricultural practice” so as to act as “the spearhead” in national development. In 1965, just a year after the cabinet crisis that led to a number of Banda’s ministers and MPs fleeing the country, the MYP Movement was transformed into a political militia. From the late 1960s to the early 1970s, the Pioneers received military, intelligence and espionage training in Taiwan and Israel, in addition to “technical subjects” studied in Denmark, West Germany, the United States and Britain. This came at a time when Dr. Banda was becoming increasingly autocratic and dangerously repressive. The MYP’s training in intelligence and espionage became handy for the maintenance of Dr. Banda’s personal dictatorship, being used to suppress anti-Banda elements within the country, and to monitor the infiltration of “communist elements.”

In addition to “scholarships” and technical support from the western-bloc countries, the Movement also received arms from the Republic of China and other countries – purportedly “in good faith” and “for training purposes only.” But these became the instruments of oppression. About 10,000 Malawians underwent some form of train-

ing through the MYP between 1963 and the mid-1980s, including, for more than half that number, military training.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the MYP intelligence system, in collaboration with the ruling MCP and the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) of the police, used informers and “plants” to infiltrate the civil service, the party machinery, academic, and other institutions of civil society, and thus became a dreaded instrument of Dr. Banda’s oppressive machinery. The creation of parallel and competing security systems (the Army, the Police and the MYP) was crucial to the maintenance of Malawi’s repressive regime. They competed in their displays of loyalty to Dr. Banda personally, and to his political system in general, in return for recognition and favours.

This resulted in the creation of tensions amongst them, not least between the army and the Pioneers. Army sources maintain that on a number of occasions they had requested their officials to approach Dr. Banda and his government to get rid of the parallel and competing security systems. No action was taken. Instead, some weapons destined for the army were sometimes diverted to the MYP, increasing the tensions between the two security systems.

During the referendum campaign in 1992/93, the MYP was used as an instrument of intimidation and violence against multi-party advocates. After the defeat of the one party system, a recommendation was made by the opposition parties to disarm and disband the Movement but the MCP government remained intransigent. The events following the “Baghdad” incident thus had a certain air of inevitability about them.

### Implications for the transition

As noted, the events of December may have serious implications for the transition process in Malawi. Despite the possible advantages of the apparent neutralization of

the Pioneers, there are also three dangerous possible scenarios. First, if Mozambique were to turn into another Angola (where the failure of general elections resulted in the resumption of civil war) then the MYP would have access to Renamo camps and facilities, plus the necessary logistical support. Given Malawi’s long border with Mozambique this could pose serious security and economic problems for Malawi.

Of course, the link between Malawi and Renamo has been documented. (Even during “Operation Chitedze/Bwezani,” for example, it was reported that “heavy weaponry and uniforms belonging to Renamo” were found in the MYP offices in Lilongwe.) Hence the possibility of Renamo-MYP cooperation in the event of political chaos in Mozambique after the general elections. Of course, should FRELIMO win the general elections and further consolidate itself, the MYP could expect no similar support from the Mozambique government. Indeed, most recently and after a series of joint meetings, the Mozambican and Malawian governments have agreed that the MYPs would be disarmed by the United Nations peace-keeping forces in Mozambique and handed over to Malawian military officials!

A second scenario is that of Malawi turning into another Kenya where the ruling party is voted back to power. The MCP could then be expected to revamp its paramilitary wing for the suppression (or elimination) of members of the opposition. Given the extensive intelligence network the MYP has created, and its infiltration of the civil service and other institutions of civil society, its operations would be easy and effective. However, this scenario, though possible and potentially dangerous, is very unlikely to happen. The chances of the MCP winning a free and fair election in Malawi are very slim as memories of the atrocities committed by party functionaries are still very fresh in the minds

of the general public. Moreover, the very fact of the disarmament of the MYP, the MCP's instrument of terror and a handy instrument for voter intimidation, double registration and the like at election time, has further weakened the party.

A third scenario is that members of the MYP – disarmed, frustrated, unemployed and with no income to live on – could turn into thugs, causing public insecurity in towns and villages. In the event of the MCP losing the general elections, it is possible that the party might even sponsor gangs of such thugs to destabilize the peace and attempt to discredit the other parties. There is also the possibility of normal thugs with no connection to the MYP masquerading as Pioneers and further threatening public safety.

Any such random and individualized violence that spills over from recent events will be much more difficult to handle than the disarmament of the MVP itself as a structured movement. And there can be little doubt that the public security situation in some towns in the country has considerably deteriorated recently. Gangs of thugs have been reported terrorizing women, school children, and people returning from work in Lilongwe, the country's capital. Some schools were temporarily closed for days in early February. There have been reports of shooting in public places and people have died in some of these incidents. Obviously, a continuation of this kind of deterioration of the situation would, in and of itself, represent a major setback for the transition process in this country.

#### The army itself

From a military point of view, "Operation Bwezani" was not a victory worth popping champagne over. In the end, there was very little resistance from the Pioneers, quickly frightened and in flight. Only a handful of soldiers lost their lives – and that includes those shot in Mzuzu. Although the MYP had a good stock of weapons they were

inadequately trained to use them – and they had no air support and no armoured vehicles. Moreover, their intelligence system was meant more for political than for military purposes; secret files obtained from their intelligence bank contained mainly dossiers of citizens regarded as anti-Banda and therefore under surveillance (or, possibly, on the elimination list). Though they might eventually be able to wage a guerrilla war effectively, the Pioneers were no match for the soldiers.

As for the army itself, this operation had in effect produced a coup within its own ranks. When the middle-rank officers took charge of the situation, they demanded the resignation of senior officers, then made their own choices to fill these positions (including that of the Minister of Defence, held by President Banda himself since independence). This move received

support from the opposition parties because the top brass of the army had close ties with the MCP government.

For their part, the middle-ranking officers demonstrated their tacit support for political change in the country. Had they wanted to, they could have taken over the government. From a material and political point of view, of course, they are better off in the barracks than in the Presidential office. Instead of inheriting Dr. Banda's political and economic mess, which would eventually result in the army's own loss of popularity, they can simply sit in the barracks and use threats to get whatever they want. However, if poorly managed, the marriage of convenience between the army and the opposition parties created during "Operation Bwezani" could also prove short lived – with unpredictable consequences.

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# The Forgotten Fifth Farm Workers in Zimbabwe



Paul Weinberg - Afrapix/Impact Visuals

## BY BLAIR RUTHERFORD

*Blair Rutherford, a Montreal based researcher, has recently returned from Zimbabwe.*

Every Saturday evening during the rainy season on the commercial farms surrounding Karoi in north-western Zimbabwe, hundreds of farm workers fill the gravel roads and windy paths that lead from barbed wire-fenced tobacco fields to scattered plots of assorted crops. The workers have finished their six-day work week on commercial farms and are heading to their individual rural home in the adjacent Communal Lands, the current name for what was called in colonial times the Tribal Trust Lands, the land reserved for Africans. The men are returning home to help out with farm chores and check on their relatives,

bringing sacks of maize meal or perhaps bags of fertilizer and pocket money. The next evening they will head back to the crowded compound on the commercial farm, occasionally carting back a bag of maize or assorted vegetables to sell, and perhaps accompanied by a relative looking for work.

Not all farm workers have their own plot of land in a nearby Communal Land or resettlement area, but those who do spread their own and their families' energy between the two homes for both security and investment reasons. Although the lifestyle on the home farm is seen to be healthier than that on the farm compound, working on commercial farms is familiar - many workers grew up on one - and the monthly wages are attractive. As well, farm workers can often get agricultural in-

puts like fertilizer and seeds - and at a better price - for their own farm, which will help to supplement both their meagre diet and their meagre wages. A home independent from the commercial farm is also invaluable in case a worker leaves his job. For a farm worker's life, from the conditions of the compound to the possibility of credit and overtime pay, depends heavily on the attitude of the commercial farm operator. As farm workers put it, their lives depend almost solely on "the laws of the white man/owner." Indeed, Zimbabwe's two million farm workers and their families are so dependent on farm owners that they become virtually invisible in most of the country's policy and academic discussions on democracy and development. Rural Zimbabwe is usually seen as comprising two dichotomous

worlds - that of the approximately 4,000 commercial farmers (who still are disproportionately white) and that of peasant farmers of the Communal Lands and resettlement areas. Farm workers are rarely mentioned in discussions of this "dual economy." This way of understanding is especially evident when it comes to "the Land Question" - the dominant forum for discussing democracy and development in rural Zimbabwe.

President Robert Mugabe's Zanu (PF) won the first election of independence in 1980 and the following two elections on the platform of addressing colonial inequities by redistributing land from white commercial farmers to land-poor black peasants. The Lancaster House Constitution, which ended the liberation war in 1979, forced the government to acquire commercial farms on a willing buyer/willing seller basis and to pay in scarce foreign exchange for the first decade of independence. This condition was a major factor in limiting the amount of land that went to resettlement farms. After altering the Constitution in 1990, the government passed the Land Acquisition Act in 1992 allowing it to designate farms to purchase at government-set prices. It has already begun designating land and is also overhauling its resettlement policy.

The Act has caused a major stir within Zimbabwe and in international circles. The debate has mainly centred on the question of economic productivity and has been between the two rural actors of policy discourse. White farmers and their domestic and international supporters point out that commercial farms are the backbone of the Zimbabwean economy and warn that breaking them up into small farms and giving them to "subsistence farmers" will lead to "rack and ruin." The government and its supporters argue that aside from the necessity of redistribution to correct historic injustices, increasing the number of small African

farmers will not cause the economy to suffer. Since independence when the government began to provide proper infrastructure, peasant farmers have demonstrated they can substantially increase production for the market.

Despite their large numbers and vital economic role in rural Zimbabwe, being neither "white farmers" nor "African peasants," commercial farm workers have been largely neglected in this debate. This neglect reflects their uneven treatment in events since independence.

In 1979, on the eve of independence, the transitional government scrapped the *Masters and Servants Act*, the piece of legislation that since 1899 governed labour relations on commercial farms according to the patronizing assumption that the white farm owner knows what is best for the workers. Under that Act there was no minimum wage. Rather, wages were significantly lower than in other industries on the pretext that the farmer also provided rations and housing to the workers. Disciplinary proceedings against workers were permitted for an incredibly wide range of actions, including insulting the farmer's wife or children and refusing to obey a master's command. Nor was it uncommon for farmers to take the law in their own hands and mete out physical punishment against their workers. With independence, the Zanu (PF) government brought agricultural workers to the same level as other formal employees and effectively challenged the wide-ranging authority the farmer had over workers. Agricultural workers gained the right to organize, which led to the recognition of the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) as the sole union for farm workers. Zanu (PF) established party cells on most farms which helped set up workers committees for workers to pass on grievances to management. Minimum wage legislation for the industry led to remuneration being paid entirely in money (in ad-

dition to housing), with wage levels initially set by governmental officials but now negotiated annually by a National Employment Council comprised equally of officials from GAPWUZ and the Agricultural Labour Bureau (ALB), the employers organization. Furthermore, citizenship rights were granted to long-term residents of Zimbabwe born or patrilineally descended from outside the country.

The latter change has been extremely important for farm workers. Many current farm workers, or their (grand-)parents, originally came from Mozambique, Zambia or Malawi to work in colonial Zimbabwe. However, their stay in the colony was conditional on continual employment. With Zimbabwean citizenship, many farm workers have been allowed to get land rights in the Communal Lands of the district they worked in as well as voting rights in national elections.

With the establishment of formal labour relations machinery, minimum wages and the legal possibility of getting land and voting rights, formal rights for farm workers have improved tremendously since 1980. However, many farm workers today disagree with any sentiment of continual progress. They acknowledge that for the first time they enjoy rights and attribute this advance to Mugabe. But, they ruefully note, since the mid-1980s, there has been a reversal of the gains made at independence.

For them, the cause of this reversal has been a shift in power between workers and owners with the latter gaining back authority lost during the heyday of independence. Although there is no unanimously held rationale for this shift, the signs they see of this change include the increasing interest of the government in profits over equality as seen by their IMF-inspired Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP); the fact that a number of government ministers are also now commercial farm owners;

and that owners and managers have been able to disregard the law and use dismissal as a threat against workers who make demands.

This change is reflected, in recent times, in the forms of worker representation. Most worker committees are seen as ineffective, more a conduit for owners to convey concerns to workers than an effective forum for workers to raise issues. The under-staffed GAPWUZ is seen as too distant from daily concerns such as overtime pay, the use of dangerous chemicals without protection, and violence from foremen and managers, while being completely out-of-touch with farm workers' living conditions. At best, workers see GAPWUZ as only helpful in the final stages of being dismissed. If a permanent worker is fired without proper leave-pay, GAPWUZ is effective in getting these benefits to him (most commercial farmers refuse to hire women workers as permanent workers and, consequently, women as contract workers are denied the same rights and are largely ignored by GAPWUZ and workers committees).

Today any improvements of farm workers' living conditions tend to come from the goodwill of farmers, often in the form of subsidized maize-meal and meat (crucial especially during the 1992 drought) and interest-free loans for agricultural inputs for workers' Communal Land farms. The regulations decided at the National Employment Council often are enforced only because of the sporadic and often isolated struggles of a few workers who fight to see that the laws governing over-time, standardized working days and higher piece-work wages are obeyed. If management refuses to negotiate, the workers often quiet down or follow the popular resistance strategy during colonial days - they leave the farm.

As for conditions on the compound, it depends entirely on the farm owner. Until last year legis-

lation governing commercial farms came mainly from Rural Councils, the local government body elected by commercial farm owners (and renters). Although farm workers comprised the vast majority of people living on these farms and are the predominant users of clinics and schools under the Rural Councils' jurisdiction, they had no representation in local government. Not surprisingly, when it came to making by-laws regarding minimum standards for housing, water and services for the farm compounds, there were none made. Ultimately, it is up to the farm owner to set standards. Although there are some farm compounds which have a standard of housing and water better than some of Harare's high density suburbs, this is the exception rather than the rule.

It seems likely that this pattern will continue in the future despite reforms to local government. The 65 Rural-District Councils now represent and administer all settled rural lands including commercial farming areas, Communal Lands and resettlement lands. But within the defined commercial farming areas, the property requirements of voting rights remain. Instead of having the right to vote, farm workers and their co-residents are given one or two ministerially-appointed representative(s) on the new body. Their disenfranchisement continues.

This lack of local and national representation outside of GAPWUZ hurts farm workers at (inter)national level debates. This is readily apparent in current discussion over resettlement policy. Many development experts and politicians are calling for stricter control over candidates for the new resettlement policy currently being formulated. They claim that failures of the resettlement programme during the 1980s were largely the result of selecting landless people as settlers on resettlement schemes as opposed to properly trained African peas-

ants. "Commercial farm workers" have been most often singled out as being the group most responsible for these "failures."

Since many farm workers went from being classified as foreigners to citizens after independence and often had no land rights in Zimbabwe before then, in many districts farm workers make up a large number on resettlement farms. Now past mistakes in resettlement policy are being explained by claiming that farm workers lack the work ethic for "development" and hence should be automatically excluded from future resettlement programs. As the Minister of State in the Ministry of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Cooperatives, Fay Chung pithily put it, "Zimbabwe has little room for reform mistakes that it made in the early 1980s. 'Why should we feel we must give land only to illiterate workers who were formerly working on farms?' Chung asks" (*Weekly Mail*, September 4 to 10, 1992).

Commercial farm workers have a lot to lose from a resettlement policy that removes their jobs through land designation and specifically excludes them from resettlement schemes. Such a policy would undermine the livelihood of tens of thousands of farm workers and their families. As those in the Karoi area show, commercial farm workers have been able to improve their economic opportunities since independence by operating on both sides of the so-called "dual economy." However, their situation is quite precarious and arbitrary given the present situation. By reducing rural Zimbabwe to commercial farmers and Communal Land farmers, current formulations of the Land Question at best neglect the lives and demands of commercial farm workers. At worst, they view farm workers as a threat to future policy. If democracy and development really are to be pursued in rural Zimbabwe, the situation of nearly a fifth of the national population needs to be addressed.



# It's Not Easy Being Brown ANC Environmental Policies

BY DAVID McDONALD

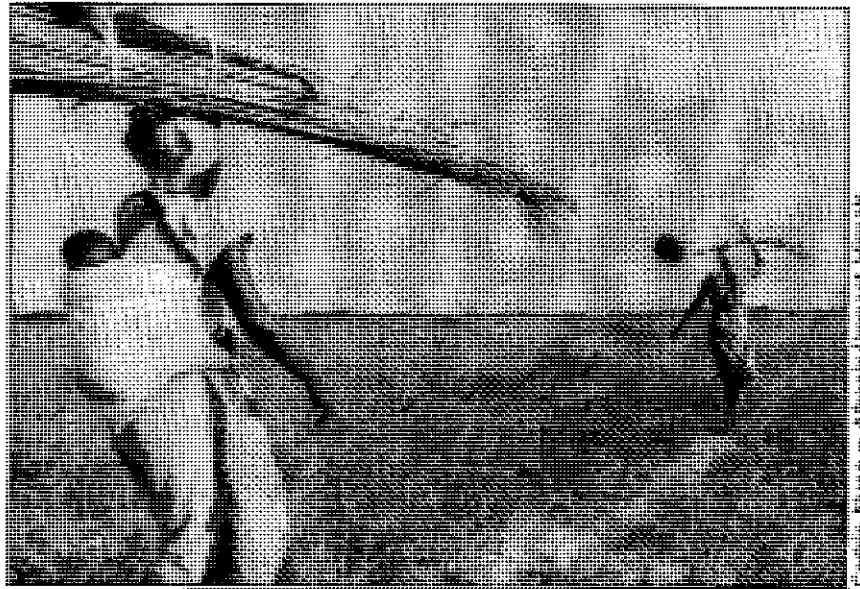
*David McDonald, a Canadian, is currently researching environmental questions in South Africa.*

White South Africans have long prided themselves on the rugged beauty of this country. From the Brylcreemed and safari-suited Afrikaner civil servant in Pretoria, to those in the air-conditioned Land Rovers and pith helmets of Cape Town, there is a white South African dream of an unspoilt African wilderness. Nature conservation became a passion here. But, as with so much under apartheid, it became distorted and perverse, unable to justify itself and full of contradictions.

Apartheid is slowly but surely disappearing, and along with it so are many of the old-school versions of ecology. Previous environmental policies, like the forced removals of communities to make way for national parks, are being challenged by an increasing number of people and political groupings. Although there is still a long way to go on these issues, the battle over environmental policy has begun. The ANC has articulated some of its own policy guidelines and a quick synopsis and commentary on these is provided here.

## ANC environmental policy

Undoubtedly the most significant feature of the ANC's position on ecology is how it is integrated into their broader reconstruction programme. It is not just policies in the narrow sense of writing up new rules - it is a notion of ecology that goes hand-in-hand with a fundamental restructuring of apartheid's socio-economic inequities. Apartheid created one of the most environmentally degraded countries in the world. Soil erosion and desertifica-



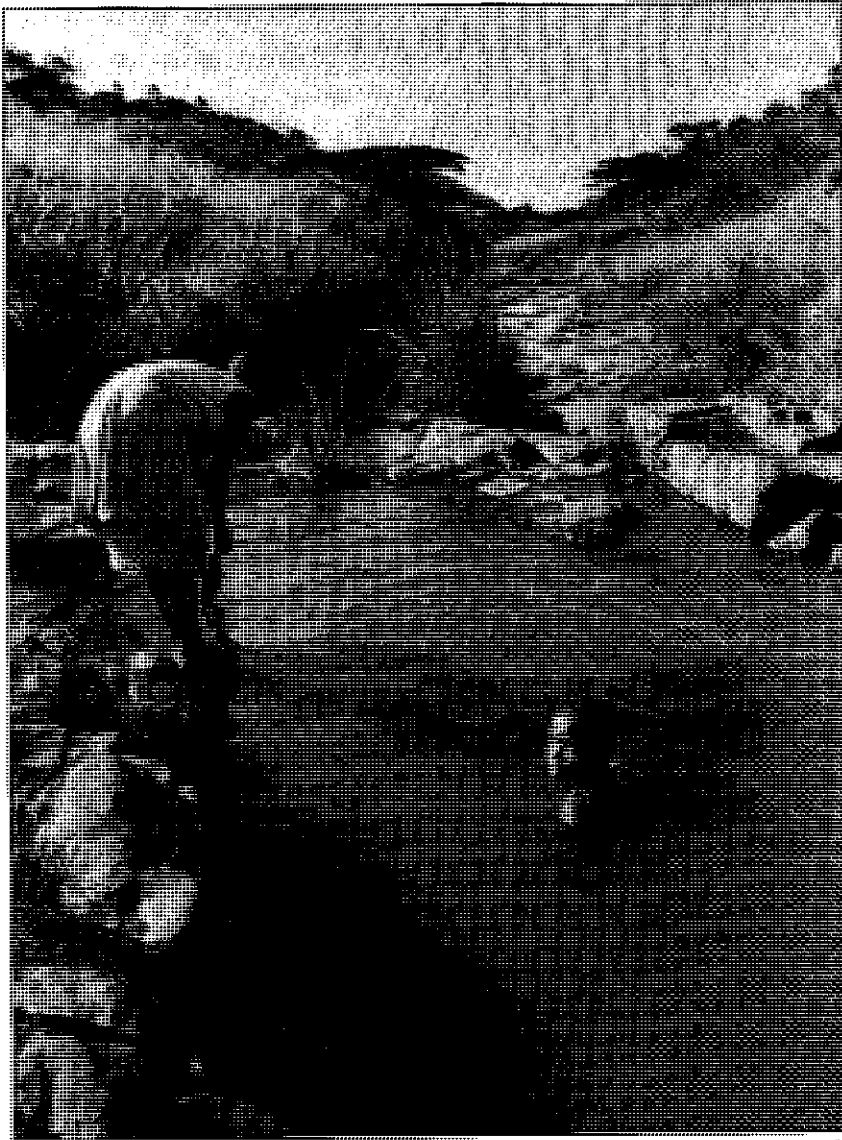
*These reeds for house construction were gathered 'illegally' in Kosi Bay, a 'Protected Zone'. Threat of prosecution brings local residents into conflict with conservationists.*

tion in the over-crowded homelands have been coupled with similar erosion on the mono-culture, profit oriented white farms. Dirty, coal-fired electricity has been provided at reduced rates to white industry, while two-thirds of South Africans have been denied this basic amenity and forced to cut down trees for cooking and heat. Water distribution, perhaps South Africa's most precious resource, is similarly skewed. Millions of litres of water a day are squandered in white suburban gardens, while entire African communities may depend on one unreliable tap. The lack of proper sewage facilities in squatter areas makes the water situation even worse. Contaminated puddles are breeding grounds for disease, and the run-off pollutes rivers and ground water supplies.

There will be enormous environmental benefits merely from the

scrapping of previous apartheid absurdities and the implementation of basic reconstruction plans (housing, sewage and sanitation, land redistribution, etc.). These "brown" environmental issues (and I use the term "brown" because it so vividly conjures up images of sewage and treeless townships) are the core of ANC environmental policy. Without an effective plan to deal with the grinding poverty that exacerbates the environmental degradation of this already beleaguered ecology, then all of the fences, anti-poaching squads, and water-purification tablets in the world will do nothing to save South Africa's natural resources for future generations.

ANC policy does not stop here. Although "official" environmental policies are rather slim, there are a number of discussion documents which provide insight into the



*Mngweni River, Natal, has the highest recorded mercury levels in the world*

ANC's positions (the only "official" sources being in the *Ready to Govern: ANC Policy Guidelines* booklet, the relevant paragraphs of which are reprinted in the accompanying box, and the "Environmental Rights" written into the ANC's "Bill of Rights for a New South Africa"). Policy discussions are wide ranging: promotion of alternative energy sources; phasing out of the dumping of toxic wastes at sea; promotion of agroforestry, permaculture and the utilization of South Africa's biodi-

versity for economic purposes; liberalising Roman Dutch law so that it can better handle environmental issues related to the public domain. By redefining "the environment" to include the living and working conditions of South Africans, the ANC's guidelines also open the door to new policy potential. Workers, often forced to use hazardous chemicals, can become environmental watchdogs, both for their own health and safety and that of others. "Brown" environmental issues of the town-

ships become central to an environmental agenda. Narrow, conservationist approaches that see the environment as a purely physical issue are pushed aside.

### Policy implementation

What does all of this mean in practice? In the short to medium term if the ANC can implement a reconstruction programme on the scale that they would like to, environmental conditions will improve dramatically - particularly for those currently living in squalor. The ANC's longer term vision of ecology is not so clear cut. Poverty alleviation is not, in and of itself, an environmental paucity. Over-consumption is just as much an enemy of environmental sustainability as under-consumption. Putting black South Africans on the resource-hungry trajectory of whites runs the risk of destroying longer term sustainability objectives.

One has to be very careful on this point however. Instructing poor people how they should consume, now or in the future, borders on eco-fascism. Shopping for useless, disposable, or decadent items can easily be written off as "false consciousness" by an informed consumer, but to someone who has been forcibly denied the option of these goods in the past, they are seen as important symbols of change and progress.

Nevertheless, consumerism must be challenged and analyzed in environmental terms. South Africa has the industrial base and capital availability for massive job creation, but what is it that those jobs are going to create? Plastic Jurassic Park dinosaurs, T.V. dinners, and BMWs will provide work for people, but it will also be creating further mountains of waste and toxic by-products. Clean-technology, recyclable fibres, and alternative energy sources can only make so much of a difference. The introduction of environmentally-friendly techniques and products has moved at a snail's

pace so far in South Africa. It is also unclear whether the market economy which the ANC is moving closer and closer towards can provide the impetus for such change.

## Ecology and the market

To begin with, there is no guarantee that the phasing in of alternative energy supplies and materials will take place in a market economy. In North America and Europe there is a lot of 'green-washing' of products by producers, but very little substantial change in terms of their environmentally damaging impact. Even if there were significant environmental change with these products, a market economy relies entirely on growth for capital accumulation. Growth, in turn, depends on an incessant replacement of old products and production methods by new products and production methods. In other words, solar panel SX100 will need to be replaced by the "new and improved" SX150, or will perhaps be outmarketed by a new fad in power generation - designer windmills. The market can never stand still, and like a hyperac-

tive child, destroys things in its restlessness.

The ANC has been one of the most acute critics of capitalism in South Africa and remains cautious in its concessions to a market economy. Yet with a negotiated settlement, and a lack of international alternatives and allies, the ANC has been forced to talk market principles. It is unrealistic to expect the ANC to hold on to orthodox central planning canons - especially when they proved so environmentally disastrous in eastern Europe. Conventional paradigms aside, what really is disconcerting is the lack of criticism by the ANC of modernity and industrialism. Criticisms of this kind may be found in certain ANC environmental discussion papers, but where it really counts the ANC adheres to a technology driven modernization. ANC environmental policy is, in the end, environmental "management" - a belief that environmental damage can be perpetually mitigated by new techniques. Alternative ecological positions are paid lip-service to, but it

appears that technocracy may again have won the day.

## Conclusions

The ANC's environmental positions are a clear improvement on the narrow conservationism of the past in South Africa. Ecology is seen as part and parcel of the short to medium term socio-economic changes that are required, and in this respect symbolize the type of integrated approach that is needed for complex environmental challenges. Nonetheless, the long term environmental goals of the ANC are less clear, and full of potential pitfalls and contradictions.

The options for environmental policy are admittedly limited. Rapid economic growth is desperately needed to provide jobs and basic amenities, and a significant level of private sector participation is unavoidable for this purpose. The question then that remains is how to avoid getting steamrolled by this private sector in the medium to long term. This will be a difficult, uphill battle.

## ANC Environmental Policy

The ANC's goal is to help all South Africans to have a safe and healthy environment. The environment includes the air, the land, the sea and the rivers. It also includes plants, animals and our natural resources, like the gold we mine.

So, everything we need to satisfy our basic needs, is part of the environment.

### Our policy

We must use our environment in a careful and planned way so that all people can benefit from it, now and in the future. For example, the land must be farmed wisely so that we leave the fertile soil for our grandchildren to grow crops in the future.

The state should try and make sure that all South Africans have equal opportunities to get natural resources to satisfy their basic needs - such as fresh water and good land.

The government will make policies to redistribute resources. There will also be policies to protect the environment. Where the environment has been harmed, there will be policies to repair the damage. These policies will include the wise use of natural resources, con-

serving endangered plants and animals, preventing pollution and controlling the dumping of waste.

South Africa will not import or export dangerous waste, like nuclear waste.

The state should set up controls to make sure that everyone has safe and healthy living and working conditions. Those who have damaged the environment and have harmed people's health will be responsible before the law.

Local communities will be consulted when reserves or parks for the conservation of animals or plants are set up. Members of these communities will be given the chance to take part in the management of these areas, and to share in any benefits that come from them.

Any plans to help our economy grow, must not harm the environment.

The ANC is committed to consulting people and their organizations about decisions concerning the environment. We also believe in working together with other countries to look after the earth.

(From: *Ready to Govern: ANC Policy Guidelines*, Johannesburg, December, 1992, ANC, pp. 21-2.)



# THE MEANING OF PEACE

**F**or people in the Ethiopian province of Tigray, and in so many parts of the world, peace means some very basic things. It means a secure, reliable supply of food. It means having uninterrupted access to fresh water, and materials to build proper shelter. It means educating children instead of training them for war.

The United Steelworkers Humanity Fund understands because we are there. We have relief and development projects in Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, and in Central and South America. We know that, in areas of conflict, the job of providing relief is difficult. Development might be impossible.

The Humanity Fund was initiated in 1985. Participating Steelworkers negotiate into their contracts a deduction of one cent an hour that goes into the Fund. Today, the Humanity Fund has become a model for other unions in Canada to follow and learn from.

For Steelworkers, it means that, when we go to the bargaining table, we take the *World* with us.

And when we do, we go in peace.

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