

**Southern Africa**

Vol. 6 No. 5

**REPORT**

JUN - 4 1991 May 1991

**Battle Scars:**

**Angola, South Africa, Mozambique**



**A N G O L A**

What Way Out  
of the  
Quagmire?

**S O U T H A F R I C A**

The High Costs  
of  
Stalemate

**M O Z A M B I Q U E**

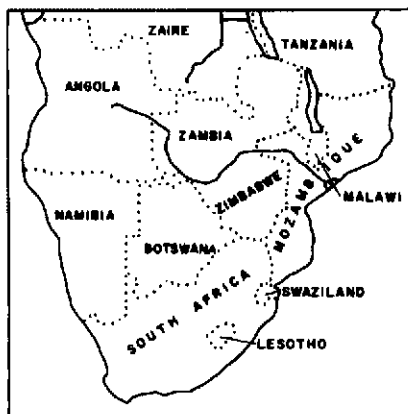
Refugees,  
Renamo and  
Reconstruction

price: \$3.50

# Southern Africa REPORT

Vol. 6 No. 5

May 1991



## Southern Africa REPORT

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

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

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

ISSN 0820-5582

SAR is a member of the Canadian  
Magazine Publishers Association.

## Subscriptions

Annual TCLSAC membership and  
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rates are as follows:

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Individual (1 year) . . . . \$18.00  
Individual (2 years) . . . . \$36.00  
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*Mozambican refugees, newly arrived in South African "homeland" refugee camp*

## Battle Scars

In southern Africa these days certainties are difficult to come by: the transition in South Africa increasingly blurred, the promise of genuine liberation elsewhere in the region severely compromised. We cast about, looking for straws in the wind, auguries in the entrails. Here darkness prevails, there a glimmer of light can be seen. The present eclectic issue, in its very range and diversity, may therefore capture more of the contradictions and confusions that define the present moment in

southern Africa than more typical issues of *SAR*, ones structured self-confidently around one central shaping theme or another.

Contradictions and confusions? In this issue, Frank Luce probes the scars left by siege (and self-destructive tendencies) on Angola's ruling MPLA and, by extension, on a badly battered Angola, while Naomi Richman helps underscore the psychic scars that are part of the legacy of Mozambican children from South Africa's war against

their country. Dan O'Meara, reporting on a recent trip to South Africa, flags the danger of chaos – a possible Lebanonization – that the unresolved legacies of apartheid and the uncertainties of transition in South Africa might yet bring. Bill Martin, reporting from Washington, suggests ways in which the U. S. anti-apartheid forces may be suffering from weaknesses of their own – at the very moment when a new level of subtlety and resolve in their efforts is called for. And

hovering menacingly over all these southern African battlefronts is the shadow of another war – that in the Persian Gulf – and the shadow, too, of what we identify, nervously, as “the post-Gulf syndrome.”

\* \* \*

For even though it is some distance from the Gulf, it's hard not to feel that southern Africa – and, by extension, southern Africa support workers in Canada and elsewhere – will be suffering the fall-out from the recent war for years to come. In this regard, the specificities of the war are a lot less important than its broader implications for the texture of future relationships between “the West” and the “Third World,” southern Africa included. It is this fact that seems to demand from us some further reflection on the war in the present editorial.

True, the Gulf action was not an absolutely typical western intervention in the Third World. Saddam is a villain (although, truth be told, not much worse than any number of U. S.-sponsored satraps around the world, including most of our “democratic allies” in the Gulf itself). And his invasion of Kuwait was, indeed, unacceptable (although no more so than such “acceptable” interventions, in southern Africa and elsewhere, as the U. S. destruction of Nicaragua and Angola, the South African reduction of Mozambique to chaos, the Indonesian invasion of East Timor). Yet the escalation of war, pre-empting the testing of any legitimate time-frame for the efficacy of sanctions to be felt, remains an obscenity by any standard: compare how reluctantly even the most modest of sanctions were imposed upon a country like South Africa, for example, and how patiently we were expected to wait for them to have effect! The extraordinary, and continuing, costs to the people of Iraq – themselves prisoners of Saddam's dictatorship – of using “maximum force” are only just beginning to become apparent. It will be some years before other costs –

cost, for example, to the credibility of the United Nations security system, used like a Kleenex tissue by the United States and then thrown away – can even begin to be totted up.

However, as indicated above, southern African activists will be especially preoccupied with the costs of U. S. victory, broadly, to the Third World. Not that the global reach of capitalism is something new. Moreover, it was apparent well before the Gulf events that in the post-Cold War epoch the imperial centres of the international economy were becoming more, not less, greedy and assertive; witness the sidelining of the positive possibilities inherent in discussion of a “New International Economic Order,” the overbearing impositions of the IMF and the World Bank, the western-sponsored distortions of the GATT negotiations, and the like. This is a pattern we know well from recent developments in southern Africa, and one that holds virtually no promise of long-term socio-economic transformation for countries there or elsewhere. Nor is the tendency to militarize this kind of western control over the Third World a new phenomenon (as a reading of, say, Gabriel Kolko's, magisterial *Confronting the Third World: United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1980* should remind anyone who cares to know).

No, the new reality here is the added charge the war has given, quite self-evidently, to American arrogance and assertiveness in carrying out its global activities. The greatest casualty of the Gulf War – and in saying this we do not mean to trivialize the passing of all those, Kuwaitis and Iraqis in particular, who died needlessly in the war – is the “post-Vietnam syndrome.” There can be little doubt that the new “post-Gulf syndrome” – increasingly the ideological glue of George Bush's “New World Order” and of the world-wide *recolonization* process that is upon us – bodes very

ill indeed. Yet far too few stood up against this grisly sub-text of the Gulf War while it was in progress – just as too few are prepared even now to state that the Emperor has no clothes (however many Patriot missiles he may be wearing!)

Nor is this way of reading the resonance of the war profane knowledge. For example, from a quite different perspective and at its most obscene it can be found in the rantings of British right-wing columnist Peregrine Worsthorne (who also had his innings on the CBC's *Commentary!*): “It is beginning to look as if Saddam Hussein has given the West a chance once again to establish its unchallengeable pre-eminence in a manner impregnable at once to moral obloquy and military resistance. Not only will our arms have prevailed in a most spectacular fashion. So will our ideals [*sic*]. Nothing is forever. Sooner or later the Third World will throw up other challenges. But if the Gulf War ends as it has begun, there can be no doubt who are the masters now – at any rate for another generation. We have the laser beams and they have not. And the ‘we’ who matter are not the Germans or the Japanese or the Russians, but the Americans. Happy days are here again. Bliss is it in this dawn to be alive; but to be an old reactionary is very heaven.” Even Worsthorne could not have got away with using quite this kind of language a few short months ago.

Nor, unfortunately, is Worsthorne's mindset a million miles away from that of George Bush and his colleagues. Thus the *Toronto Star's* Richard Gwyn – no left looney he – writes of the underlying logic of the war (beneath the headline “War is a stern lesson to Third World,” February 24, 1991) in the following terms: “... the object lesson taught to the Third World will, most probably, be well learned. In essence, the United States is sending out a message: ‘There will be no more Vietnams.’ Any Third World countries that challenges it can anticipate be-

ing dealt with in the same way – first by being softened up by a precise, high-tech aerial blitz, then by being smashed by an overwhelming ground assault. Look, therefore, for the Third World countries to come to terms with American hegemony. ... None of this has got anything to do with liberating Kuwait. Instead it's got everything to do with creating a post-Cold War, Pax Americana. It's clinical and hard and calculating. But it's a fact."

Gwyn is correct; it's a fact. And attendant upon that fact is the brutalization of political discourse ("Desert Storm" trading cards, yet) we have witnessed in the media and the racism we have witnessed on our own streets (anti-Arab – viz. Adrienne Jones' article, "Manipulating the Arab Image," *The Globe and Mail*, March 14, 1991 – but readily generalizable, we fear, to other Third World peoples and projects). It is incumbent upon all of us to resist the wrong lessons being learned, by the Canadian government (faint hope?) and by the Canadian people, from the "success" of the Gulf War. Certainly, for us, the lesson is clear: any space lost to the "post-Gulf syndrome" is room for manoeuvre lost by those seeking openings for humane development in southern Africa. In short, the struggle against the Gulf War, by southern Africa activists amongst many others, must continue.

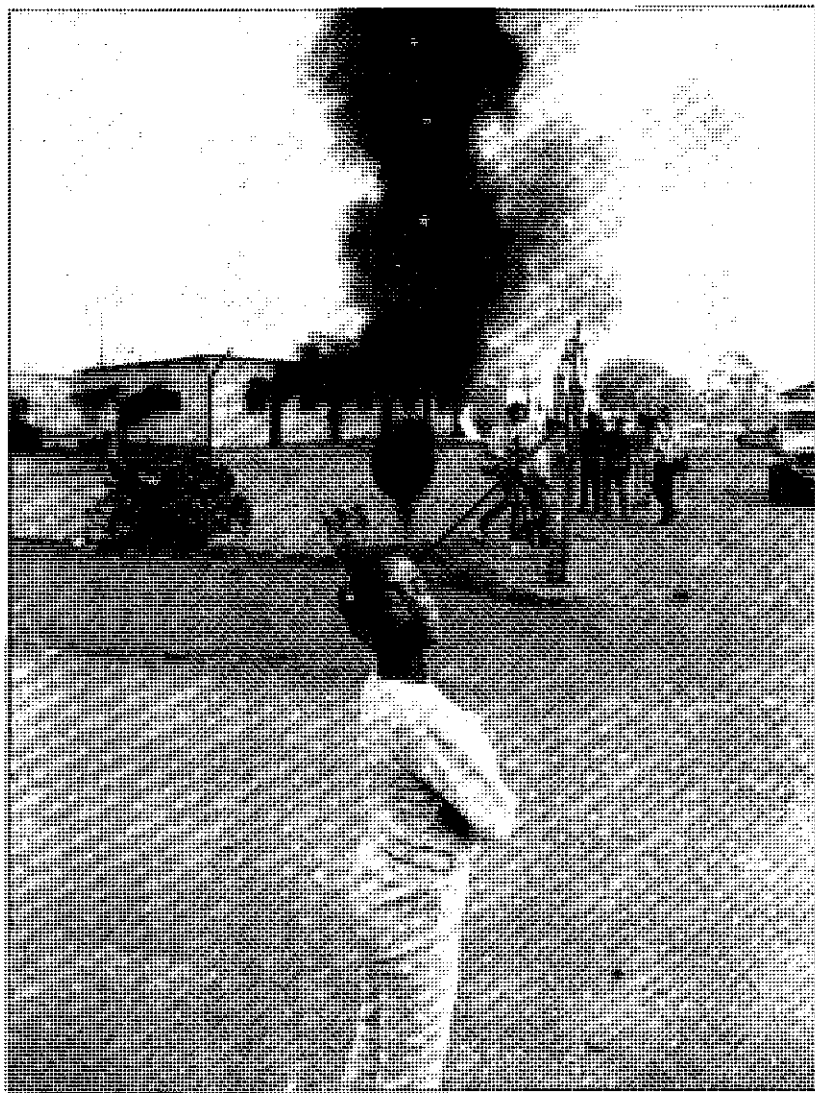
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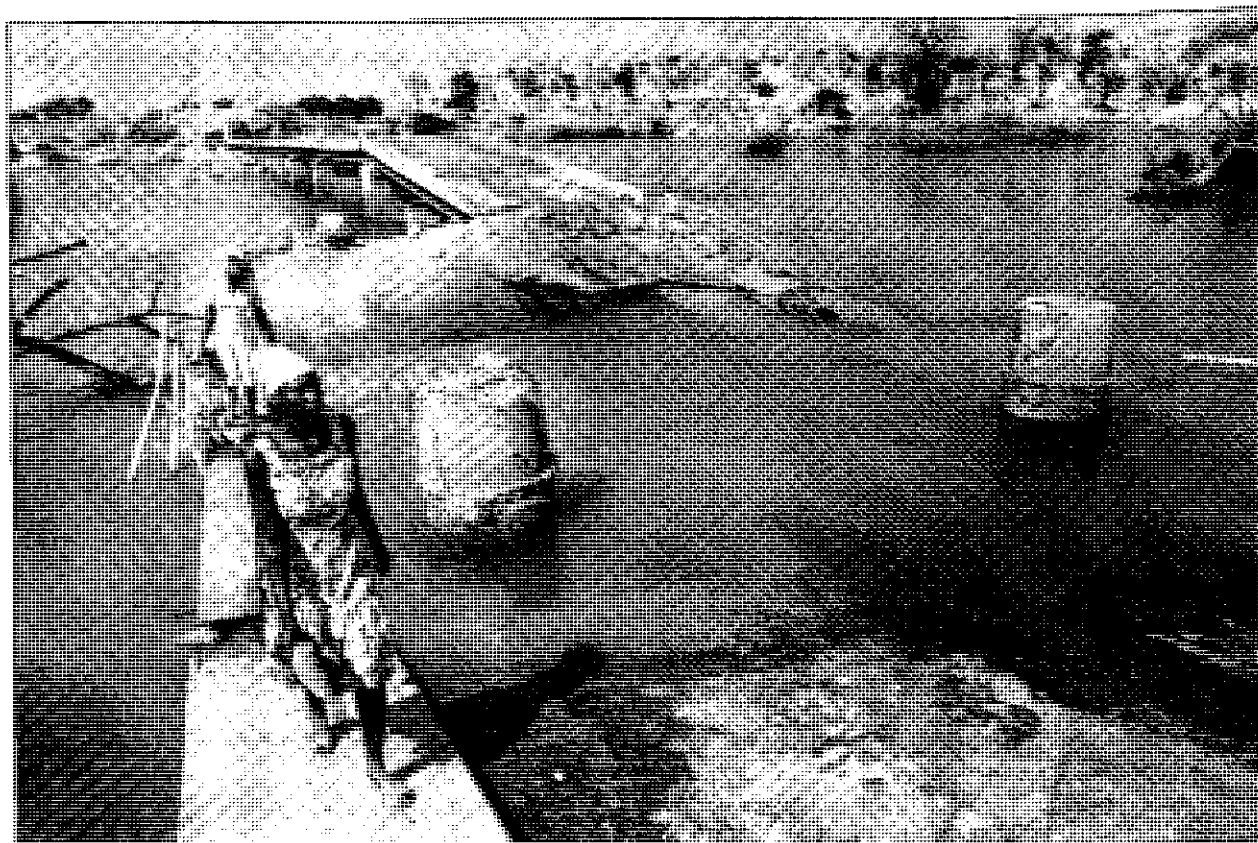
Still, we spoke at the outset about glimmers of light as well as areas of darkness in southern Africa. And indeed a whole host of smaller struggles for humane development in southern Africa are indeed going on there. Alongside the articles and issues already mentioned that are to be found in the present issue of *SAR*, there are others that survey positive signals emerging from southern Africa, signals that can help relieve the gloom of the post-Gulf moment. Thus, even as it conveys something of the chaos of contemporary An-

gola, Luce's piece also identifies ongoing popular initiatives that suggest both the resilience of the Angolan people – and possible points of entry for our continuing support of their efforts. Richard Saunders identifies a vitality to the Zimbabwean media that he senses, similarly, to be heralding the insistent resonance of democratic claims upon the leadership in that country. And Shireen Hassim identifies signs of advance – not quite drowned out by the "dialogue of the deaf" that all too often characterized the proceedings of a recent landmark women's confer-

ence in South Africa that she reports upon – on the front of gender-related assertions in that country.

Of course, any such advances are themselves only to be made on hotly contested ground, in a context fraught, as argued above, with contradictions and confusions. Under such circumstances, it is indeed tempting to ask whether the promise of struggles to be won is likely to outweigh the scars of struggles lost? Unfortunately, there is no easy answer to such a question. But have we any choice other than to engage – and see?





Impact Visuals

Destroyed bridge at Langoaga, across the Namibe River

# Angola's Quagmire: What Way Out?

BY FRANK LUCE

*Frank Luce is a Toronto-based labour lawyer who has recently returned from a study tour in Angola.*

Angola's national ruling party, the MPLA, has had a three-pronged approach to trying to maintain state power — through peace initiatives, the restructuring of the economy, and the creation of a coalition of patriotic forces to prevent a takeover by Jonas Savimbi's U.S.-backed Unita.

The peace process stumbled in February earlier this year because the MPLA insisted that Unita agree

to a specific date for a cease-fire. The failure of this sixth round of Portuguese-mediated talks illustrates the unfortunate reality that peace is beyond the control of the Angolan government. The initiative for peace now lies with Unita and its American sponsor, which must somehow fit Angola into the New World Order.

Not only would Unita not agree to a cease-fire; it has actually increased its military activity dramatically since mid-January, when the Bush Administration launched Op-

eration Desert Storm. Unita's success in the north contradicts the tribalist analysis that it is strictly Umbundu-based, and suggests that a class analysis would better explain the current balance of forces in Angola. Prior to the Gulf War, Unita had already entrenched itself in the Kikongo-dominated northern provinces; it has a strong presence in Uige province, especially outside the urban areas. It's also a myth to suppose that Unita is the MPLA's only opposition. The Zaire-backed Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda acts relatively openly in the



Cabinda strip, that area that cuts into Zaire, one of Angola's northern neighbours. Unita now appears to be positioning itself to enter the capital of Luanda through the province of Cuanza Sul and/or to take control of at least one provincial capital (possibly Cuito in Bie) before a cease-fire.

Savimbi has already indicated that because of the continuing presence of some 15,000 Cuban troops in the Luanda region, Unita will not agree to a peaceful entry into the capital following a cease-fire agreement and elections. The departure of the Cubans in June of this year leaves open the possibility that Unita will attempt to enter Luanda militarily, depending on the Bush administration's current vision of the Angolan peace process.

#### The danger of a Unita victory

Although a Unita victory now looms as a serious possibility, Unita itself remains relatively unknown. To what extent does Unita enjoy popular support? What is its organizational capacity in relation to the demands of state power? What is its actual military strength as opposed to its ability to sabotage development efforts? Although Unita has said little about what its policies would be as a government, the international solidarity movement recognizes Unita as a friend of apartheid, a friend of neo-colonialism, and an enemy of genuine democracy.

The political priority for those who support liberation in Angola at this conjuncture is to stop Unita, whether or not the MPLA maintains state power. However, the historical commitment of the international solidarity movement to the MPLA as the sole embodiment of Angolan liberation is outdated. In view of the concessions that the MPLA has already made towards the creation of a market economy and a multi-party democracy, solidarity with the people of Angola can encompass possible third forces without abandoning critical support for the MPLA.

#### Where did the MPLA go wrong?

The overwhelming desire of the Angolan population is for a return to normalcy after thirty years of constant warfare. The war remains as the primary impediment to economic progress, but it does not explain the corruption and arbitrary exercise of state power which has come to characterize Angola's single party regime. While Unita and its friends must shoulder the blame for the ongoing warfare, the MPLA is primarily responsible for its own lack of popular support. After the electoral experiences of ruling parties in Eastern Europe, Nicaragua and in Cabo Verde (an African neighbour and former Portuguese colony whose leader, Aristedes Pereira of the socialist-oriented PAIVC, recently won less than 25% of the popular vote), it should come as no surprise that, after more than fifteen years in power, the MPLA perhaps enjoys less popular support in Angola than the Mulroney government enjoys in Canada.

If the Angolan peace process were to culminate in fair elections, including sufficient time for a third force to organize, it's likely that neither the MPLA nor Unita would be elected. However, the various factions of the Angolan political elite have begun to jockey for position and at least seven new political parties have declared themselves in Angola during the past several weeks. Of all these groups, perhaps only Unita may be able to claim a peasant base, albeit of a dimension which remains unquantifiable.

Some advocates of the need for a third force in Angola oversimplify the situation with the slogan "Neither the Unita murderers nor the MPLA thieves." What has the MPLA done to merit being labelled as thieves? The MPLA took power with the promise that, in the words of Agostinho Neto, "We will make of Angola the fatherland of the workers and the revolution will continue its triumphal march at the side of

the peoples who are following the same path." Now that most of these people have stepped off the revolutionary path and the MPLA has started down the path of multi-party democracy, both Neto (once revered as "The Immortal Guide of the Angolan Revolution") and his promise have been dropped from the masthead of the official daily newspaper, *Jornal de Angola*. Without Neto's promise of progress towards revolution, what is left is corruption and economic collapse. Instead of a liberated Angola as the fatherland of peasants and workers, the MPLA has created a system in which a privileged segment of the petty-bourgeoisie clings to its control of the state apparatus at all costs and resists change in order to protect its own narrow interests. The forces of liberation are in retreat from the current neo-colonialist onslaught to a large extent because they have been co-opted by this privileged segment, which Joachim Pinto de Andrade, a former honorary president of the MPLA, has labelled the "lumpen-bourgeoisie." (Joachim is now the president of ACA, the Angolan Civic Association, founder of Angola's most likely third political force, the Frente para a Democracia.)

The "lumpen-bourgeoisie" phenomenon is not unique to Angola, but it bears characteristics which reflect Angola's experience since independence. The Portuguese colonial system did not allow for the development of a national bourgeoisie. The liberation struggle was led mainly by intellectuals who popularized the notion of Angolan nationalism but refused to embrace Amilcar Cabral's principle that they must commit suicide as a class in order for the African revolution to succeed. The formation of Angola's "lumpen-bourgeoisie" is the product of class politics in times of economic scarcity.

After 1976, at the end of the Second Liberation War, against South Africa, the MPLA opted for oil

rather than agriculture as an economic base for the Angolan economy. The MPLA in power consolidated its own class interests, and it did so in a manner which reflects an economic system in which informal process dominates formal process and chronic scarcity and uncertainty dominate distribution. Wealth and political power were merged into oil revenue and were divorced from productive activity. In the face of increasing scarcity, the distribution of goods and services became the exclusive domain of those who wielded power within the ubiquitous party-state. They distributed first to themselves, then to their families, their clans and their friends, and always in exchange for present or future benefit. Whatever portion of Angola's oil wealth was not consumed by war was squandered to guarantee the lifestyle of a signifi-

cant minority of the petty bourgeois elite that controls state power in Angola.

#### Attempted structural adjustment

The MPLA is being held captive by the privileged social class which benefits from the existing economic system. While the struggle continues within the MPLA, many patriotic and progressive elements have abandoned the party or have been excluded. The MPLA strategy to forge a coalition of patriotic forces against Unita risks being undermined by the MPLA's reluctance to dismantle the existing social system, opposed not only by international capital but also by the population as a whole, including the workers and peasants. Ironically, opposition to the introduction of an unfettered market economy comes

both from the vested interests which profit from the current system and from the forces of genuine liberation. Both international capital and the Angolan population as a whole agree with the official MPLA line that the economy must be restructured. But the efforts of progressive forces to find viable alternatives to a neo-colonial model have been sabotaged by the government's inability to break with the allure of its entrenched privileges, and in the meantime, the IMF/World Bank works diligently to impose its vision of structural adjustment.

Two Angolan economies continue to exist side by side. The informal sector dominates a formal sector that is subject to artificial state control. The formal sector serves mainly to provide access to hard currency and to consumer goods, either imported or produced by state



*SADF destroyed house in Ngiva, Southern Angola*

John Liebenborg/Impact Visuals



enterprises, which can be marketed in the informal sector. The informal exchange rate of 750 New Kwanzas to the US dollar reflects real value much more closely than does the official rate of about 30. While prices are unstable because of the chronic universal scarcity of goods and services, the general price level reflects value, that is, the informal exchange rate. This system has fostered a lifestyle of buying, selling and scheming which leaves little time for production. Wages in the formal sector, paid in New Kwanzas, are never enough and must be supplemented by the right of access to marketable goods (obtained either at controlled prices from the state or at the hard currency stores), and through time off work to permit scheming and exchange. This time off, to the foreign observer, often appears to occupy the most potentially productive time.

Two often inter-related social groups benefit from the misery which this economic system produces: the champions of free enterprise, who have managed to amass their fortunes through dealings in the informal sector, and the politicians and office-holders, who control access to hard currency, consumer goods, and state-dispensed privileges through their stranglehold on the bureaucracy. Those with access to hard currency, including the growing international aid community, can consume at a comfortable level either by exchanging currency on the free market or by buying goods at the hard currency stores which can then be exchanged for New Kwanzas or local goods and services. Once you break into the informal market, goods and services are freely available at prices which approximate their value.

In 1987, the government launched the SEF (Saneamento Economico e Financeiro), a first attempt to rationalize the economic structures. The SEF programme was an indigenous structural adjustment programme which left the basic gov-

ernmental structure intact but advocated devaluation, privatization, price liberalization, and foreign investment to a degree which made the World Bank drool and secured Angola's entry into the IMF. A special SEF squad was set up, under the protection of the President, whose members were given ministerial status to permit them to bully recalcitrant ministries into compliance. But although they had ministerial status, they were not ministers: the "lumpen-bourgeoisie" was able to sabotage all efforts at change, forcing the government to abandon SEF in late 1990.

The government, recognizing the continuing urgency for economic restructuring, replaced the SEF with the PAG (Programma de Accao do Governo). The PAG initially bypassed the experts who had designed the SEF, and instead sought to co-opt the members of the bureaucratic elite by including them in the restructuring process. This approach led to the infamous "troca de moeda," or currency exchange, of September 1990. In a period of one week, five percent of privately held cash Kwanzas were exchanged for New Kwanzas; the remaining Kwanzas were demonetized and held by the central bank as forced savings, recognized in the form of a promissory note, redeemable at the option of the government. The popular view was that the government had stolen their money and would never give it back. With the currency exchange, the MPLA sacrificed a large chunk of whatever goodwill towards it that remained among the population without having gained any substantial dividend. The market was briefly thrown into disequilibrium due to the brutal contraction of the money supply, but the pre-existing price structure soon prevailed. The PAG had promised that a 100% devaluation would coincide with the demonetization, but to date the exchange rate remains unaltered.

The government has yet to admit to the complete failure of this first step in the PAG, although the Min-

ister of Commerce has been scapegoated. The government's error was in thinking that it could start to restructure the economy by attacking the free-enterprise elite alone, without destroying the privileges of the bureaucrats. This experience has proven that it is the informal economy which dominates the formal. By bowing once again to the entrenched vested interests, the MPLA has increased the risk that a neo-colonial economic model will soon win out for lack of any alternative. The PAG has now been revamped to incorporate the input of economists from the various ministries, and an economic plan for 1991 was adopted in February which includes a 200% devaluation by the end of this year. The concept of a planned economy may be doomed since the inter-ministerial team which is now charged with the elaboration of a plan for 1992-96 is working in close cooperation with the World Bank and the UNDP. Whether or not the planned devaluation will be implemented, and whether or not the official exchange rate will eventually be brought into line with the market rate, remains undetermined.

#### Constructing civil society

According to the MPLA timetable, multi-party democracy will arrive in Angola in April of this year, and free elections will be held within three years. All aspects of government policy should henceforth be analyzed in terms of the MPLA's electoral strategy. In an effort to build a coalition with the unarmed opposition, the MPLA has engaged in a series of public meetings in which it has opened itself up to public criticism. The government has formed a presidential advisory Council of the Republic composed of church and civic leaders, including ACA and former adherents of the "Revolta Activa," a group of intellectuals within the MPLA who, just before independence, unsuccessfully challenged the party's direction. Virtually all of the political



Angola resident rebuilds his destroyed house.

parties currently on the scene describe themselves as social democratic. However, not all present themselves as potential allies of the MPLA, both because of the MPLA's failure to break with the negative aspects of its past record, and because the Bush administration may well prefer an Angolan version of Violetta Chamorra, to replace the image of Savimbi and his blood-soaked contras.

The construction of civil society in Angola parallels the construction of a multi-party political system. The impetus to construct civil society in Angola comes from three distinct sources. First, within the IMF/World bank model, a civil society independent of the party-state structure is as much a component of a free-market economy as is multi-party democracy. Second, the MPLA sees the independence of certain currently party-dominated apparati as part of a legitimization strategy in the multi-party system. Third, many pro-

gressive individuals have abandoned state and party politics, reflecting a world-wide phenomenon of disillusionment with the political process. While neo-colonialist and anti-imperialist opinion can agree on the pivotal role which the civil society will play in the evolution of the multi-party system in Angola, they differ on the type of non-government organizations which should be encouraged and they will differ increasingly on what type of activities should be supported.

#### UNTA, UNACA, and OMA

Which organizations in Angola will best be able to represent the interests of workers and peasants in the inevitable transition to some form of market economy? Which organizations will be most effective in the delivery of goods and services to workers and peasants in partnership with international NGOs? How can the democratic participation of workers and peasants best be encouraged in the process of their own liberation? The MPLA no longer provides or

seeks to provide a simple answer to these rather complex questions. At this conjuncture, the international solidarity movement should begin to seek answers in cooperation with a trio of fledglings who have recently left the MPLA nest: the trade union central, UNTA; the peasant organization, UNACA; the women's organization, OMA. While all three organizations must now face the financial constraints which vex the viability and independence of non-government organizations throughout the world, and while all three are burdened by a political and organizational past which may prove to be their downfall, they occupy privileged positions and are best situated to evolve into organizations which legitimately represent the interests and wishes of workers and peasants in a process of liberation.

Existing labour legislation provides that all workers employed in the formal sector are required to be members of an UNTA-affiliated trade union and that UNTA is the

only authorized trade union central. Since union dues are compulsory, UNTA enjoys both a guaranteed membership and a guaranteed source of financing (at least in New Kwanzas). Whether or not UNTA and its affiliates will continue to enjoy a monopoly is a current subject of debate between UNTA and the Ministry of Labour. Compulsory union membership and compulsory dues are not inconsistent with a market economy, as is evident from the Canadian situation. UNTA has experience organizing workers for militant struggle more recent than that of most unions in Canada. A transition from a party/state-dominated docile bureaucracy to a legitimate independent trade union movement is possible under the present circumstances. The determining factor in the transition is not how UNTA obtained its membership, but the level of class struggle within the union. Any effort by the state to force UNTA members to de-unionize and then to re-organize would be a setback as the economic circumstances which face the membership begin to deteriorate in the face of even the modest steps towards structural readjustment which the government has taken to date. UNTA has been active in drafting new labour legislation and it will provide legal representation for its members before the anticipated Labour Tribunal. It has, however, been largely ineffectual in relation to the changing economic circumstances of its members which have resulted recently in a number of wildcat strikes, and it is in this area that it would benefit from the experience of independent unions in other countries such as South Africa or even Canada.

In Angola, to make the distinction between workers and peasants is very difficult. Urban areas are crowded with peasants displaced by the war who may or may not return to the land following a cease-fire. Peasants remain organized, however, in traditional structures of families, clans and tribes, which often do not fit within either the framework of international coopera-

tion or the modern ideology of liberation. UNACA, the peasant organization, was formed in 1989 when MPLA realized, with the encouragement of the FAO, that it needed to re-establish agriculture as Angola's economic base. It was founded through a genuinely representative process but most of the peasant associations it represents barely function and are virtually without resources. UNACA hopes both to speak on behalf of peasants and to deliver goods and services to the countryside to encourage peasant production, especially through a co-operative movement of poor peasants like those in other Southern African countries. Unlike UNTA, UNACA has no direct source of funds and no guaranteed membership. It currently is promoting the passage of legislation which would protect peasant land, and lobbies for government policies which will encourage a return to the land after a cease-fire agreement has been reached.

OMA, the Organization of Angolan Women, remains officially linked to the MPLA because it depends on the party for financial support. At the last party congress, OMA protested publicly that the party had failed to provide access for women to participate in MPLA affairs. At OMA's insistence, the government recently created a Secretariat of State for women's issues which will likely absorb much of OMA's personnel. OMA will decide its own fate at its next congress which will follow the MPLA extraordinary congress in April. It may remain as the MPLA's women's branch, in which case it would encourage the formation of a federation of Angolan women's organizations of which it would be a member.

UNTA, UNACA and OMA are well situated to become legitimate representatives of Angolan workers, peasants and women, independent of their past reliance on the MPLA, but it is not possible at this point to predict their success, which will de-

pend in part on whether or not they will receive the benefits of international cooperation. There are many other candidates for international NGO dollars, including the Angolan churches, and many potential Angolan NGOs waiting for a kick-start. The first Angolan organization to establish itself on the classic NGO model was the AAD (Accao Angolano de Desenvolvimento), which has adopted a policy of collaboration with the state structures mainly at the local level. The AAD experience underlines the advantages which Angolan NGOs would enjoy - access to development dollars, the capacity of Angolan NGOs to execute projects, and the dependency of NGOs on the Angolan state structures. The international solidarity network should ignore neither the churches nor Angolan NGOs such as the AAD, but cooperation with UNTA, UNACA and OMA should be a priority at this stage, in order to support the idea that the role of the state is crucial to development and liberation remains its long term goal.

The MPLA continues to deserve our solidarity and support as long as it continues to stand against neo-colonialism, apartheid and tribalism, and for liberation. It neither wants nor deserves our uncritical support as the struggle within the MPLA continues against corruption and exploitation. Now that the concept of the one-party state has been abandoned in Angola, and as civil society begins to flourish, solidarity with the people of Angola goes beyond a relationship with the MPLA and its family of mass organizations. As events unfold in Angola, the broadest possible coalition of forces will be required to oppose Unita and the other organizations which will inevitably come forward in the service of neo-colonialism. If international solidarity is to continue to play a constructive role in favour of liberation in Angola, then it must remain open to include solidarity with the broadest possible range of Angolan opinion.

# The High Costs of Stalemate:

## Dan O'Meara on South Africa

Dan O'Meara, well-known South African writer and activist who now teaches at the Université de Québec à Montréal, recently revisited South Africa after a fifteen year exile. A long time collaborator with SAR, O'Meara briefed our editorial working group on his impressions of the current moment in South Africa in the course of a speaking trip to Toronto shortly after his return. His was a sobering account, all the more forceful for the broad historical perspective his own extensive research and writing on South African developments enabled him to bring to bear on recent events.

Change is in the air in South Africa. Dan O'Meara was very far from underestimating the significance, real and potential, of the overturning of core apartheid legislation over the past year. Yet he placed at the very heart of the several presentations he made in Toronto the consequences of the fact that change has not gone anywhere near far enough. The main consequence: an escalation in the level of violence – both counter-revolutionary violence and the violence that accompanies an upsurge of sheer criminality – inside South Africa, a level of violence only hinted at even in the sometimes fevered recent coverage of South Africa produced by our western news media. A reasonably straightforward transition to a democratic South Africa may yet be possible, argued O'Meara, but the alternative possibility of an increasingly (and alarmingly) chaotic situation also looms large. The anti-apartheid movement in Canada needs to take this latter possibility seriously as one more pressing reason for revitalizing its efforts to help remove obstacles to democratic transition and to support those forces – notably the African National Congress – that re-

main the best guarantors of progress in South Africa.

### Violence

O'Meara supplied graphic first-hand anecdotes to support his fears, citing Bheki Mlangeni, a black ANC lawyer active in securing testimony before the Harms Commission on



David Hartman

Dan O'Meara

state violence, who told him that every night he returned to his Soweto home with the nagging feeling he would not live to come to work the next day. Two weeks after his conversation with O'Meara this lawyer was killed by a parcel bomb. O'Meara found, in fact, that ANC/UDF activists in the Johannesburg area were being targeted at an alarming rate, producing an extraordinary sense of dread within the popular movement and even a sense that the moment of maximum opportunity for positive change might be beginning to slip away.

Thus, the warlord system that is so much a part of the infrastructure of Inkatha's brutal presence in the Natal squatter camps and beyond has begun to reproduce itself elsewhere, with even some of the "young lions" of earlier stages of popular resistance turning, in the present uncertain moment, into "comtsotsi" ("Comtsotsi" is an amalgam, in the popular lexicon, of the words "comrade" and "tsotsi" [criminal] and means, basically, "bandit"). In this and other ways, the bill for the apartheid-fostered breakdown of social cohesion in African communities (most notable in the sprawling squatter camps of the peri-urban areas) is coming due. A thuggish power-brokering premised on force and on mafia-style patron-client relationships has emerged and threatens to preempt a new politics premised on genuine community renewal. The challenge to the ANC of keeping alive the process of bringing order and renewal to this potentially chaotic situation is, therefore, considerable.

This is all the more evident when one considers that the most unsavoury elements in the black population are egged on by sinister white forces – by rogue elements in the army and police for example, as has been well documented. These latter seem bent, in O'Meara's view, on turning black South Africa into another Mozambique, this with an eye to playing on white South Africa's worst fears. Moreover, creeping chaos feeds these fears on another level: fuelled by large supplies of firearms flooding back into South Africa from Mozambique in the wake of Pretoria's military adventures there, social breakdown leads to a rising rate of crime. And this in turn leads, in O'Meara's first-hand ob-

servation, to ever-heightened white paranoia. Under these circumstances one might have expected President de Klerk to be moving rather more rapidly along the road to genuine change – the better to short-circuit a collapse into the kind of chaos from which few, either black or white, could expect to benefit in the long run.

#### De Klerk's agenda

Why then has the march forward to a new society – one that, in the name of community and renewed social purpose, might counter such pulls towards social disintegration – slowed down? A careful attempt to decipher the contradictions within de Klerk's own project is particularly crucial to our answering this question, O'Meara argued. Other options (Botha's token reformism of the late '70s/early '80s and the renewed repression of the post-insurrection period) for defusing black resistance having failed, de Klerk has taken the historic step

of seeking stability through negotiations with the ANC. O'Meara argues that, in so doing, he has managed, for the moment, to outmanoeuvre the ANC, placing it on the defensive. And yet de Klerk, too, finds himself in an unenviable position of his own, one that limits his ability to secure a level of change in South Africa sufficiently dramatic to keep things on an even keel.

Partly, this reflects the limits of his own vision of what such change might look like, a point O'Meara argued in an extremely interesting way. For de Klerk and his colleagues quite simply will not commit themselves to the establishment of a non-racial democracy. Thus, the constitutional plan they have now bruited about as their likely "offer" when that stage of the negotiations process is reached, still provides for a strong white veto through the careful structuring of the proposed new parliament's second chamber. This reflects deep-felt concerns on the part of Afrikaners about protect-

ing their own culture and language, of course, as well as more prosaic concerns about defending important aspects of economic/racial privilege against any unchecked democratic majority certain to be both poor and black.

How could de Klerk believe it possible that any such white veto could be sold to the black population, by the ANC (even in the unlikely event that it should seek to do so) or by anyone else? Here O'Meara sees de Klerk as victim of the old Afrikaner fixation (shades of the mad scientist Verwoerd and his Bantustan scheme) with "social engineering." The new code word is "elite-pacting," the notion that "representative elites" can be brought together in negotiations to cut a more or less private deal. A fundamental misconception of the nature of black politics, needless to say, yet one reminiscent to O'Meara of the Afrikaners' similarly out-of-touch overestimation of the electoral chances of a deeply compromised



Bosch/Afrapix

Bishop Muzorewa vis-à-vis Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe or of the viability of the various alternatives to SWAPO that they attempted to cobble together in Namibia over the years.

Complementing his own half-heartedness about risking real political change, de Klerk is also looking over his shoulder, as suggested above, at the white right, and in particular at the army and the police. Despite having dismantled the State Security System, de Klerk still seems to treat Defence Minister Magnus Malan with kid gloves, failing to seize a golden opportunity to dismiss him in the wake of the Harms Commission's report and also covering up for his lies in Parliament. Moreover, O'Meara emphasized the extent to which the pattern of recent

appointments – notably that of General Liebenberg to head the Defense Force, the very man who, as chief of the SADF Special Forces Command, had presided over the military destabilization of Mozambique and Angola – seems further to document de Klerk's disinclination to run too many risks in the interest of change. Could a coup be in the offing? Since the military's own preferred alternative for dealing with crisis – brute repression – so visibly failed in years immediately preceding de Klerk's coming to power, it may not feel quite confident or clear enough about an alternative agenda to chance such a step. But in the meantime, even short of a coup, the pattern of police and military harassment of the popular movement is allowed to continue.

True, O'Meara judges that de Klerk still has majority support within the white community for his reform agenda. Yet it is "soft support," he says, hinged on the promise that de Klerk can deliver an end to uncertainty and some respite from crisis. But if the violence continues to escalate and the economy to disintegrate, this support may merely withdraw from politics – not necessarily moving to the right but leaving a political vacuum, one that could provide even less basis for underwriting creative initiatives from de Klerk than does the current situation. Like Gorbachev in a rapidly disintegrating Soviet Union, de Klerk too is running out of time. The one thing de Klerk requires most, in O'Meara's view, is an ANC sufficiently strong to broker





with him a restabilization of South African politics. At one level de Klerk knows this. How ironic that he seems bound, simultaneously, to undermine the very ANC he needs so much!

### A tight corner for the ANC

For who, in the black community, can believe in the good faith of de Klerk under the present circumstances? And yet the ANC seems as bound to de Klerk as he is to them. Of course, there are some very good reasons for this, O'Meara suggested, notably all the pressures, economic and otherwise that have driven de Klerk to the brink of change. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the ANC finds itself in a quite difficult position as it attempts to adjust to the new terrain onto which government actions have catapulted it. There have been all the very concrete difficulties of establishing itself organizationally as a mass political party in what have become unfamiliar surroundings – not least the considerable financial demands such an organizational transformation involves.

Moreover, there are significant gaps to be bridged between erstwhile exile leaders and other leaders who have established themselves inside the country in more recent decades. Gaps, too, even amongst those returning home, gaps that open up as the proximity and cohesion of exile life gives way to a new diversity in the links ANC cadres are now establishing with various local constituencies. Add to this such ideological differences as now swim to the surface, reflecting diverse interpretations of what a new South Africa should actually look like now that it is, at least, within reach.

Perhaps, too, there are differences of opinion about how seriously de Klerk should be taken as an interlocutor of change: some ANC leaders are probably more into an "elite-pacting," "conflict resolution" mode of negotiating the future than are others. But even those who see continuing struggle (though not now, in

all probability, armed struggle) and popular mobilization as a necessary backdrop to successful negotiations are less well-placed to deliver any such mobilization than one might hope. This is not merely because of the challenges to organizational coherence itemized above. Here again O'Meara underscored the crucial importance of the all-pervasive violence that currently stalks South Africa. The capacity of ANC cadres to mobilize popular pressure around the negotiations is being sapped, in many crucial areas of the country, by the necessity to fire-fight outbursts of violence, damp down (understandable yet unproductive) popular demands for vengeance and the like.

Here lies the irony of the current situation. Strong enough to resist repression and to now place itself in the middle of the negotiations process, the ANC-led popular-democratic alliance is, simultaneously, too weak to force de Klerk to pay primary attention to its demands and yield to a genuine democratization of South Africa. Indeed, chances are that as negotiations proceed the ANC will find itself under growing pressure to yield key points – to forego the establishment of a constituent assembly (rather than a mere "consultative process") in the first phase of transition, or, even more seriously, to accept a substantial "white veto" in any new constitutional set-up that might eventually be forthcoming. And yet on such questions – especially on the question of the proposed "white veto" – neither the ANC nor its popular constituency are able to compromise. Too strong to lose, too weak (and perhaps weaker in this respect than it was twelve months ago) to win: this is the ANC's contribution to the current dangerous stalemate in South Africa.

It was by this route that O'Meara returned to his main point, the one noted at the outset of this report. Despite its undoubted weaknesses, the only possible political vehicle for overseeing an orderly tran-

sition to a democratic South Africa is the ANC. Yet the realization of any such transition is severely jeopardized. Therefore a primary task of the international support network must be to back more effectively than ever the ANC, both in terms of bolstering its image abroad and in assisting it to strengthen its organizational capacity at home. O'Meara did argue the case for simultaneous international support for the beefing up of various progressive elements of an autonomous "civil society." These are necessary guarantors, in general terms, of the long-run consolidation of democracy in South Africa; in addition, they can help keep pressure on the ANC to itself remain democratic. Yet he felt such a concern should not blind us to the importance of helping the ANC to get South Africa over "the first hurdle" and to the realization of a new and just constitutional dispensation.

What of the urgent need that ensuring a more egalitarian socioeconomic structure must accompany a process of political democratization in South Africa? Given that a revolution is not immediately on the cards, O'Meara sees the essential precondition for possible realization of any such radical transformation to lie in ensuring that the current drive towards political democratization not be derailed by the forces of chaos. The high costs of stalemate in the current moment need, first, to be preempted. Should South Africa degenerate into another Mozambique – something that is more likely now than it was a year ago – any prospect of ultimately mounting a well-organized, coherent egalitarian project will have been destroyed. In sum, O'Meara now sees left activists as facing a bitter and ironic choice. As someone who has always opposed the notion of a "two-stage revolution" in South Africa, O'Meara now feels that the first priority of "economic democrats"/socialists is to ensure a peaceful transition to real political democracy there.

# Mozambique's Beleaguered Children: Legacy of a War

BY NAOMI RICHMAN

*Naomi Richman is a child psychiatrist working for Save the Children, UK, in the Mozambican Ministry of Education.*

N. is 12 years old and lives in Zambezia. He was kidnapped with his mother and cousin, and spent three years on a bandit base. While there he saw people beaten and killed, including his cousin in a public execution. He and his mother managed to escape two years ago.

This is the kind of child we are trying to help in our school-based programme run by the Ministry of Education, where I have been working for the past two years. As well as trying to promote a "therapeutic" climate within the schools, we have been looking at how the war has affected perpetrators and victims of violence.

Both children and adults have witnessed atrocities they find it hard to forget – relatives murdered, brutal mutilations, rape; many have been kidnapped, terrorized and beaten. Psychological symptoms following such experiences are common, often persisting for years after the original events. Of the first 50 displaced children we talked with a quarter described disabling symptoms. These included recurrent "flashbacks" about particular events, nightmares, preoccupations about missing relatives, headaches and other somatic symptoms, sadness and hopelessness. The teachers we talk to describe similar reactions.

N., the boy mentioned above, suffers from headaches and palpitations, and occasional nightmares about murder and kidnapping. He has recurrent thoughts about a terrifying incident when he was trying to run away, was recaptured and



Paul Weinberg/Afrapix/Impact Visuels

threatened again, and feels sad and alone because his father was killed.

Gratuitous violence towards children is common – amputations of the penis, an arm shot at close range requiring amputation. For example, S., a girl of 15, was present when her parents were killed, and during the attack a log was delib-

erately dropped on her leg, crushing it. The leg had to be amputated and now S. is living in deprived circumstances, looking after four younger children, and getting around on crutches. Yet she is also managing to go to school.

How can we respond to the needs of the tens of thousands of chil-

dren who have suffered in the war? With the numbers involved, it is impossible to provide individual treatment based on Western models; nor are "treatment centres" the solution, since these separate the children from normal social life, are expensive and could reach only a small proportion of children. A community-based programme, using people who already know the children and their society, would appear to be the most effective response. This is the kind of programme that was initiated by the then Minister of Education, Graça Machel, in 1988.

The programme involves sensitizing the teachers to the emotional needs of war-affected children and developing skills for helping them. Amongst these skills are the capacity to give emotional support to children, and the use of recreational and creative activities, such as games, drawing, dance and theatre. In the first phase, training seminars were held at provincial and district level, aimed at reaching as many primary teachers as possible. Now, in the second phase, we are attempting to improve our training methods for teachers, using our practical experience of working in schools and with individual children.

How feasible is such a programme in a situation of war? Are we expecting too much of the teachers? They too have suffered; they work under difficult conditions - often with two shifts a day and up to 80 children in a class. Further constraints are the lack of technicians to supervise work in the provinces, and the effects of structural adjustment on the Ministry's capacity. In spite of these difficulties, children are being helped, and in the long term, we hope that our innovations in teacher training will have an impact on teaching methods and on concepts about the role of the teacher.

The third phase of our programme will be to train technicians to work in the provinces and to introduce the programme into teacher training colleges. We are also con-

tinuing to explore the social context of the children's lives and the ways in which family and community support those who have suffered.

Many are hopeless about their situation and do not think the war will ever end. This is especially so for the displaced within and outside the country who have no land and no means of gaining a living, and for those who have lost nearly all their relatives. The brutality of Renamo has shaken confidence in the possibility of constructing a "good society." One boy was even reluctant to form a friendship in case conflicts arose and "then he might kill me." Yet not everyone is resigned. I have met mothers who braved a bandit-controlled zone in order to rescue their children, teachers who led their pupils to safety after being kidnapped, or who continue to care for others in spite of their own personal grief. Whenever conditions allow, people start cultivation.

What is it that helps people to cope in the face of humiliation and victimization? After being displaced and living off handouts, they need to be in charge of their own lives and economically self-sufficient in order to restore their self-respect. It is also necessary to have beliefs that provide strength for confronting their situation. Currently there is confusion about the political choices available for dealing with the economic and social crisis, and a pessimistic tendency to view war as an inevitable part of the human condition. In these times of stress it is not surprising that people are actively adapting traditional beliefs as a means of coping with their problems, and often use a variety of beliefs concurrently. I talked to one woman who was a member of the Frelimo Party and a representative of the People's Assembly. At the same time she was a practising Catholic, and a believer in the special powers of traditional healers (*curandeiros*) and spirits, and of the army of Neprama.

Last year this army appeared in Zambezia led by a healer, Manuel Antonio, who attributes his special powers to Jesus Christ. He protects his followers, who are ordinary men and women from the countryside, from bullets, using "vaccinations" with razor blades and plant ashes. Without the use of arms they have penetrated into bases and rescued the population, whilst their enemy flees in fear. The activities of Neprama are coordinated by conventional Frelimo forces.

In Gaza province the spirit Mungoi has "created" a safe zone and is protecting thousands of people. Following a Renamo attack on the village, which contains the grave of a traditional chief Augusto Sidawanhane Mungoi, his spirit appeared to a medium and complained about the attack on his people. The medium went to the base to inform the bandits that if they did not return their prisoners and booty they would suffer terrible punishment. The bandits recognized the power of Mungoi and complied. As in Zambezia the provincial structures accept the legitimacy of the spirit medium who in turn works in conjunction with them.

There are now calls for Frelimo "to build a bridge between traditional values and the demands of institutionalized power" as the Sunday paper Domingo put it last year. To some extent this does seem to be happening. *Curandeiros* are open in their activities, emerging from the obscurity imposed on them after independence. They try to help clients who are suffering from symptoms related to traumatic events; they perform ceremonies to propitiate the ancestors, integrate those who have returned from the war zones, and purify those who have been involved in fighting, adapting traditional ceremonies of reintegration.

Another source of spiritual comfort comes from the religious groups, whose membership has been increas-

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ing rapidly in the past few years. As well as the more orthodox churches there are the fundamentalist sects who distribute Bibles with their food aid. Zionist sects are also numerous. The Mazionis in their long robes,

do some of the *curandeiros*. Such ceremonies can have a powerful therapeutic effect on those who have committed violent acts, especially as it is widely thought that those who have committed murder will go mad

minimal provocation. Most of them calm down after some months if they have the opportunity to re-establish normal social relations, and to be with an adult in whom they can trust and confide, although the potential for violent reactions probably remains.

Martin-Baro, one of the Jesuit priests murdered in 1989 in El Salvador, suggested that long-term conflict alters peoples' concepts about society and social behaviour. In order to survive, they develop a narrowing vision based on day-to-day survival strategies, and can no longer envisage ways of resolving their problems. Social relations become distorted, humane values are lost, and possibilities of reconciliation fade away.

How far is this true of Mozambique? Is a culture of violence firmly embedded and revenge more probable than reconciliation? Is the fear justified that the men and youths who are used to killing, will continue their violent behaviour when they return home?

Maputo used to be one of the safest capital cities in Africa. Now the rates of violence, robbery, and murder are rising as more displaced flee to the city, as the effects of PRE bite and the value of the metical (the local currency) falls. The thousands of Mozambicans returning from the bankrupt factories of East Germany add to the jobless. Clearly the resolution of conflict will depend not only on individual efforts but on the economic and political climate, on the possibilities of developing a fulfilling life.

We have seen in Uganda that a strong government of national unity can begin to reconstruct the country and to some extent contain violence, in spite of the long history of bloody conflict. Will Mozambique have the chance to construct a social climate that facilitates reconciliation and allows individuals space to recover their equilibrium and rebuild their lives?



Paul Weinberg/Afrapix/Impact Visuals

can be seen every Sunday along the beach in Maputo, carrying out baptisms and providing healing to those who cannot afford either the expensive *curandeiros* or the health service charges imposed by the PRE (the Economic Recovery Programme).

The role of the state is to provide a framework and mechanisms for people to reconstruct their lives. The efforts made to pass the highly controversial amnesty law, which allows Renamo adherents to return without prosecution, is an example of such a framework, as are the efforts being made to achieve peace. The churches are more or less active in promoting the government's policy of amnesty, and some of them encourage their members to confess their sins in public or in private, as

if they do not undergo a purification ceremony. The people we spoke to in Zambezia all said that reconciliation is necessary in order to put a stop to the violence, but that this will be difficult to achieve for those who meet the murderers of their relatives.

Some of the child victims of violence, perhaps especially those who are physically scarred, express a wish for vengeance, but on the whole they are not aggressive. This is in contrast to the behaviour of boys who return from bases where they have participated in violence as part of a bandit gang. Initially these boys, ranging in age from around 10 to 16 years of age, are often withdrawn and suspicious, and capable of extremely violent reactions with

# Mozambican Refugees: The Mosaic Dossier

South Africa's direct involvement in the war of destabilization in Mozambique is well-known to readers of these pages. However, the document that we reprint below is a potent one, highlighting certain dimensions of South Africa's role that are too little known. Equally significant, perhaps, is the source of this "dossier."

For it has been drawn up (and fleshed out in its original form with various informative appendices that, unfortunately, we haven't the space to publish here) by a support group for Mozambique which now exists inside South Africa itself - MOSAIC, the Mozambique Solidarity Action Interim Committee. Since this committee represents a distinctive and exemplary initiative being undertaken by a wide range of South African organizations, it is worth saying something more about Mosaic by way of introducing the document itself.

Mosaic was founded at the beginning of 1990 (as reported, albeit very much in passing, in SAR, May, 1990) in response to an open letter from journalists, intellectuals and artists in Mozambique requesting "pro-liberation" South Africans to help end the war. The committee is made up of cultural workers, journalists, intellectuals and various individuals from mass-based organizations.<sup>1</sup> Noting that "the destinies of the people of Mozambique are intimately linked through a complex of cultural, economic, political and social interdependency," Mosaic pledged itself formally to:

- set up organizational links between South African and Mozambican organizations on a multilateral and bilateral basis;

- campaign for a public inquiry to investigate the sources of support for Renamo from South Africa and to associate Mosaic with the call by Nelson Mandela that legislation must be effected making it a punishable offence to support Renamo;

- assist in an information campaign to highlight the circumstances and effects of the war;

- liaise with organizations doing relief work among Mozambican refugees and in particular to campaign for the tearing down of the electrical fence;

- involve national organizations in campaigns affecting the region and Mozambique in particular.

Mosaic's first act was a response to the Mozambican initiative and took the form of a letter published in various newspapers supporting the call for peace. Subsequently the committee did generate some further publicity through articles in various newspapers, distributed videos and other materials to various groups and addressed several union rallies and the like; Mosaic also interceded with Nelson Mandela to get him to speak about the situation in Mozambique in his speeches in Durban and Bloemfontein, subsequently printing a poster of one of these speeches. A solidarity week was organized in April, and a meeting marking the 15th anniversary of Mozambican independence was held in June.

Unfortunately, some important planned events - a trip to refugee camps near the Mozambican border by a high-profile delegation - did not take place for various reasons. And the South African government's reluctance to issue visas helped undermine attempts to forge links with Mozambican organizations. Indeed, with the pace of events inside South Africa itself picking up throughout 1990 and with solidarity work therefore tending to "take second place," Mosaic witnessed, in its own words, "a lull in our activities in the second half of the year." It is currently considering ways to organize itself more effectively "so that any programme we decide on can be carried out!"

Some of the themes Mosaic is seeking to reactivate itself around are spelled out in the dossier on the status of refugees reprinted here. One, in particular, is driven home in the letter to COCAMO (Cooperation Canada-Mozambique) that accompanied the dossier. This is the contention that South Africa's deportation of people back into what is essentially a war zone in Mozambique is a contravention of customary international law. Mosaic understands, of course, "that only one state can take another state to the International Court of Justice regarding a breach of international law." But, drawing on the advice of, among others, Professor John Dugard, regarding various aspects of international law, Mosaic is requesting the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to seek an advisory

<sup>1</sup> The groups who formally participate in MOSAIC are: Afrapix, Artists Alliance, Association for Democratic Journalists, Congress of South African Writers, Film and Allied Workers Orga-

nization, South African Union of Journalists, the Workers' Library, and the Working Group on International Relations. Members and Officials of various unions have also participated in ac-

tivities and they include the National Union of Mineworkers, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa and the Transport and General Workers Union.

sory opinion from the court regarding both jurisdiction and the substance of the issue.

As the Mosaic letter continues, "in the meantime we have contacted

a number of political, legal, and special interest groups to take up the issue of the status of Mozambican refugees and their welfare. We would request that COCAMO raise

this issue in Canada and elsewhere. We hope that by creating an international and local campaign the plight of the refugees will be raised." The dossier itself follows.

## Dossier on Mozambican Refugees

### Mozambique Solidarity & Information Committee (MOSAIC)

Mosaic, which represents a number of organizations in the Transvaal, is extremely perturbed at reports that refugees from Renamo's war in Mozambique are being subjected to various forms of exploitation and slavery on the Reef and the Eastern Transvaal.

We are also concerned with the increasing evidence that Renamo members are directly involved in the violence that has swept the Reef and Vaal townships in the past few months.

There are also indications that many of the weapons used by right-wing elements in the townships are derived either from Renamo connections or from refugees who bring handguns and AK47s across the border with them for sale in South Africa.

#### Sanctuary and status for refugees

Mosaic believes that one of the root causes of the slave trade in Mozambican boys and girls that now appears to thrive in the Transvaal is the South African government's refusal to grant sanctuary and status to refugees.

Instead of providing this aid and protection, South African police and customs officials conduct a vigorous campaign to arrest and repatriate as many Mozambicans as possible.

The South African legislation relating to illegal immigrants is the most draconian in the world. The Illegal Entry of Persons into the Republic Act and the Aliens Act allow

for junior police officers and customs officials to deport anyone they "suspect" of being an illegal alien.

The law states specifically that: "No court of law shall ... have any jurisdiction to review, quash, reverse, interdict, or otherwise interfere with any proceeding, act, order, or warrant of the minister, a board, an immigration officer or master of a ship ... issued under this Act." It also stipulates: "The onus rests upon the person to satisfy that he is not a prohibited person in respect of the Republic (of South Africa) or that his entry into, or presence within the Republic, is not unlawful."

In the case of the Mozambicans, the most cursory check of evidence is relied upon including the checking of vaccination marks on people's wrists, where Mozambican doctors administer the vaccine. South Africans are vaccinated on their upper arms. There are cases of refugees who regard their vaccinations as the "mark of Cain" often inflicting injuries on themselves or asking local doctors to remove their marks.

These laws violate the most basic human right and the principle that people are innocent until proven guilty. These laws are implemented so vigorously, indiscriminately, and harshly that South African citizens have been arrested, imprisoned, and deported as aliens to Mozambique. The Black Sash has a number of these cases on record with supporting affidavits.

The laws and their vigorous method of implementation are what makes forced labour and slavery possible in South Africa. They are the ultimate sanction that harsh employers and slave owners use. If there are any complaints or reports of bad conditions by the labourers or slaves, they are threatened with arrest and deportation to Mozambique.

The lack of legal protection and status for refugees exacerbates the problem. They have no identity, no official record of their existence, and no recourse to normal procedures of justice to deal with the abuses against them.

#### The war in Mozambique

The other root cause of forced labour and slave trade is the war in Mozambique. The horror of Renamo's atrocities, said to be worse than that of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, is well-documented. It is common to hear refugees saying they would prefer living in near-slave conditions than to be sent back to Mozambique.

#### The role of the homelands

The only authorities in South Africa that provide recognition and assistance to refugees from Mozambique are those that govern the tiny homelands of KaNgwane and Gazankulu. These homelands, however, suffer shortages of land, schools, and health services, and other basic resources. The refugee populations in both homelands have now reached saturation levels and are contributing to tensions with the local communities.



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Other homelands where refugees have settled, Bophutatswana, KwaZulu, and Venda offer no official support. In KwaZulu there are active attempts by the KwaZulu police to arrest and deport refugees.

### The electrified fence

The South African government has erected a lethal electrified fence along the border between the Eastern Transvaal and Mozambique's Maputo province. Official figures put the death toll as a result of the fence at over 100, more than the number of people trying to cross the Berlin Wall before it was pulled down.

### The legal situation

Mosaic has contacted local lawyers working in the field of interna-

tional law and is advised that South Africa's refusal to protect refugees, and active efforts to deport them constitutes a violation of international law as laid down in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

Rights for refugees are further entrenched in the Organisation for African Unity's Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa of 1969.

Although South Africa is not a signatory to the conventions, lawyers argue that these standards are now enshrined in customary international law and that South Africa is bound, not only morally but legally, to respect these principles in its treatment of the Mozambican refugees.

### A note of warning

With regard to the movement of arms across the border - either via formal links between Renamo and Inkatha or through refugee networks - it is clear that the war in Mozambique is spilling over into South Africa and destabilising local communities. Mozambique's premier poet José Craveirinha, who helped inspire the formation of Mosaic, warned of this long before the current wave of violence on the Reef. He said "Mozambique and South Africa are bow and stern of the same ship. It sails the same waters. It shares the same storms. And it will share the same peace." At the moment we are sharing the same war.

Mosaic, therefore requests your support in its campaign to promote peace in the region and protect the interests of refugees.



Gil Lauriciano/AIM



Paul Weinberg/Afrapix/Impact Visuals

## Refugees, Renamo & Reconstruction An Oxford Workshop

BY OTTO ROESCH

*In the previous issue of SAR we reported on solidarity conferences held, late last year, in Paris and London. Recently, Otto Roesch of the SAR editorial working group attended another, somewhat more academically-defined one-day workshop on 'Mozambique: Contemporary Issues and Current Research' at Oxford University. Organized by the University's Refugee Studies Programme and the Standing Committee for African Studies, the workshop was primarily a scholarly gathering concerned not so much with questions of solidarity as with actually analyzing social processes and current events in Mozambique itself. Yet*

*a considerable number of the approximately 150 people in attendance were from the solidarity movement, while still others came from applied development and emergency relief backgrounds with NGOs, governments, religious organizations, and multilateral agencies and this made, as Roesch reports below, for a lively mix during discussion periods.*

Peace or war? Not surprisingly, much of the discussion and debate focused on the fitful nature of the current peace process, and specifically on both Renamo's violations of the ceasefire provisions of the Rome Agreement (signed between Renamo and the Mozambican government in

December 1990) and its obstructionism at the negotiating table. As a paper presented by Alex Vines of York University (U.K.) persuasively argued, Renamo's ceasefire violations and its unwillingness to negotiate a political settlement with the Mozambican government stem from Renamo's recognition of its lack of popular support inside Mozambique.

Rather than face the humiliating prospect of an electoral loss in upcoming national elections scheduled for later this year, Renamo continues (Vines contended) to seek pretexts for violating the ceasefire and delaying a negotiated settlement — for example, Renamo's recent and

unsubstantiated charges that Zimbabwean troops continue to be stationed outside of the rail corridors in violation of the Rome Agreement. Its hope: that a continuation of the war will further weaken an already debilitated Mozambican government to the point that it will be obliged to concede some sort of power-sharing arrangement. Only on this basis can Renamo's leaders hope to gain any share of state power in Mozambique. In the meantime, Renamo is feverishly engaged in re-writing its own history in an attempt to shed its past image of brutality and foreign control and construct a new organizational and political identity for itself.

## Roots of Renamo

Other papers probed behind the headlines in even more dramatic ways. Particularly striking were three case studies of the regional dynamics of the war at the local level. The studies focused respectively on Zambezia, Tete and Gaza provinces and spoke directly to the ongoing debates around Renamo's grassroots organizational character and the nature and extent of peasant involvement in the war [see *SAR* vol. 6, no. 3 (Dec. 1990)]. All three case studies underscored the importance of local social and economic processes for understanding the nature of peasant involvement in the conflict and for understanding Renamo's varying degrees of success in different parts of the country. In this regard the evidence presented made it clear that to generalize from regionally specific experiences or to explain the escalation of the conflict simply (or even primarily) in terms of a backlash against Mozambican government rural development policies would be facile and misleading in the extreme.

The Zambezia and Gaza case studies also offered considerable documentary evidence of the essentially military and predatory character of Renamo as an organization, and of its corresponding failure to establish itself as a genuine political move-

ment on the ground inside Mozambique. Based essentially on an economy of pillage and heavy taxation of the peasantry, Renamo's military effectiveness and capacity to hold territory is highly constrained by logistical factors. As long as the areas it captures are able to provide it with food and loot, Renamo is able to sustain military operations and hold the captured territory. But once an area has been completely looted and stripped of resources, Renamo's capacity to sustain military effectiveness and hold territory rapidly collapses.

The Zambezia and Gaza case studies also served to illustrate the importance of African religious traditions in both Renamo's mobilizational ideology and in the peasantry's own ideological responses to the war and Renamo violence. Almost since its inception Renamo has sought to win popular support and legitimacy for itself by claiming that it has the support of the ancestral spirits in its war against Frelimo. However, for the war-weary Mozambican peasantry that has had to bear the brunt both of Renamo abuses and of the fighting itself, this message has become increasingly less convincing. In a fascinating counter-use of the same symbols and traditions that Renamo has sought to use in its bid to win popular support, the peasantry of some of the most war-torn areas of Mozambique has begun to give rise to a number of new religious cults in which the ancestral spirits are making it perfectly clear that they do not support Renamo and want only that their descendants (the local population) be left in peace.

Thus the religious cults of Semantaje in Manica Province, Mungoi in Gaza Province, and Neprama in Zambezia Province are all examples of this new peasant strategy of ideological resistance that has proven highly effective in neutralizing Renamo violence and creating islands of relative peace in the areas where the cults are practised. Their success stems from

the fact that the Renamo rank-and-file combatants accept the magico-religious premises upon which the cults are based and consequently respect the wishes of the local ancestral spirits (speaking through local spirit mediums) that they leave the local people in peace. In the case of the Neprama cult in Zambezia this success has been nothing short of spectacular, with unarmed, but magically protected, devotees charging Renamo bases and forcing their defenders to flee in fear. According to Ken Wilson, of the Refugee Studies Programme of Oxford University, who presented the paper on the war situation in Zambezia Province, the Neprama cult has succeeded in driving Renamo out of large areas of rural Zambezia.

## Refugees and reconstruction

In the absence of such strategies of ideological resistance, however, the Mozambican peasantry has had little alternative but to flee to government held areas or neighbouring countries in order to escape Renamo terror and the horrors of war. Mozambique's refugee problem, in fact, is of enormous proportions. For most people in the West the nature of this problem is rarely understood in any but purely statistical terms: between one quarter and one third of Mozambique's population has been displaced and over one million Mozambicans are living in refugee camps in neighbouring countries. But what is life like for Mozambicans in refugee camps in Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland? How do they live? What relations do they have with the rural populations of their host country? Are the refugees eager to return to their homes or do they wish to become immigrants in their host countries? What implications will the whole question of repatriation and resettlement of large numbers of refugees have for rehabilitation programmes and national development after the war is over? Clearly the answer to such questions varies according

to the region of Mozambique from which the refugees come and according to the particular country hosting them. But it was precisely to such questions that a workshop panel on displacement and repatriation of Mozambican refugees sought to address itself, focusing attention on the real human and political dimensions of the plight of Mozambican refugees.

Many of the presentations on this panel pointed to the creativity of refugees in trying to solve their own material problems and establish a modicum of normalcy in their lives, not infrequently in the face of the incompetence of relief agencies and the outright hostility and corruption of government officials in host countries. Refugees are not passive or idle but actively forge economic survival strategies for themselves, independent of the emergency assistance they receive and usually in agricultural and informal sector activities. Such novel strategies often involve complex processes of ethnic redefinition and identification with host rural populations as well. Moreover, when permitted to do so by host governments and relief agencies, refugees also take an active role in organizing and administering camp life and in resolving problems of collective concern.

Of course, many Mozambican refugees in neighbouring countries never end up in refugee camps at all, but simply cross the border and take up residence on the other side, often with relatives amongst the host populations. Whereas some of these, like some in the camps, abandon any idea of returning to Mozambique, the majority of all refugees plan to eventually return home. In fact, the repatriation of refugees has been an ongoing process, with people simply picking up and moving back to their homes in Mozambique, with little or no assistance from governments or aid agencies, once they feel it is safe to do so. Yet this produces problems: the needs of returning refugees for land, homes, roads, schools, and

health services all have to be balanced against, and integrated with, both local and national level rehabilitation and development priorities.

The related debate that already is beginning to take shape inside Mozambique centres, in the words of one of the papers presented at

trajectory.

A final issue that generated considerable debate during a workshop session on the current socio-economic situation in Mozambique was the blanket condemnation of foreign NGOs in Mozambique as agents of neo-colonialism by author



Joel Chiziane/AIM

the Oxford workshop, on "whether people can be allowed to settle where and how they choose with infrastructure and service development facilitating and responding to them, or whether population distribution should be controlled as part of technically managed development projects (mostly aid agency-funded) and as a labour force for commercial endeavour (largely as foreign investment)." Accordingly, the process of defining a resettlement strategy for Mozambican refugees over the next few years will inevitably be closely linked to both the technical and ideological dimensions of Mozambique's overall development

Joe Hanlon. Hanlon's by now familiar assertion that the standard NGO practice of working outside of state structures weakens and discredits the Mozambican state, thus playing into the foreign destabilization of Mozambique, was met with hostility and sharp criticism from participants, many of whom were from past or present NGO backgrounds. The ensuing debate covered much the same ground covered in the earlier solidarity conferences in Paris and London with which *SAR* readers will be familiar [see *SAR* vol. 6, no. 4 (March 1991)]; there, too, Hanlon's baldly over-stated position elicited considerable scepticism.

# Stop the Press?

## The Media Struggle in Zimbabwe

BY RICHARD SAUNDERS

*Richard Saunders is a Canadian doctoral researcher and freelance journalist based in Harare.*

A new round of public debate and activism focused on the role of the mass media in Zimbabwe is threatening to turn the country's current bout of "democratic fever" into an epidemic. If this happens, the ruling Zanu-PF may be in danger of losing the tight control it has had in determining the country's social policy.

Political observers are now wondering aloud whether the country is witnessing the beginning of the end of Zanu's attempt to construct an effective hegemony in Zimbabwean society – or just the end of the beginning in private society's discordant efforts to reform the social status quo. In all of this, the national media have played a central role in the deepening of debate, both as a crucial terrain of public criticism and as an object of contention between the state, the ruling party and civil society.

This struggle has broken out while Zimbabwe is marking ten years of what government terms a "unique experiment" in public media management. The Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust [MMT] was established by the state in 1981, a move designed to remove the main national press from South African control, and reorient it to serve the new needs of majority rule society. But like so much else of Zanu's reform package implemented in the early 1980s, the MMT was a careful political patchwork. It was destined to change the appearance of inherited social structures more than their content. And like other instances of post-1980 restructuring, the tinkering seemed to work for a

while, only to break down later with the surfacing of social contradictions it sought to mask.

### South African interests controlled the media

Up until independence in April 1980, the Rhodesian media was dominated by the same forces which supported the white supremacist state of Ian Smith for 15 years of UDI. The country's only newspaper chain, the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company (renamed Zimpapers in 1980), was controlled by the South African-based Argus Media Group.

The impact of white ownership (however "liberal" it pretended to be) was unequivocal. Before 1980, editorial policy was consistently supportive of white Rhodesia's embattled rulers, and during the Smith-Muzorewa interregnum of the late 1970s, Argus' white editors were instructed by management to be first in line to sing the praises of the "Internal Settlement." Moreover, senior management and editorial posts were largely reserved for whites, a fact reflected in the chain's cadet training schemes in which blacks were represented in token numbers and destined for lowly reporting tasks, or worse. A similar situation existed at Zimbabwe's only national news agency, the Inter-Africa News Agency (Iana, later renamed Ziana), also controlled by white liberal South African interests.

Against such a background, it was not difficult for the new government of Robert Mugabe to make mild reforms in the national media appear as major accomplishments, particularly when this infrastructure (including many senior editorial and management personnel) was inherited lock, stock and barrel.

For Zanu in 1980, the aim of a new information policy was to revamp the media structures most closely associated with colonial rule. Priority was given to making control of the national press indigenous – a move which would be quite at home in Canada and most other western countries.

### Nationalizing the press

But in Zimbabwe, just after the defeat of white Rhodesia, the problem was to discover a model of press "nationalization" that would solve the question of South African ownership without provoking the flight of white skills and capital anxious about the transition to black-led society.

The "solution" was found in the form of the MMT, a public trust set up under the personal guidance of then-Minister of Information Nathan Shamuyarira. With the help of a US\$5 million donation from Nigeria, all South African shareholders (or 44 percent of all stock, 42 percent of which was held by Argus) were bought out by government. The shares were immediately handed over to the newly-created Trust, which was given the tasks of acting as a buffer between the publicly-controlled Zimpapers (and Ziana) and government, launching a journalist training programme for blacks, and planning and implementing a new media policy in harmony with government's own designs for national development and transformation.

The Trust was formally placed outside of government control, and a Board of Trustees of black and white members "representative of the national community" was established as its Directorate. From then on the Trust was meant to func-

tion independently of government. The state heralded the Trust as a "unique experiment," combining political autonomy with national control – or "freedom with responsibility," as Zanu became fond of repeating.

It wasn't too long before others did not see it that way. In the interim, a host of financial, administrative and political tensions had eroded the firm ground on which the MMT had been created, on paper at least.

It is certainly the case that some necessary changes were made in the immediate aftermath of the MMT take-over. At Zimpapers, white editors of the two national dailies based in Harare and Bulawayo and three weeklies were soon replaced by blacks with links to the nationalist movement. A fledgling journalist training school, the Zimbabwe Institute of Mass Communication, was set up to prepare blacks for a range of media jobs. And the Trust started to tackle the question of how to go about extending the media to the 75 percent of the population living in the rural areas.

### Money troubles dominated Media Trust

But it soon became apparent that financial and political insecurity were to weigh heavily against the full implementation of such initiatives. A large part of the problem was that the MMT had spent all its money before it opened its doors. The share buy-out of Zimpapers and Iana and the creation of Zimco left little capital for the day-to-day running of the body. As a result, the part-time Trustees, none of them media experts, spent much of their time deliberating bank loans and finances, and virtually no time at all planning for the new media order. Moreover, the structural integrity of Zimpapers blocked any significant administrative intervention at the chain. The MMT slipped quickly into debt; it carried on its shoulders investment costs in Ziana and the jour-

nalist school, and gained little from Zimpapers dividends while the early 1980s recession cut into the newspaper chain's commercial viability.

Standing in the background was the Ministry of Information – with its access to the state treasury – and a full complement of policy and planning personnel. It was only a matter of time before the Ministry's growing financial influence at the Trust seeped into the realm of the latter's political role as press guardian. It was a dynamic hastened by heightened political tensions in the country, and by discreet developments within the media under the Trust's jurisdiction.

The Matabeleland crisis of 1982-1983, which simmered up to the time of the Zanu-Zapu Unity Accord in December 1987, offered Zanu the stick of "national security" with which to silence political opponents and public debate. This process extended into the space of the press, usually silently, but sometimes – as with the banning of reportage on Matabeleland disturbances in 1983 – openly. In the context of an endangered "national unity" and under the rule of Emergency Powers, the MMT stood by and watched. The precedent had been set for future cases of political interference from a ruling party periodically troubled by bouts of insecurity and prone to over-reaction when dealing with critics.

Changes within Zimpapers management were to exacerbate the Zanu infiltration. In 1984 Elias Rusike, a long-time Zanu partisan, was made Managing Director of the chain. He soon set about doing the party's dirty work inside the company, allowing Zanu to effectively by-pass any remaining formal obstacles presented by the Trust. The pattern of the new political administration in the national press was soon established by a series of editorial firings, undertaken by Zimpapers without consultation with the MMT.

In 1983 Farayi Munyuki, editor of Zimpapers' flagship daily, Harare's *Herald*, was squeezed out; he was followed two years later by *Sunday Mail* editor Willie Musarurwa, who was openly accused of "not toeing the government line" by Rusike. In 1987, Musarurwa's successor was pushed after then-Prime Minister Mugabe complained of an article on the deportation of Zimbabwean students from Cuba (a story which, as it happened, was never disproved). Underneath these provocations, junior journalists were subjected to persistent intimidation and veiled threats by the state, the ruling party and the replacement editors.

### Media become government instruments

As a consequence, the MMT media, with few exceptions, had become government instruments by the end of the 1980s. At the same time, financial constraints and the lack of a planning infrastructure meant that any real possibility of sustained expansion into the rural areas was pre-empted. The "peoples' media" had become popular neither in form nor content.

Yet, as in other spheres of the Zimbabwean state's relations with civil society, the failure of the public to impose its will on the private was eventually to erupt on the surface of political life, bringing with it a set of effects disruptive of the ruling party's overarching social authority. This was even more so the case in the instance of the public media, whose political value to Zanu lay in the opportunity presented for the portrayal of the "partisan" as the "newsworthy fact."

For some time, the formal structure of the MMT had facilitated popular belief in the illusion of the "independent press" which had been made of smoke and mirrors. The maturation of Zimbabwean civil society finally put an end to the ruling party's magic.



### People's organizations emerge

The emergence in the 1980s of a range of popular organizations in civil society – from trade unions and co-operatives, to women's groups and radical intellectuals – revealed the gradual consolidation of a coherent, progressive political consciousness. In the latter half of the decade, this process was generally fortified by the impact of accelerating economic decline, and by the resurgence of critical social debate in a period of "glasnost" following the Unity Accord of December 1987. Crucially, some media played a key part in this dynamic.

Such media, however, did not fall under the domain of the Trust, but rather comprised the large terrain of the Zimbabwean private press. The public-private cleavage, one which cuts so deeply across the face of the social formation, was nowhere more evident than in the realm of the print media.

At the end of the 1980s, the private press in Zimbabwe included about 150 publications, from business and trade magazines, newspapers and newssheets, to radical journals and popular leisure monthlies. One magazine that is a leading example of the positive changes which have taken place in the local media and political scene in the last ten years is *Parade*. In 1980 it was a tired and trashy monthly with a 20,000 print run and declining sales. Four years later, under new (white) management, the magazine got a face-lift, a new editor interested in increasing sales by pushing political features and local news, and not page three girls. Today, *Parade's* circulation of 110,000 is limited only by newsprint supply. Its readership – the highest of all publications in Zimbabwe with nearly two million readers monthly, most of them in the rural areas – continues to expand. The periodical now serves as an important forum for debate and criticism of government, and attracts regular contributions from Zimbabwe's leading liberal and radical in-

tellectuals, trade unionists and renegade Zanu "born-again democrats."

With its rich diversity and ability to reach unionist and businessperson, peasant and commercial farmer, the domain of the private press stood as a powerful, if disaggregated, social institution. But it was an institution with which Zanu never really came to terms.

### Media discredited

As economic decline and social unrest became more apparent at the end of the 1980s, the ruling party's inability to grapple with both these problems was matched by its failure to shore up grassroots support and maintain control over popular discourse in private society. A central reason why this was no longer possible was the discredited status of the instruments Zanu came to rely on to relay its image and programme to the people: the MMT media, and the parastatal Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation. Here, Zanu's major error was its decision (made by default) to cede the channels of legitimate popular discourse to those outside the party. Institutionally, these came to be represented not by the MMT structures, but by the private press over which there was no formal or substantial informal jurisdiction.

Just as the public media had grown into a tight working relationship with Zanu, the private press was to develop something of a symbiotic relationship with various elements standing outside the party in civil society. While social factions coalesced and, increasingly, defined themselves in contradistinction to Zanu and aspects of its programme, the private media responded by articulating their views – thereby assisting in their emergence as discreet social identities.

The whole process of this "counter-hegemonic" coalition-building has been punctuated by a series of social and political crises, which have led to the crystallization of a common-denominator "demo-

cratic sensibility" now pervasive at the Zimbabwean grassroots. Wil-  
lowgate (a political scandal involving car imports and the suicide of a senior government official), the establishment of Edgar Tekere's ZUM, the disturbances at the University of Zimbabwe, union-bashing and more recently, the slow introduction of Zanu's homegrown structural adjustment programme, have all provided talking points for the private sector media in their "capturing" of the popular imagination.

### Bizarre linkages

At times, the process involved the construction of bizarre cross-class linkages: business papers rose to the defence of students demonstrating for socialism; trade unionists called for broad support for national capitalists. On both points, the perceived arbitrary authority of the state and ruling party bore the brunt of the attack.

Importantly, such campaigns have begun to yield concrete gains. In 1990, pressures from below led directly to Zanu's scrapping of the one-party state and the lifting (after 26 years) of the State of Emergency. None of this would have happened if it had not been for the contributions from a wide spectrum of the private media.

It is only now that Zanu is catching on to what is at stake in this quiet struggle for political authority. But the question is: is it too late to close the floodgates?

While all the official talk in Zimbabwe these days is of trade liberalization and the free market of goods and ideas, it is clear that any clamp-down on political debate (particularly after the scrapping of Emergency Powers) would only worsen the problems of the ruling party in the long term.

### Zanu reforming the media

Zanu is instead now embarking on a different tack aimed at minimizing future damage by introducing minor reforms in its obedient MMT me-

dia appendages. Recently, as the climate of criticism has heated up and focused on the public media in a series of public seminars and workshops, the party has let it be known that the more obnoxious elements in its media infrastructure – notably the slavishly partisan editor of the *Herald*, Tommy Sithole – will no longer be considered the sacred cows they once were.

There is talk by the MMT of a new media council, with representatives of all the media, advising the Trust on matters of policy. And there have been a string of “mea culpas” from MMT and government alike, admitting some of the political excesses of the past. (These were amplified by the revelations of Zimpapers defector Elias Rusike, who in a new book launched in February directly implicated the Ministry of Information in the political undermining and – as he sees it, failure – of the Trust experiment).

It remains to be seen whether such tactics will allow Zanu to force its way back into the good books of the private media and popular consciousness. It may be that the forces calling for real reform have grown too strong to be sidetracked by manoeuvres from a discredited state. For in the shadows, standing behind the various workshops and seminars which now call for a rethinking of media, education, health and other policies, is the vague presence of a new political entity still in formation.

### A new political presence

If a new political presence does establish itself, and if it poses a political challenge to Zanu, then the party might be tempted to revert to a more standard approach to bolster its own flagging hegemonic presence in private society. But time is running out, and the current dynamism of civil society might already have

prevented this as a reasonable alternative in the short term.

In the meantime, the cause of popular democracy is still ascendant, and is likely to increasingly shift public attention to the fight over the implementation of trade liberalization. This emerging struggle will serve as the latest test of strength of the media-masses coalition, as it flexes its muscles in defence of the remaining popular gains won in the early years of Zimbabwe’s independence.

If this “historic bloc” of aligned social forces achieves a victory or partial victory on this count, it is sure to target the state media infrastructure again as another possible site of participatory democratic action. And if that is the case, it might not be too long before the Mass Media Trust experiment is put back onto the track from which it fell during the turbulent political weather of the 1980s.



# The U.S. and South Africa: What Next?

BY BILL MARTIN

*Bill Martin is Co-Chair of the Research Committee of the Association of Concerned African Scholars.*

After decades of support for minority rule in South Africa, U.S. policymakers are now faced with the prospect of a transition to majority rule. The question is thus posed: what road forward?

Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen in early March hearings before the U.S. Congress was quite straightforward: "U.S. policy is to encourage broad-based negotiations on the establishment of a non-racial, multi-party democracy." Again and again over the last few months policy makers here have defined negotiations as the primary goal of U.S. policy.

But the U.S. seems to have a fairly clear idea of what they think ought to be negotiated as well. This past January a top White House official making the rounds in Johannesburg was pressing ANC leaders to drop their demand for a democratically elected constituent assembly. According to ANC sources, White House National Security Council staffer Bob Frasure, in meetings with Mandela and other top ANC leaders, was "leaning very very heavily" on the ANC to drop both the demand for a constituent assembly and the campaign of mass action. The desired alternative is quite clear: a brokered deal behind closed doors, with full Western influence brought to bear.

Contacts with a State Department official confirm that the U.S. government had come out against the demand for a constituent assembly. The U.S. government

does not believe an elected constituent assembly is necessary for drawing up a new constitution, he said. The U.S. position is apparently similar to the South African government's own proposal that an all-party congress draw up a new constitution that would then be subject to a referendum for approval.

And the U.S. hasn't been shy about defining the key players in South Africa. Assistant Secretary Cohen told Congress that the President has met with and remained in contact with de Klerk, Nelson Mandela and Chief Minister Gatsha Buthelezi over the past few months "to keep them apprised of developments in U.S. policy and to seek their views." This view was given further reinforcement when the administration asked Congress to allocate \$3.7 million to the ANC and \$1 million to Inkatha out of funds earmarked by Congress for "promoting democracy in South Africa." (As of late March distribution of the funds was still being blocked by conservatives in Congress who felt Inkatha should get at least as much money as the ANC.)

With many Frontline state leaders and even elements with the ANC now apparently considering dropping the demand for a constituent assembly, the U.S. is hardly alone in this view. This makes U.S. intervention all the more critical, and U.S. policymakers are moving quickly indeed to shape the transition in South Africa and the eventual outcome.

## The Sanctions Debate

The immediate policy debate here is over the question of sanctions and specifically when to lift them.

When President George Bush met with F.W. de Klerk last September he stressed he would not allow anti-apartheid activists to "move the goal posts" on sanctions.

Those goal posts that George Bush is so worried about protecting are set out in the 1986 Anti-Apartheid Act which stipulates that sanctions cannot be lifted until five conditions are met: (1) all political prisoners are released; (2) the state of emergency is lifted; (3) political parties are unbanned and there is freedom of political expression; (4) the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act are repealed; (5) the government enters into good faith negotiations with representative black South Africans. Under the U.S. law, if the political prisoners are released and four of the five other conditions are met then the President may lift some sanctions even before the final condition is met.

The administration's Herman Cohen maintains that with the lifting of the state of emergency, the unbanning of political parties and the beginning of negotiations all that remains is for the political prisoners to be released and then Bush can begin lifting sanctions. Administration officials were thus suggesting in early March that direct flights between South Africa and the U.S. could be restored by May 1, with the ban on imports of South African agricultural goods lifted shortly thereafter.

Many others don't agree.

Congressman Ron Dellums, who wrote the original draft of the 1986 bill, circulated a letter in late February arguing that none of the conditions outlined in the law have been fully met. The two Washington-

based anti-apartheid lobbies, Trans-Africa and the Washington Office on Africa, have both circulated reports detailing why the conditions in the 1986 law haven't been met. All of these reports note that the law requires that South Africa must have made "substantial progress toward dismantling the system of apartheid and establishing a non-racial democracy" before sanctions can be lifted.

Certainly SAR readers will have no trouble believing these conditions haven't been met, but the 1986 legislation runs to some 70 pages and is a confusing and in some places even contradictory, jumble of clauses and counter clauses. A whole team of lawyers could probably be kept busy arguing about the bill for many years.

The issue may be less whether Congress will lift sanctions, than whether Congress will be willing to put up a public fight against the lifting of sanctions. George Bush has said he will not act without consulting Congress and many observers believe he will not move to lift sanctions if there is substantial opposition on Capitol Hill. The administration is particularly concerned about further alienating the black community, which was outraged last year when Bush vetoed an important piece of civil rights legislation.

To help keep pressure on Congress, the New York based Africa Fund organized a high profile delegation of civil rights, entertainment and religious leaders to meet with the House leadership in early March. Under the theme that sanctions should stay in place until there is a constituent assembly, film maker Spike Lee, civil rights leader Joseph Lowery, and about half a dozen prominent black preachers visited Capitol Hill on March 12.

In meetings with the Congressional Black Caucus, the delegation was told that progressives in Congress would fight any lifting of sanctions and the House leadership also reiterated its opposition to any lifting of sanctions "before apartheid is ended." But key members also acknowledge that there doesn't seem to be much constituent pressure on this issue at the present time.

In addition, Congressman Howard Wolpe, who chaired the

with Zairian leader Mobutu, which developed after Dymally helped broker some lucrative business deals between the Zaire and a few powerful black businessmen in the U.S.

In addition, Dymally has appointed an entirely new staff at the Africa Subcommittee, including staff director Adonis Hoffman whose resume includes past work as a lobbyist for UNITA in the United States. The staffer responsible for South Africa, Marva Camp, is working quickly to make up for her lack of background knowledge and is organizing hearings on sanctions for April 30.

It is unclear how Hoffman's past support for UNITA will affect Congressional efforts to curtail U.S. covert assistance to Savimbi which is currently estimated at some \$60 million a year. Last year the Congress voted down a bill offered by Rep. Ron Dellums (and supported by Dymally) that would have ended aid to UNITA. But the Congress did pass by one vote a much weaker amendment to the Intelligence funding bill. This was to have

suspended military aid to the Angolan rebels if the MPLA established a timetable for elections, agreed to a ceasefire and the U.S.S.R. suspended military aid to Luanda. Even this weak language was apparently too much for President Bush, who vetoed the entire legislation rather than let it become law. The mere fact that Congress approved legislation on the issue is, however, seen as a victory for opponents of U.S. aid to UNITA.

The debate over Angola policy is sure to resurface this year, particularly because in February House Speaker Thomas Foley appointed well-known UNITA opponent Con-



House Africa Subcommittee for the last ten years, has relinquished his position in favour of a committee post that will allow him to direct more attention and more tax dollars back to his home state of Michigan. The new chair is Congressman Mervyn Dymally, a California Democrat who hasn't been a leader on this issue.

#### Dymally takes over

Dymally isn't known for his forceful advocacy on African issues, and many Congressional insiders believe he is more interested in promoting black American investment in Africa than in maintaining principled political positions. As evidence they point to Dymally's close relationship

gressman Dellums to the House intelligence committee.

But the end of the cold war has also raised the possibility that the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. may move together to impose a solution on Angola. Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze suggested in a letter to some U.S. Congressmen last August: "Your views on what ought to be done in order to ensure progress toward national reconciliation in Angola concur, by and large, with our own thoughts. We, naturally, support and approve the idea of a mutual termination of arms supplies to Angola by the Soviet Union and the United States."

It is worth remembering, however, that in the U.S. many see no contradiction between support for Savimbi and support for sanctions against South Africa. While Dymally's new staff may pose serious problems for Angola work in this country, the subcommittee's inexperience will probably pose more of an obstacle than its ideology in the debate on sanctions.

Dymally himself agreed in mid-March to introduce a non-binding sense of the Congress resolution that would assert that sanctions should stay until the leadership of the democratic movement in South Africa call for them to be lifted. Anti-apartheid activists believe they can use this resolution to rally Congressional support for maintaining sanctions.

The degree to which U.S. activists can forestall the Bush administration's effort to lift sanctions is further complicated by the tactical debate over sanctions within the South Africa movement. Many U.S. activists have long felt that with strong support from the movement, U.S. sanctions could be maintained (obviously European sanctions are a different matter). The estimation late last year by some ANC leaders that sanctions were a lost cause, for example, threatened to undercut pro-sanctions work in

the U.S. Whether the ANC's recent recommitment to sanctions will hold, and whether U.S. activists' work will succeed, thus remains uncertain.

### Toward a Free Market

But even in the medium term, sanctions will not be the main element of U.S. policy. "I anticipate that America's interests in the future South Africa will be focused on the economy," Ambassador William Swing wrote in *Business Day* in early March. And Assistant Secretary Cohen has even spelled out what type of economy the U.S. would like to see. It is our belief, he said, "that a pluralistic political system, with a market-oriented economy based upon equal opportunity, is the greatest guarantor against authoritarian rule and racial discrimination." In that same testimony in early March, Cohen went on to lament that "the ANC still seems wedded to the notion that it must somehow 'control' the economy."

There are few people in the U.S. and even fewer in Congress who would question the notion that a market-oriented economy is the best solution for South Africa. The U.S. government's \$40 million aid program includes substantial funds set aside to "broaden the understanding of the free market system and to help prepare black business owners, managers, and employees for positions of leadership."

As part of this effort the State Department has brought a stream of black businessmen to the U.S. (including some with ANC support) to seek out investment and franchising opportunities. Out of these exchanges a New Jersey company has even formed an association of black American and black South African businessmen to foster cooperation and commerce between the two countries. Picking up on these efforts to build up a black middle class, the former chairman of the sporting shoe company Reebok has

started a business council on South Africa. Joe Labonte is proposing to help establish black-owned construction companies in South Africa and give them the money to build an initial 1,000 homes. The profits from sales of these homes would then be ploughed back into these new businesses enabling them to continuing building and expanding.

The President of the Rockefeller Corporation, Peter Goldmark, has also begun developing a Development Bank for South Africa that would fund investments in a post-apartheid South Africa that would help establish new black-owned companies.

There is little doubt that these projects could materially help to address some of the pressing problems of housing, employment and education that the new South Africa will face. But such well-financed efforts will surely affect the debate about the future economic direction in South Africa. For obvious reasons, such moves will be especially difficult to counter in the United States.

As this issue of *SAR* was going to press, reports emerged of an even more direct approach to influencing that debate. The Washington-based Investor Responsibility Research Center is organizing a seminar with the University of Transkei on a new investment code for South Africa. The ANC, COSATU, NACTU and a host of business groups have been invited to this non-partisan effort to help promote the debate on investment codes for a majority-ruled South Africa.

But wait a minute: as elsewhere, not all is as it appears on the surface. Invitations to the conference and most of the correspondence have all apparently gone out from the fax machine at the American Chamber of Commerce in South Africa and much of the organizing in the U.S. is being done by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. A coincidence?

# Significant Differences: Debating Gender in South Africa

BY SHIREEN HASSIM.

*Shireen Hassim, a South African feminist researcher based at the Centre for Social and Development Studies at the University of Natal, is one of the organizers of the Conference on Women and Gender in Southern Africa. This article expresses her personal view.*

Tension had been building from the beginning of that first day of the Conference on Women and Gender in Southern Africa held at the University of Natal in Durban at the end of January. Now, the last session of the day, three hundred women were gathered in the lecture theatre to listen to a panel on "Conceptualizing Gender." Within minutes, the intended discussion about the theory of gender relations had been swept aside by a spontaneous overflowing of emotions, replaced by a live demonstration of the barriers and differences which apartheid has created between women of different races.

Discussion in the morning session, on feminism and nationalism, had raised the equally thorny issue of the relationship between activists and academics. By the end of the day, most of the panellists felt compelled to express their views on the political value of the exercise of conceptualizing gender. When it was announced that a small group of conference participants were calling a larger meeting of activists, it emerged that there was considerable division as to how "activists" were to be defined. Was the academic/activist split a black/white one? Several white women disagreed, insisting that they were also activists.

Also disagreeing, however, were a number of black women, who argued forcefully that the racial split was the real issue. "To ask who qualifies for the label of 'activist' is a good question but the character of the group of women who got

together to call a separate meeting was predominantly black. I think that's the split," said University of South Africa psychologist Kedibone Letlaka-Rennert. This naming of the issue produced a shocked intake of breath throughout the room.

An angry and emotional debate developed, with the conference organizers being attacked on two often conflated grounds:

1) the conference was "too academic," had not consulted with organizations, had no relevance to the lives of the majority of women in South Africa. In particular, some women were angry that the ANC Women's League "had not been invited." (The conference organizers had in fact consulted a range of women's organizations, including the ANC Women's League. Dr. Zanele Dhlamini, of the Women's League, was scheduled as a keynote speaker, but was unable to attend at the last moment).

2) the conference was "white" and reproduced "entrenched apartheid relations." This was reflected in the composition of the organizing committee (one out of six members is black), and also in the dominance of white women on the programme.

Other speakers pointed to the need to put more emphasis on race and class divisions.

## The politics of research

The anger which exploded on all sides of this issue was arguably the most significant aspect of the conference. Women were confronting the debate about representation, ultimately an argument about power. Some black women claimed that the conference was disempowering because their lives and experiences of oppression had been appropriated by white women as "research material." White women, progressive or not, thereby suppressed black

women's power to represent themselves.

Academics presenting their research, on the other hand, felt that they were being placed in a double bind. Progressive women academics have been concerned to do research on black women in order to subvert both the apartheid ideology and to correct left analysis which ignores a large proportion of the population. Now it seemed that the research was regarded as not just inadequate but racist. Products of women's struggles in the academy, such as the Durban-based journal *Agenda* and the conference itself, were being undermined. The argument that black women were under-represented at the conference because they were numerically few within the universities came across as weak and defensive.

Another issue was researchers' "accountability" to "the movement." But to whom precisely? The diverse grouping of organizations that make up the women's movement? If so, which ones? Some of the most creative insights into the complex nature of patriarchy, and of contradictions of women's strengths and weaknesses, emerge out of feminist readings of novels and poetry. Where would such work be placed in relation to the narrow demand for accountability to a political line?

As more than one person commented, the fact that the anger was articulated made the conference a success. The question of racism is one that feminists must confront head on. The anger of black women at the conference may have been misplaced, but the anger is real. White researchers *do* have to confront their relative privilege. Their access to the universities and their mobility within universities has undeniably been facilitated by apartheid.

On the other hand, reflecting on these exchanges it is clear that once



again the dominance of the race issue had overwhelmed gender concerns, postponing these to a distant future. There was never a discussion of how to conceptualize gender. This illustrates once again the uphill struggle the women's movement has to face in the new South Africa. Not to mention the difficulties that lie ahead in transforming the slogan of non-racialism into reality, a point that was noted by several participants.

### Framing the questions

Ironically, a discussion of how to conceptualize gender in South Africa might have provided a framework for addressing the political concerns raised at the conference. Analysis of women's position in South Africa has been dominated by the notion of triple oppression, which offers no way of understanding the situation of women who are not black and working class. We need to debate new approaches towards understanding women's position in society, ways which can take account of the very wide differentiation within the category "woman." Such a conceptualization might give us the tools to tackle questions such as how to structure a women's movement in South Africa (and how it might be structured differently from a national liberation movement which mobilizes women). More specific problems could also be addressed, such as the relationship between activists and academics within the women's movement and the relationship between black and white women within universities. And on the level of research, what kind of feminist methodology is appropriate in South Africa? If feminism is about subversion, as Canadian participant Rosalind Boyd argued at the conference, then how are we in South Africa subverting the dominant forms of knowledge and of knowledge production in the universities?

Overcoming the heritage of apartheid will require a lot more than the right theory, however. Several critical threads ran through the 64 papers presented in themes in-

cluding "Race, class and gender," "Culture and ideology," "Organizing women" and "Everyday life." A common perspective, not surprisingly, was the necessity for women to make interventions in policy formulation in the new South Africa.

### Gender and development

One arena where this was emphasized to be especially important was in the development process. The conference began with a keynote address by Dr. Naila Kabeer, from the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex. She reviewed the debates on women and development, drawing out particularly the insights from the United Nations Decade for Women. Dr. Kabeer put the spotlight on a debate that has become increasingly important in southern Africa. In Zimbabwe and Mozambique, women have had long experience attempting to shift the male bias of development planning. They have begun to question the government's budgetary priorities and the skewed allocation of resources to women.

In South Africa, on the other hand, the debate is in its infancy. Thus far, people concerned with development have fallen into two categories: (i) those who work "within the system" (such as Inkatha, the Development Bank and the Urban Foundation) who have supported policies likely to preserve existing gender relations and gender roles; and (ii) those who work in small independent, often progressive, development agencies (such as Planact, BESG and CORD), who have at least paid attention to removing gender discrimination in resource allocation and exploitation of women's labour, though their overall impact has been limited by their size.

Kabeer argued in favour of a "holistic understanding of development." Such a form of development would take into account the links between production and reproduction, give weight not just to the outcome of projects but also the process of development, and ultimately concern itself with the transformation of so-

ciety and social relations as a whole.

Looking at the possibilities for feminist-oriented development strategies in South Africa, Michelle Friedman began to explore some of these international debates. Her paper highlighted the neglect of gender in rural development projects. Friedman concluded that the possibility of gender sensitive (let alone feminist) development depended on the strength of women's organizations "within communities, within development agencies and NGOs, within the state and within training institutions."

A paper by the Transvaal Rural Action Committee showed just how difficult this would be to achieve. Although largely responsible for agricultural work, patriarchal traditions denied women legitimate access to land. Land was traditionally allocated to the male head of the household, and even when he was away from the household, he retained formal control. Thus while women take the major responsibility for the land, they have no formal power to make decisions. However, some women have begun to challenge their exclusion from decision-making. In Mogopa, in the Western Transvaal, women have fought for and won representation on the *kgotla* (the community decision-making forum, usually the domain of elderly men). This was made possible in Mogopa because the land was held communally. In the Trust lands, where the authority of chiefs has been entrenched, shifting power relations will be a far more difficult task.

### Gendered state policy

The broader economic and political context within which these issues have to be addressed was provided by an interesting set of papers. They ranged from a gendered analysis of the state (Linzi Manicom) and the impact of reform and restructuring on women (Gender Policy Group) to women's access to housing (Alison Todes and Nora Walker) and housing subsidies (Sue Parnell), and the significance of the notion of "community care" (Fran-

cie Lund). These papers showed the importance of a gendered analysis of the state and of its various agencies, an area of feminist research that is highly underdeveloped in South Africa. Manicom argued that "women, historically and today, have been negligible in state structures, that state policy has discriminated against women, oppressively so against black women, and that indeed, the historical development of apartheid was predicated on state-enforced gender subordination." There is as yet a very sketchy scholarship which explores these connections, although the stimulus provided at the conference will, hopefully, inspire researchers.

#### Feminist representations

A very different set of papers explored the way in which women have been represented in art, literature, feminist journals and the theatre. Various papers explored the way in which patriarchy structures discourses on women, whether it is because the dominant culture is an androcentric one (Marion Arnold, Cecily Lockett), imposing eurocentric aesthetic criteria for assessing literature (Annemarie van Niekerk), or because nationalist resistance often mobilizes around archetypal gender stereotypes (as Carol Steinberg implies in her analysis of the play *Asinamali*).

In a hard-hitting paper, Kedibone Letlaka-Rennert argued that *Agenda*, a journal on women produced by a feminist collective in Dnrban, reflected a "pattern of white academic hegemony." Taking this further, she argued that "on the academic left, white women writers use their research to legitimize and justify the dominant position they hold over black women in the field

of research on the grounds that it is work for the struggle."

#### Shared sexual oppression

An important new development was the extent of interest shown in issues around reproduction and sexuality. In fact, it was the one plenary session which did not get bogged down in narrow political issues. In the past, such issues have been regarded as "bourgeois feminist concerns." This view was indeed expressed: one participant queried the legitimacy of "talking about menstruation while our children are being killed in the townships." In the session on reproductive rights and sexuality, however, discussion ranged from child sexual abuse (Ann Levett) to abortion (Helen Bradford), prostitution and AIDS (Dori and Ros Posel) and sexual harassment (Carla Sutherland). This was one of the few sessions at the conference where the notion of sisterhood appeared to have some substance: there was a feeling of sharing common ground around these issues, there was broad and active participation from the audience and disagreements were calmly articulated. The room collapsed into laughter when Mary Mkhwanazi from the South African Domestic Workers Union pointed out that the real problem was that men walked around all the time with a dangerous weapon in their pants!

#### International contributions

Another breakthrough at the conference was the broad participation of people from outside South Africa. Countries represented included Canada, the USA, Britain and Holland. Perhaps more important, however, was the presence of women from several countries in southern Africa. Input from these women was really important because they were able to

point out pitfalls for South African women in the period of transition. Frances Chinemana's paper showed how short independence had fallen in terms of women's demands (and government rhetoric) in Zimbabwe. Rosalind Boyd, from McGill University, examined the reasons for and impact of the high level of women's participation in the National Resistance Movement in Uganda. This paper aroused a lot of interest as many women in community organizations are beginning to look more closely at Uganda for lessons.

The contribution of women from Mozambique was particularly insightful. Drawing on the history of the OMM and FRELIMO, and the recent move towards greater autonomy of the OMM, they cautioned against placing too much faith in the post-liberation movement and particularly in the state. At the same time, the clarity and courage of their analysis illustrated the positive aspects of Mozambique's experience of independence.

The conference was not an easy one to participate in (or to organize!). Some of the conflicts which emerged had begun to heal by the end of the three days, but the issues are ones which South African feminists and South African women more generally will have to confront frequently and painfully in the coming years. Perhaps the most insightful and encouraging view of the conference was expressed by Shula Marks at the final evaluation session. She compared it to childbirth: the process was painful and bloody, but a baby had been born. This baby had come with an appalling heritage, but the midwives could not be blamed for this. Instead, the baby needed to be nurtured, so that it could outgrow its heritage.

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## Southern African Notebook: Credit Where Credit Is Due?

How typical of Toronto's *Globe and Mail* that it should present the negative response of some South African

embassy official in London as the centrepiece of its front-page story about the Commonwealth foreign

ministers' decision to maintain sanctions on South Africa ("South Africa protests continued sanctions," *Globe*

and Mail, February 18, 1991). Not until page seven do we find Joe Clark saying "we think that if there is to be any relief to sanctions, that should be in response to particular actions - not promises, not undertakings to do something - but actual things that have been done to change the system." Or the ANC's Thabo Mbeki reiterating that "nothing has changed so significantly (as) to warrant a change in the Commonwealth's position."

To his credit, the *Globe's* Michael Valpy fingered effectively his own newspaper's one-sided set-up of the story in his column a couple of days later ("There's reason to praise South Africa decision," *Globe and Mail*, February 20, 1991): "News reports tended to portray the Commonwealth decision as perverse and irrational. This newspaper gave prominence on its front page to South African government protests against the decision, quoting a South African diplomat as saying that it 'flies in the face of worldwide recognition of recent moves to end apartheid'. The *Globe's* report termed the committee's decision a 'snub' to South African President F. W. de Klerk."

Yet, Valpy continued, "one man's snub is another man's understandable prudence" and noted that "the foreign ministers repeated the original purpose of Commonwealth sanctions - to bring the South African government to the negotiating table and keep it there 'until fundamental and irreversible change' has been secured." Valpy's perfectly accurate observation: "This has not yet happened." His conclusion: the Commonwealth's move to maintain sanctions "is a totally reasonable decision, and Canadians should applaud their government [although not the *Globe* and *Mail* - ed.] for being part of it."

This is suggestive commentary from Valpy, however galling it may be to find anyone speaking well of a Tory foreign policy initiative in the wake of its abysmal performance in the Gulf. What, then, is going

on? And what, you're probably asking, does Linda Freeman make of all this? To satisfy the thirst for enlightenment of those of you who, like SAR's own editorial working group, can't wait for Freeman's annual dissection of Canadian southern African policy in these pages (see our December issue!), we phoned her at Carleton University for a bit of instant expertise. As usual her observations were crisp and firmly to the point.

She was quick to remind us, in the first instance, of how limited Canadian sanctions already are. The most vocal interest groups that might stand to lose from sanctions have already been amply accommodated. Thus, all along, the government has quite simply refused to move against our important exports of sulphur to South Africa - because of the big Alberta companies' political clout. On the import side, important lobbies have also operated to keep inputs flowing from South Africa (dissolving wood pulp for Courtauld's, certain key minerals for the specialty steel industry). It is small wonder, then, that imports from South Africa have now climbed back to their pre-sanctions level; small wonder, too, that the government has some space to manoeuvre in keeping its existing rather modest sanctions in place (note that there is no talk about extending sanctions!)

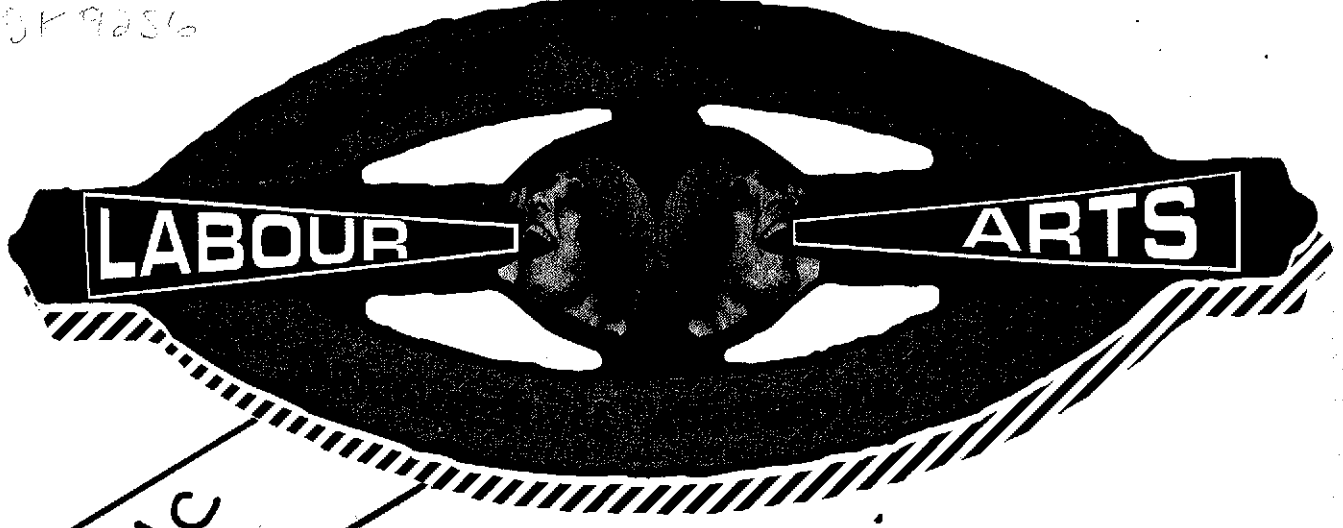
In such a context purely political calculations - the perception that Canada could retain the kudos it had already reaped within the Commonwealth merely by doing nothing more - counselled caution in moving to reward de Klerk too quickly. Of course, this in itself represents some change from last fall's position, argues Freeman. Then, in External, there was a feeling that the situation in South Africa had more or less cleared up. But more recently the mood has changed, not merely in Canada but in many other western capitals: de Klerk is increasingly seen as not yet having delivered on the Pretoria Minute (as regards the return of exiles and the release of prisoners, for example), as not yet

having given legislative form to his promises to lift oppressive statutes, as not yet having opened the door to really substantive constitutional negotiations. Moreover, at its December conference the ANC showed that it was once again getting its act together - after faltering earlier in the year - as a central protagonist in the negotiations process. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that Canada once again found itself helping the Commonwealth to stick (at least for the moment) with the sanctions' *status quo*.

Indeed, Freeman notes, Clark appears even to have played a quite active role at the London meeting in developing a potentially promising new dimension of the Commonwealth sanctions programme, one which advocates that any lifting of sanctions be *phased* - in lock-step with concrete advances made inside South Africa itself. Thus, with the fulfilment of the Pretoria Minute and the passing of clear legislation revoking apartheid statutes cultural and sport sanctions might then be expected to go; with the launching of real constitutional negotiations most other sanctions, save those on military supplies, would be lifted; finally, with the structuring of an interim government, even military sanctions might disappear.

It remains to be seen what will happen in the future to this apparently judicious programme. Freeman feels that Clark, who seems inclined for now to take his cues from within the Commonwealth, will be importantly affected by what transpires regarding sanctions in the U. S. Congress. Yet, for the moment - and with all the requisite qualifications duly noted above - Freeman seems inclined, with Valpy, to give the Canadian government some credit for its stance. Yet she is also quick to agree with SAR editors in advising that, the anti-apartheid movement, nonetheless, keep its powder dry. The struggle for a democratic South Africa is not over. Nor, we wager, has the last curlicue in Canada's southern African policy been seen.

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