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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Amusing at one level, devastating at another

LET ME start with a belated congratulations on the revamped and very readable *Reality*. The letters column is already providing a gauge of the debate your articles provoke, so let me join it.

Jo Stielau's rollicking spoof of the deliberations on the admission policy at the school we both teach at, was amusing at one level, but devastating at another. Since she and I spoke on the same platform (the lunatic left), urging affirmative action and openness, it seems fair to swoop to the defence of the more conservative staff (the raving right) whom she so mercilessly lampoons with a series of lunging barbs, mostly on fabricated issues.

Having observed first hand for several years the enormous weaknesses in local black classrooms, and having in the process gained great respect for many aspects of black culture, it was with a sense of caution but positive expectations, that we planned our input at the meeting called to enable all members of a large staff to express their hopes and fears for the implementation of Model B at our school. Jo and I, in wobbly tandem, worked hard at trying to ensure that we did not fall into the mode adopted by so many private schools, of absorbing a few elite blacks into our aging English culture, so anglicising them.

We wanted to be looking at a multi-cultural situation and we did what we could on that and other occasions, to steer the debates in that direction. In the early days staff have made every effort to ease the first integration process and have been accused inter alia of being unfairly pro-black. Such are the ironies we shall work through as the admission of pupils from other race groups accelerates in the months ahead. Jo and I have also worked on English bridging programmes, the area of greatest need at present.

Mr Editor, you can do better than lift articles from *Teachers' Forum*, a publication I have long abandoned as

BASCKIN HAS A POINT!

DAVID BASCKIN isn't pleased that Nadine Gordimer won the Nobel Prize; he wanted Coetzee or Breytenbach. (This makes a change from another unhappy columnist who put in a strong pitch for Wilbur Smith).

Basckin complains that Gordimer is "sour and melancholic". Well, Coetzee and Breytenbach aren't barrels of fun. She's "obsessive";

but Breytenbach is pretty single-minded. She's from Houghton (actually Parktown); so different from Rondebosch?

One of Basckin's points is valid, though: Gordimer is the only one of the three who's got a uterus. I suppose that's why he's so distressed: the award does deflate his own literary phallus.

MARIE DYER Pietermaritzburg

providing very unhelpful comments on the education dilemmas we face. The days when Jo would have been summarily dismissed for risking such an article in public, are not far behind us, and may not be too far ahead. In the meantime we are both grateful to be working under a principal who has displayed much wisdom and openness in piloting our school through the tricky waters of an integrated education system.

We haven't hit any big waves yet, but they will need very clever steering when we do. Let's hope Jo will temper her skills to assist us then.

DEANNE LAWRENCE

Pmburg

Why now the silence?

ALLISTER SPARKS's challenge to white liberals is particularly relevant in the context of a nation poised to embark on the lengthy process towards a new constitution, and all that this implies for the future stability and prosperity of the country. I refer to the article in the July, 1991 issue of *Reality* and entitled: "Whatever happened to the White Liberals?"

Collateral with the rights and privileges that white liberals enjoy (but hitherto denied to the black majority) go duties and responsibilities and the political obligation, with respect to communal needs, to see that these rights are extended.

For liberals therefore, an alternative to the apartheid system that they supposedly reject, would be one that best enshrines the values they espouse,

whilst serving the interests of all. The ANC's advocacy of a non-racial, multi-party democracy surely fulfills these criteria. Why then, is there now no apparent commitment on the part of white liberals?

In posing the question and raising issues critical to present needs, the author and publisher of the aforementioned article are indeed following in the best tradition of informed, responsible journalism.

ANN COLVIN

Chairperson

Black Sash

Natal Coastal Region

NOW, perhaps more than ever, it is essential for liberals to express views on values stridently.

There is an alarming dearth of morality-based politics. Values have become relative. To prevent the political contestation from eroding all values under the guise of 'seeking first the political kingdom' liberals, arguably not directly part of the power play, need to be exploring and voicing the responsibilities of democracy and ways to achieve reconciliation.

BRUCE ROBERTSON

Regional Co-ordinator

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EDITORIAL

CODESA offers real hope

NEW YEAR 1990, after the release of Walter Sisulu the previous October, was the first time in more than forty years that it was possible to feel that the year to come might be better than the one just passed. And so, of course, it was. 1991, in spite of many disappointments, was another good year. How could it not be when it saw apartheid swept from the Statute Books?

So what of 1992?

In spite of the Government's ineffectual handling of the security situation and the unpleasant and potentially damaging Mandela/de Klerk clash on that issue at the convention, CODESA brought 1991 to an end on a high note. That clash must have left scars on the relationship between the two which will not heal easily, but full credit to De Klerk for refusing to allow the incident to deflect him from his course and for ending the meeting with a constructive and encouraging statement on how he sees the negotiating process developing in the year ahead. He gave a firm commitment to move swiftly towards what will to all intents and purposes be an interim government.

From the ANC side we heard Cyril Ramaphosa saying, unprompted, that he now sees the course on which the country has embarked as irreversible, something which all previous ANC statements were emphatic that it was not. This means that the last justification for maintaining sanctions has finally been removed, and that pointless drain on the economy should now be stopped.

The Democratic Party's stature has been significantly increased during this last phase of negotiations and it seems that it will have an important stabilising role to play in the tough sessions which we can expect in 1992.

All this is positive. On the negative side it is a pity that Inkatha did not sign CODESA's declaration of intent, but in his closing remarks and a subsequent TV interview, the leader of its delegation, Frank Mdlalose, gave every indica-

tion that his organisation intends to stay involved. This leaves outside Mangope, the PAC, AZAPO and the white right. The first two may still be persuaded to join. The complete failure of AZAPO's Christmas shopping boycott suggests that, at this stage anyway, it is not a force to be reckoned with.

The white right is the real worry, as recent reports on its secret, military training camps have re-emphasised. Nobody should underestimate its capacity to wreak havoc. All the more important, as Mr Mandela keeps saying, that Andries Treurnicht and Eugene Terre blanche be persuaded to come forward and argue the case for a white homeland. Theirs may be a totally impracticable proposition, as the South African Law Commission, in its study of constitutional possibilities, has concluded, but let that be established, for heavens sake, in open debate in a public forum.

In spite of all the anxieties, CODESA offers real hope for a negotiated constitutional arrangement for the future to be agreed by the major political constituencies soon.

There are other anxieties which make it urgent that this should happen, a per capita national income which is falling at an alarming rate, a population which will double in 30 years unless something drastic is done about it, soaring crime (219,000 white-owned cars alone stolen last year, to say nothing of the number of criminal murders) and added to it all the seemingly intractable problem of political violence.

These are the symptoms of a country starting to slide out of control. They are the product of past policies, not only apartheid, but also "ungovernability". The slide will only stop when we have a government which more people feel represents their interests and which is supported by determined and unbiased organs of law and order that will take tough action against anyone who tries to disrupt the process of change.

May 1992 see us well on the way to that happy state. ●

ALLISTER SPARKS reports on the first meeting of the national constitutional convention –

CODESA FACES A STORMY PASSAGE

**“There is a rocky road ahead of us,
but there is no other alternative.
We cannot revert to the past.”**



Nelson Mandela

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*Cover picture by Scotch Macaskill, chief photographer, The Natal Witness.

THE BLAZING ROW that blew up between President F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela on the opening day of the national constitutional convention was a sharp warning not to be too sanguine about an easy solution to the apartheid problem.

The fact that the convention survived such a rocky start was encouraging evidence that the negotiating process will not be easily derailed. The fact is neither of the main players, the Government and the ANC, has a viable alternative. But it also became clear that the passage to a new South Africa will be tough and stormy.

On the positive side, the row helped dispel some misconceptions. Many people have suspected there was some kind of secret deal between Mandela and De Klerk and that the negotiations were really a façade behind which they were preparing to carve up the leadership cake between themselves. It was a notion fostered by the apparent warm relations between the two, with Mandela's frequent statements last year that he regarded De Klerk as “a man of integrity”.

It did neither leader any good. Mandela's position was particularly threatened, as the PAC sought to capitalise on the perception, breaking ranks with the “Patriotic Front” and withdrawing from the convention on the grounds of alleged collusion between the ANC and the Government in order to present themselves as the only true liberationists.

Those close to the situation have known for some time that the early relationship between Mandela and De Klerk had worn thin and that far from there being collusion there was bitter resentment simmering beneath the surface of politeness.

Mandela had become convinced De Klerk was pursuing a double agenda, talking negotiations while secretly allow-

ing the special military and police units who ran South Africa's destabilisation campaign against the Frontline States in the 1980s to do the same now against the legalised ANC.

For his part, De Klerk felt Mandela was breaching faith by going to the negotiating table while refusing to disband the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation).

This is the row which finally burst into the open across the convention floor. In doing so it cleared the air of the connivance theory and sent Mandela's shares rocketing in the black community.

On the negative side, the clash damaged the ANC's efforts to reach out to the white community and give substance to its “nonracial” ideal. Even liberal whites felt Mandela went too far in his vituperation.

More seriously, it hurt De Klerk in his constituency. The episode was televised live and the sight of a black man tongue-lashing the Afrikaner State-President in such scornful terms was too much for many Afrikaner Nationalists to stomach. Their angry phone calls jammed the switchboards of Afrikaans newspapers and the SABC.

It was a massive booster for Andrië's Treurnicht and his far-rightist Conservative Party. As one National Party MP remarked dolefully, “That's Potchefstroom gone”, referring to a critical by-election in February which may signal whether De Klerk has lost majority white support.

Sensing this, Mandela tried to make amends next day, crossing the floor to shake hands with De Klerk, then making a speech saying the two sides should not try to weaken each other because each had to bring its own constituency into whatever agreement they reached. He warned the right wing not to try to capitalise on the row. But the white

horse, one sensed, had already bolted.

Having survived this trauma, the first session of the convention — which goes under the racy acronym of Codesa — ended on a positive note with the 228 delegates representing 19 parties reaching agreement on a wide range of procedural issues.

It adopted a sweepingly liberal declaration of intent to establish a non-racial democracy, then set up five working groups to prepare the ground for this.

The working groups will present their recommendations to another meeting of the convention in March — setting the pattern for the negotiating process which will continue for at least a year.

Two delegations, from Chief Mangosutho Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party and the Bophuthatswana tribal "homeland", withheld their signatures from the declaration of intent to discuss some details further.

Inkatha's reticence followed a decision by Buthelezi to boycott the convention session because it rejected his request for Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini to be included with his own delegation, indicating an increasingly idiosyncratic stance by the IFP leader whose party has been embarrassed by a series of disclosures that it received secret Government funding.

Buthelezi's action made little sense politically. He has been trying to present Inkatha as a national, not a purely Zulu, party, yet staged his protest on behalf of the Zulu monarch who has no greater claim to recognition than any of the other 10 senior tribal chiefs in South Africa. In the event all it demonstrated was that Buthelezi's presence is not vital to the convention, while his stand-in, Frank Mdlalose, emerged with enhanced stature as a constructive negotiator.

The high degree of agreement reached on the declaration of intent and the

procedural framework was encouraging to many.

"I can hardly believe my eyes or my ears as I hear all this consensus on a nonracial South Africa," said Helen Suzman, the veteran anti-apartheid parliamentarian who, though retired, was included in the delegation of her small Democratic Party.

"We did marvellous work in the steering committee," said ANC general-secretary Cyril Ramaphosa. "The degree of consensus and level of understanding we have reached in the committee has surpassed our expectations."

But the crunch issues still lie ahead. Chief among them is whether the new South Africa is to have majority rule or not.

The ANC is committed to majority rule, while the Government is committed to preventing it. De Klerk and his ministers want what they call "power-sharing" — essentially a system that would give all parties which poll more than a minimum percentage of votes in an election equal power to both the legislature and the executive and compel them to reach decisions by consensus.

There would be one-person-one-vote elections and the majority would dominate the Lower House of a two-chamber Parliament. But all parties would have equal representation in the Senate and legislation would have to pass through both Houses, giving the minority parties a power of veto.

The Cabinet would be an all-party coalition, and the Presidency a troika of the leaders of the three biggest parties. Both would have to reach decisions by consensus. Again there would be

Majority rule or power-sharing? That's the crunch.

minority vetoes.

This would give an impression of majority rule while in fact preventing it by enabling the white minority to veto any attempt at structural adjustment of the socio-economic system.

The Government justifies its plan in the name of protecting minority rights, but the ANC argues that it is a transparent attempt to entrench the status quo of gross white-black inequality created by apartheid.

Pro-Government commentators dismiss the ANC's constitutional proposals as a "Westminster winner-takes-all" system inappropriate to a multicultural society, while pro-ANC commentators have dubbed De Klerk's plan a "loser keeps all" system.

If De Klerk were to concede the principle of majority rule he would almost certainly suffer another massive loss of white support, which he can ill afford.

Equally, if Mandela were to settle for less he could well split the ANC, perhaps suffering the same fate as Bishop Abel Muzorewa when he accepted Ian Smith's parity plan for "power-sharing" in Rhodesia.

Nor is there an easy compromise between having and not having majority rule. One suggestion is to borrow a concept from the British conditions for recognising Zimbabwean independence and seek a formula for "uninterrupted progress to majority rule."

Another tough issue is the ANC's demand for an elected constituent assembly to draft the constitution. The Government is strongly opposed to this, realising that South Africa's five-to-one



Helen Suzman, a member of the Democratic Party's delegation, sits next to Transvaal Indian Congress leader Cassim Salojee who is with Natal Indian Congress president George Sewpershad and Billy Nair. On the right are Joe Slovo and Chris Hani of the SACP.



FW de Klerk

black majority would give the ANC a commanding majority in such an assembly and enable it to have its way on the majority rule issue.

It wants the Codesa parties to negotiate the constitution. The ANC opposes this on the ground that many of the participating parties are the creatures of apartheid with no proven electoral support. Any constitution they produce would therefore lack popular legitimacy.

De Klerk proposed a compromise at the convention, suggesting that Codesa negotiate amendments to the present constitution to allow for a "power-sharing" interim government, and for elections to a new interim Parliament which could also serve as the instrument for negotiating the final constitution.

"Nobody will be able to dispute the legitimacy of such a transitional government and newly-constituted Parliament as is being done at present," the President said.

The ANC welcomed the implicit recognition that an election was necessary to give the process legitimacy, but smelled a trap. As one of its key negotiators, Mohammed Valli Moosa, noted, the National Party could seek to negotiate an interim constitution very similar to its own power-sharing model, then stall on the subsequent negotiations so that it would "go on for ever".

There would have to be a time-limit to any interim arrangement, Mandela added. The ANC leader also objected to De Klerk's stipulation that any constitutional change would have to be submitted to a referendum of the existing electorate — giving the whites a veto power.

Tough issues to resolve. As one of the two Codesa co-chairmen, Judge Ismail Mahomed, put it in the tense aftermath of the leaders' row: "There is a rocky road ahead of us, but there is no other alternative. We cannot revert to the past."

FW CHALLENGE TO ANC ON ARMED STRUGGLE TRIGGERED THE ROW

THE TRIGGER for the Codesa row was a passage attacking the ANC in President de Klerk's formal address to the opening session of the constitutional convention, made after the Government had asked to speak last of all the delegations, out of its alphabetical turn and the ANC had agreed.

De Klerk accused the ANC of breaking faith with the Government by not abiding by agreements for the phased disbanding of its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, whose activities have so far only been "suspended".

Saying an organisation which remained committed to armed struggle could not be trusted, De Klerk demanded that the ANC "terminate" Umkhonto before it could enter into binding agreements at Codesa.

At the end of the day's proceedings Mandela requested permission to "raise a matter of national importance."

"I am gravely concerned about the behaviour of Mr de Klerk here today," he began. "He has launched an attack on the ANC and in doing so he has been less than frank."

"Members of the Government persuaded us to let him speak last. It is now clear why he did so. He has abused his position because he thought I would not be able to reply. But he was mistaken, because I am replying now."

Mandela said he had been in discussions with De Klerk all week until late the previous night trying to resolve their dispute over Umkhonto and the issue of violence, and the President had given no indication that he intended raising the issue publicly at Codesa.

"Even the head of an illegitimate, discredited, minority regime as his has certain moral standards to uphold," Mandela said.

"I know now why he is losing so much support to the Conservative Party, because very few people would like to deal with such a man."

Mandela accused the President of failing to reveal that the ANC had agreed to hand over its weapons to joint ANC-Government control only once the political process had reached a stage

where the liberation movement had some effective say in government.

It had taken this standpoint because De Klerk was continuing to pursue a "double agenda", talking peace while allowing a campaign of violence against ANC members to continue with security force collusion.

"I have told him that when we have reached such a stage, then we will relinquish everything."

But to ask the ANC to disband Umkhonto now was to ask it to commit suicide.

"When our people are asking to be armed to protect themselves, what political organisation can hand over its weapons to the very people who are killing them?" Mandela asked.

"If he plays this double game, we will not disband MK. He can do what he likes."

The ANC leader also lambasted the Government for using taxpayers' money to fund "certain political organisations" — a reference to disclosures of secret funding to the Inkatha Freedom Party. He scornfully dismissed a recent De Klerk statement that he had not known about official money used for an Inkatha rally last January.

"If he didn't know then he isn't fit to be the head of a government," Mandela said.

In contrast to Mandela's icy calm, De Klerk was visibly rattled when he rose to reply. He was hyperventilating with emotion and struggled to control his voice.

Saying he would not attack Mandela personally, "because I prefer to play the ball and not the man," De Klerk said he had reluctantly raised the issue at Codesa because no progress had been made in extended discussions with the ANC.

He insisted he had been justified in doing so because a vital principle was at stake, and he would not apologise for it.

"Yes sir, I said it... (We cannot have) a party with a pen in one hand and claiming the right to hold arms in the other."

"Of all the parties here today, there is only one that has a private army."

A LOT OF BLACK PEOPLE ARE GETTING DISILLUSIONED WITH THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS BECAUSE THEY CAN'T SEE IT BRINGING ANY CHANGES IN THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES. BUT THESE LOCAL AGREEMENTS DO BRING CHANGES AT THE MOST TANGIBLE LEVEL OF HOME-OWNERSHIP AND BETTER SERVICES.

— Frederik van Zyl Slabbert

Thousands involved across the country in a 'ferment of interlocution'

WHILE world attention was focussed on the start of the historic Codesa constitutional convention in December, another scarcely noticed but equally important negotiating process was taking place at a different level.

In scores of towns and cities around South Africa, white civic councillors and black township leaders are sitting around tables trying to work out how to end the separate administration of their segregated communities and bring them together under single, nonracial local authorities.

In the biggest of these forums, involving all the white, black, Indian and coloured civic bodies in the Greater Johannesburg area (population 4-million), a landmark agreement was reached on December 4 that is likely to provide a model for the rest of the country.

After three years of tough bargaining a phased programme was agreed on that will merge the various apartheid entities into a single elected metropolitan council in four stages, beginning with co-ordinated budgetting in January.

The agreement also contained a package deal to end a bruising confrontation between the black activists and the white administration that has brought civic services to a standstill.

In terms of this deal the residents of Soweto and other black townships will end a six-year rent boycott and resume paying service tariffs from January 1, while Escom and the other utility organisations restore and improve their services.

The negotiators also endorsed a plan for transferring ownership of nearly all Soweto's 123,000 rented houses to their tenants so redressing apartheid's long prohibition on black people owning property in "white" South Africa.

Tenants who have paid rent for 30 years will be assumed to have bought their houses. Those who have leased their homes for shorter periods can buy them at discounted prices.

Dr Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, the former Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, who chaired the negotiating sessions, said he regarded the agreement as one of the most significant developments in the whole transition process taking place.

"Obviously what we are doing at local level must fit in with the national constitutional picture that has still to be negotiated," he said. "But it is tremendously important because it is at the local community level that people's lives are most immediately affected.

"A lot of black people are getting disillusioned with the negotiating process because they can't see it bringing any changes in their everyday lives. But these local agreements do bring changes at the most tangible level of home-ownership and better services," Slabbert added.

The large number of negotiations taking place presents a fascinating picture of a country in a ferment of interlocution at every level of society.

William Cobbett, a specialist negotiator with a service organisation called Planact that is advising many of the black groups, reckons there are more than 100 negotiations taking place at town and city level.

"Thousands of people are involved," says Cobbett. "It is going on in every province, in big metropolitan areas and small country *dorps*. The negotiations differ in each case, but essentially they are all about the white councils and black township leaders trying to form single local authorities."

Progress is remarkable, according to Cobbett. A political culture that was set in stone for generations is suddenly

breaking up right across the country. Only in town controlled by the Conservative Party is the process being obstructed.

Just as the pressure of sanctions and the great black uprising of the 1980s compelled the government to unban and start negotiating with the ANC and other black organisations, so did the pressure of crippling rent boycotts by black township residents drive the authorities to negotiate at local level as well.

At one point 54 black communities were refusing to pay rent service tariffs in protest against the apartheid system of local government. The Soweto boycott, begun in 1986, was the costliest, with rent arrears piling up at the rate of R25-million a year.

By 1988 the government had become eager to staunch this haemorrhage. Provincial officials established contact with a group of black leaders called the Soweto People's Delegation.

The talks inched forward until September last year, when a "Greater Soweto Accord" was signed, writing off R100-million in arrear rents and establishing a joint negotiating body called the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber.

The chamber called in Slabbert to be chairman and set itself the task of negotiating an end to the rent boycott, a redressing of black grievances, and a new form of democratic government.

It hit a Catch 22 crisis last August when the white authorities refused to improve municipal services until the black residents resumed paying tariffs, and the residents refused to end the boycott until the services were improved. The new agreement has broken that deadlock. ●

— ALLISTER
SPARKS

EDUCATION: THE CRISIS DEEPENS

VIRTUALLY nothing has been achieved in the past year to resolve the learning crisis facing senior pupils at black schools across the country.

The 1991 matriculation results released by the Department of Education and Training show that only 107 830 of 293 000 who entered for the examination passed — and of those only 28 051 achieved matriculation exemptions.

Just 19 pupils at DET schools had an A aggregate.

In white schools the pass rate was 97 per cent. Pupils at coloured and Indian schools also had pass rates of about 95 per cent.

Black pupils in black schools account for some two-thirds of the country's matriculation candidates.

These results have prompted fresh calls for a single education department and for the opening of all schools to all races.

ANC president Nelson Mandela has urged black pupils to return and for 1992 to become a year of serious learning and effective teaching. The overriding aim should be to create better conditions in which intensive learning could take place, rather than disrupt the educational process, he said.

Some indication of the enormity of the problem:

* By the year 2000 there will be 15 million children at school here.

* To cope with the demand 10 000 additional teachers will have to be trained annually.

In this issue **REALITY** examines some aspects of the problem:

* The success of a preparatory school that defied the segregated system and opened its door to children of all races a decade before state schools began integrating.

* A remarkable change of attitude to farm school education in the Eastern Cape.

* The achievements of a black head girl at a still largely white girls' private school.

* The efforts of staff at the university level to provide bridging courses to help white and black students to adjust to academic demands.

THE LIBERAL ALTERNATIVE

In 1982 JOHN MITCHELL, who was then headmaster of Kings School at Nottingham Road in Natal, decided to open the school to children of races. "We did it quietly and without sensation . . . it worked."

KING'S was founded in 1922 by Sidney Robert Edminson. Edminson had been Headmaster of Merchiston School in Maritzburg, was a well-respected man, high-mindedly Christian in his approach. It was the declared intention of the Founder that "the school should prepare boys for the Common Entrance Exam of the Public Schools, for cadetship in the Navy, and for the Entrance Exam to the Durban High School and Maritzburg College." It was in its philosophy pretty prototypical of the time. In 1939 my father bought the school. His aims were I think much the same as Edminson's. In 1954 I became Headmaster. The place was a family school. In 1986 the school was taken over by a Trust. (I have sometimes boasted that though King's was the smallest private school in the country, it had the most august trustees — among whom were Peter Brown, Archbishop Hurley, and Alan Paton.

I had long been aware that running Edminson's kind of school was no longer valid in the racial market-places of this country. This awareness was largely sparked off by my exposure to liberal thinking and to 'people of colour' when the Liberal Party was founded. This awakening was a wonderful experience for a young South African. I became convinced that for a school to have any relevance in South Africa it should become 'open'. It was impossible (because of strict Government policy) to establish such a school at that time so one sought to inspire in one's own pupils an understanding of human dignity and rights and democratic freedoms, a compassion for the sufferings of the under-privileged, and a reverence for their fellow beings. (As I write this I realise that it all sounds a bit too idealistic and high-flown. In fact, in the main, it worked.)

In 1979 I applied to the Education Department to admit a black pupil. The application was stalled. The reply I

received from the Director was that he "was unaware that King's was a Church School." (At that time some Church Schools had opened their doors, but an application had to be made for each "non-white" child one sought to admit.) In 1981 I decided that we would open the doors anyway. We did it quietly and without sensation. I remember at the time thinking mine was a brave step — one of imagination and courage. Of course, it wasn't. It was merely a rational justification for the place's existence and indeed of my right to be a Headmaster.

I have been asked whether that move to "openness" brought any problems. I don't think that it did, but looking back I recall that at first the black children tended to stick together. This may have been brought about because of language and a lack of easy fluency in English. It was, however, probably because the initial Black group was a small one. As the years went on, and the balance between black and white children evened out, so too did the integration prosper. King's is in a position now where there are more black children than white. The reason for this is obvious. The blacks are educationally under-nourished, and are anxious to find places like King's. The whites are cautious, afraid I think to put their kids in a school which is so ethnically mixed. There is always, too, the susurril whisper of standards. If it's any consolation my experience is that the bright kids are as good as they ever were, and the dull ones just as dull. Of course, right now and in the future with the opening up of the Government schools white caution might not be so easily exercised. My move to an open school was one of belief. The government's present move is one of expedience; and, indeed, it will have to hurry.

So far as admission policy was concerned I used language as a broad yardstick. If a black child could get his tongue around English, he was as far as I



Kings School has been non-racial since 1981

was concerned a possibility. Initially I took children in at any standard — from the Grades to Standard Six. It became apparent as time went on that the earlier one got a child the better; so in my last years at King's I tried as hard as possible to get children in at the Grades. One of the problems I encountered with admissions was that there were so many black applications for places that sorting them out was hugely difficult, so I tended to accept siblings first and the rest on a first-come first-served basis.

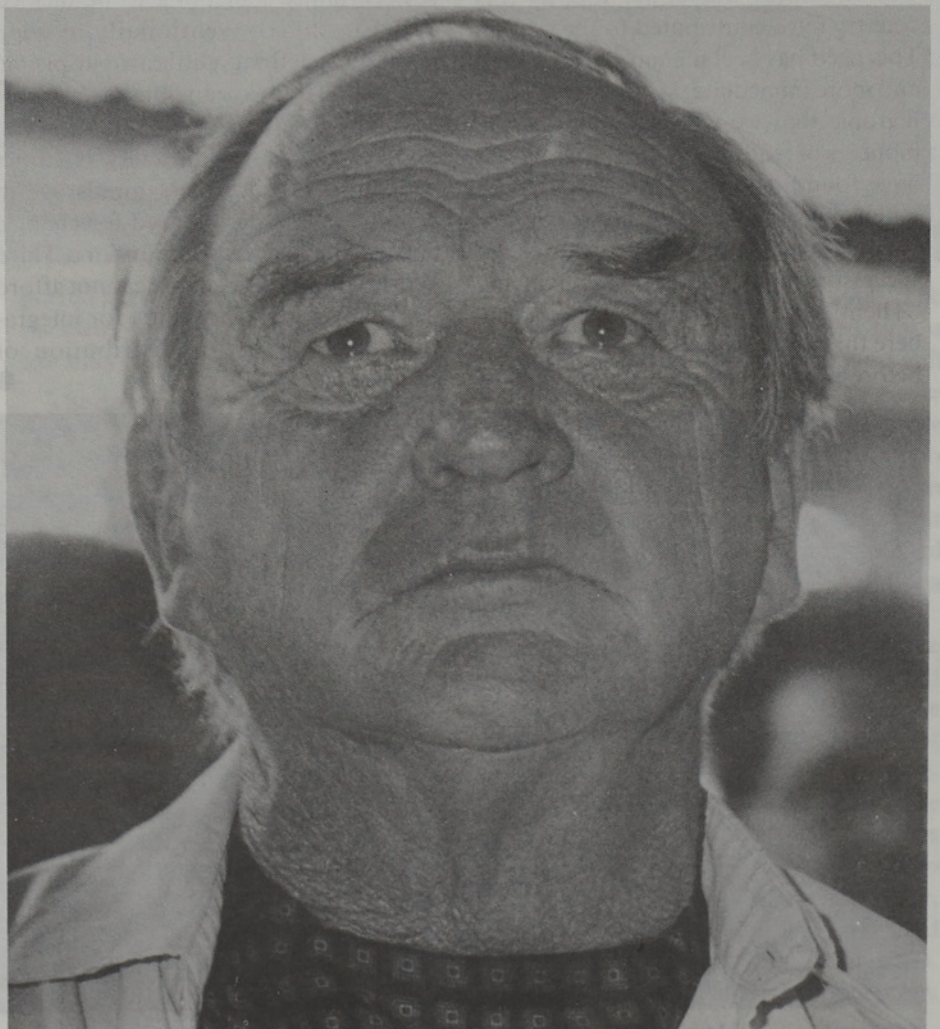
I did not apply a percentage rule. I would like to have had an even balance between black and white, believing as the Abbe Couturier once wrote:

"If you are to love one another,
you must know one another.

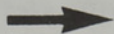
And if you are to know one another,
You must meet one another."

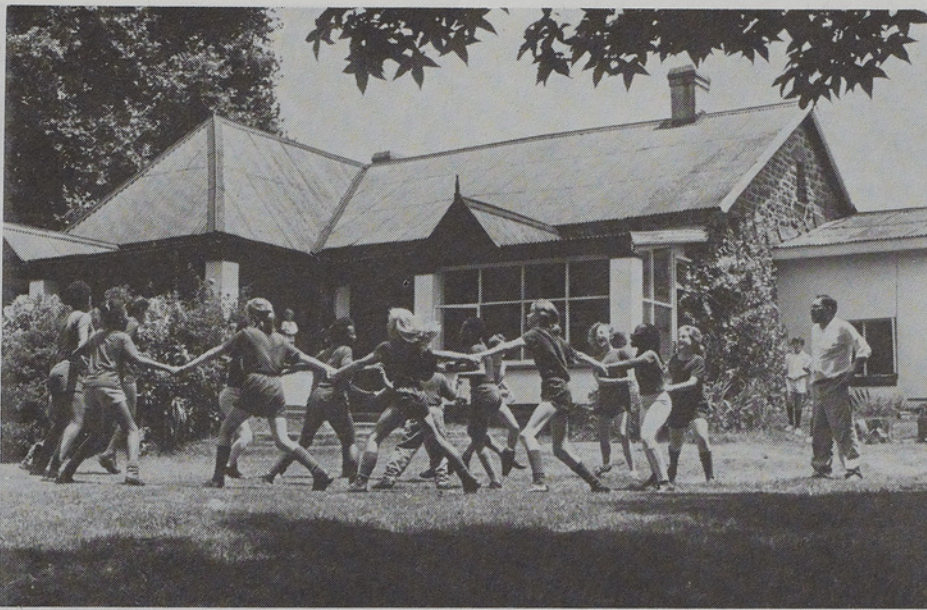
But it was not possible to keep this balance, and probably not right. One must just think of the children in one's school as South Africans.

In 1986 the government subsidy towards teachers' salaries was made dependent on the ratio of black to white pupils. At that time the percentage of blacks allowed if a school were to receive a full grant was negligible — about 10%.



John Mitchell





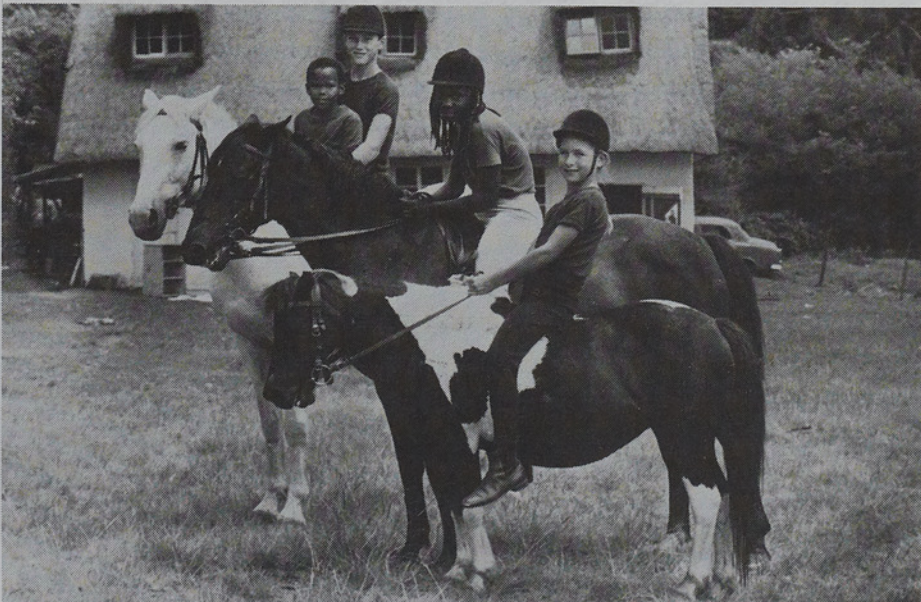
The dance: It breaks down inhibitions

From Page 9

This was not consistent with our philosophy of non-sectarianism and non-racialism, so we ceased to take a grant. I suppose this produced the greatest — or most urgent — problem of all — that of money. Who was it who said “the basic facts of life are mainly financial?” Anyway, since then we have been on a drive to raise funds. Benefactors, largely in the United States but some too in this country have contributed to the school. This need has become more demanding and more immediate. I sometimes found it ironic that we who were among the pioneers of really open schooling should have found it difficult to persuade the major donor companies in this country to put funds our way. I think my successors might be better at convincing “Them” than I was. I think I should say here that good schools need money, but before money they need the services of

dedicated people. I found it surprising and touching to find over the years how many such people were ready to give a bit of their lives to a concept which they found valid and relevant.

I write this article partly for those people who are moving or will be moving into the field of Open Education. I do not think that they should be constrained by fear of disaster or by falling standards. It is certainly something to be tackled and for the conventionally-minded perhaps something a little awe-inspiring, but it is by no means an insuperable problem. There are difficulties — yes. Perhaps the major difficulty is to get people to change their minds — to accept the thundering need for change. Separatism is not a solution for a Third World country. We simply cannot afford it. We must look for sanity, for integration, and for a fair distribution of educational wealth. ●



Horse riding is part of the fun and healthy recreation

A breakthrough — down on the farm

FARM SCHOOLS have had a controversial history in South Africa. Critics have charged the farmers and the black education department with providing sub-standard education in sub-standard conditions.

In response farmers have argued that in no other sector of the economy are employers expected to make comparable sacrifices for their workers' families, that the subsidy paid for classrooms is not much more than half the budgetted cost of building classrooms in town and that the farmers who do provide classrooms and accommodation for teachers find their lands being traversed by sticky fingered children from less generously provided farms to attend their schools.

Small wonder then that when we completed an assessment of pre-schools in the East London region in 1989 we wrote: “In the absence of obvious incentives to the farmers to develop pre-schools, or highly motivated parents, rapid growth in this area cannot be predicted.” (*Whisson and Manona 1989*).

At that time, in the coastal region between Transkei and Ciskei there were only two pre-schools on private farms known to the East London Early Learning Centre. One was on a farm which had an unusually large labour force associated with its sawmill, the other on a farm owned by the husband of a local enthusiast for liberal causes. Neither farm could be seen as typical of the region.

A year later we conducted a similar assessment in the Queenstown E.L.C. region (which extends to Barkly East and Middelburg) where we found to our astonishment that farm pre-schools had been multiplying quite rapidly over a very wide area. One was started in 1987, five in 1988, nine in 1989 and 14 in the first nine months of 1990. By August 1991 a total of 46 farm pre-schools was on the books of the E.L.C.

The earlier schools can be explained

by
*Michael
Whisson*
Professor of Anthropology
at Rhodes University

‘I position my shoulders so that my head sits comfortably amongst you all’

FOR IPELENG MOLOTO non-racial education has been a fulfilling experience. She matriculated at St John’s Diocesan School for Girls in Pietermaritzburg in December.

Her four years at the high school were spectacularly successful. She was head girl in her final year and won academic honours, a deportment award, was active in the debating and lectern club and will spend most of this year as a Rotary exchange student in Western Australia.

It was a school career not without travail, a struggle revealed in her final speech to the girls and their parents at prize-giving. She read them a poem she had written when being black among so many white fellow pupils left her acutely self-conscious.

My first day amongst them

I feel ignored

*My English is poor
and I feel Black.*

*Papa said, ‘You are
Black, nothing less, my
child.’*

*So I position my shoulders
So that my head rests
comfortably above them
all,*

*I make no apologies for
being me.*

*There is a saying in the black
community:*

*Umuntu, ungumuntu ngabantu;
A person is a person because of
people.*

She told her audience:

“I am black. I’m sure you’re all quite aware of that fact. It may seem unimportant to you, but it worried me and made me question my self worth and credibility.

“I come from a very political family and have always been very aware of the politics in our country. I always thought the only way to show people that I was not ashamed of being black was to be better than them.

“I was so intent on proving that black people can do better, that I did not realise that I was being racist myself.

“When I was selected as headgirl, I would ask myself, am I a showcase, or was I chosen for my ability and leadership? Or, was St John’s also participating in the rat race to be part of the new South Africa?”

“I know it is hard just to forget and forgive, because what they did was wrong, but dwelling on the past only creates negative emotions, blinding you.

“However, when I had to give a speech for Rotary on ‘The Education System in South Africa’, I could not say how it had changed without describing how it had been.

“It is also very difficult for people still



experiencing the ravages of apartheid to expect them to forgive and forget. Some people in my area cannot believe that I live with white people at my school.

“They believe it is something out of this world.”

And she revised her early poem to record her changed emotions:

A day amongst you

I feel accepted

I speak to you

and I feel human.

I am black; that’s all.

*So I position my shoulders,
so that my head rests comfortably
amongst you all.*

*There is a saying in the black
community:*

Umuntu, ungumuntu ngabantu;

*A person is a person because of
people.*

From Page 10

partly in the same idiosyncratic terms as those we saw in the coastal area — on farms owned by a company and by a liberal — but the growth in 1989 and 1990 was certainly not reflected in membership of the Democratic Party in the region. It had come about by a remarkable combination of circumstances which had begun to make it fashionable for farmers to develop pre-schools.

THE GROUND was broken by the activities of the rural foundation and community development associations which have expanded their operations considerably over the past few years. While pre-schools were not a part of their brief, the associations have promoted positive attitudes towards community development on the farms. What form such developments might take have been for the individual farmers to decide, but their wives have often

played a crucial part. As one put it: “It is the men who make the final decision. We can only encourage them”.

The decision has also been encouraged by the technology and the natural growth of populations on the farms, such that even the most conservative farmers have begun to recognise that education is not a serious threat to the comfortable pattern of master and servant on the farms, and that a well-educated farm community will not only provide more efficient labour but will also be both willing and able to send their literate children to work in the cities. As the pass rates in Sub A and Sub B classes has tended to be very low in the farm schools, with one teacher trying to cope with up to six standards in a single classroom, anything which enhances the performance of the children is to be welcomed.

Additional impetus may have been given by the dramatic shift in the political

scene since the beginning of 1990. The ANC and PAC have indicated that a radical redistribution of farm land will follow their inevitable accession to power within the next few years. One response to their challenge is for the farms to develop into happy communities in which the workers themselves will resist any radical changes — and a pre-school at the core of several developments is a step in that direction.

Into this favourable situation have come a few enlightened, successful, trend setting farmers and their wives, and the Queenstown E.L.C. (the director of which is married to a farmer from a well-known farming clan in the region). She has put at rest any fears that farmers might have of disruptive intruders who have no real insight into their way of life, and her combination of enthusiasm and diplomacy has opened many farm gates. Her initiatives have been followed up by

Teacher and Parent Team

regular visits by a fieldworker whose background as a farm school teacher has given her valuable insights into the farming communities from another, equally crucial perspective. Her knowledge, style and confidence have put her on first name terms with most of the farmers' wives, while her courtesy and her sensitivity to the long history of servility among the workers enables her to inspire the farm communities to make the pre-schools their own.

DESPITE this remarkable coincidence of circumstances and personalities which has launched the farm pre-school initiative so successfully, the programme remains fragile.

A farmer who is battling financially will think twice before sending a second young woman from his farm on a two week course costing R200 plus transport costs if his initial teacher leaves or has to stop work for any reason — especially if she is only caring for half a dozen children for four mornings a week.

It will only be when the parents themselves are sufficiently well educated to appreciate the value of pre-schooling and when the workers on the farms have appropriated the schools as their own, that the future of the schools will be secure. What this means is that the workers will have achieved much greater choice as to how they allocate their share of the income of the farms — receiving their benefits in cash rather than in forms which permit of no choice.

As with the sub standards in the farm schools, the pre-schools can only attract pupils from very close at hand, unless a farmer is willing to transport children from his farm to that of a neighbour on a regular basis and inevitably at his own expense. This means that most pre-schools are very small, with less than ten pupils each, and tempting targets if farmers have to prune expenditure. Their small size and the generally short periods that they are open each week — four or five days of no more than five hours each — makes it difficult for the farmer to justify anything like an urban wage for the teacher.

The structure of cash wages on any farm have to conform to well established patterns if there is not to be serious discontent and a young woman, even if she reached Std 5 at school and has a modicum of training, cannot be paid as much for twenty-five hours duty per week as a full time labouring man who

works from dawn until dusk.

A major part of the fieldworker's efforts are directed at encouraging the formation and active involvement of committees to manage the schools as independently as possible from the farmer and his wife — a development which is essential if the schools are to flourish, but one which demands very diplomatic handling. Such committees have to be representative of the community as a whole and not just the parents of the current cohort of children whose interest may last for only three or four years, and to command the confidence and respect of the owner or manager of the farm. About half the schools had established effective committees, most of the rest had committees in little more than name.

PERHAPS the most daunting problem to be overcome in the pre-schools is that of the relationship between the teacher and the parent as they work as a team to educate the small children.

Illiterate parents often have faith that education will enable their children to achieve things in life which fate has denied themselves, but have no faith in the contribution that they themselves can make to the process. They therefore abdicate all responsibility for education to the "expert" with her seven years of schooling and her month of training, and deny the worth of a lifetime of experience and received wisdom.

Restoring self-respect to adults socialised into servility and contempt for their cultural heritage, even for themselves, is an immense task, potentially made even greater by the introduction of pre-schooling — yet through the mediation of a carefully guided teacher who is essentially one of the community herself, that task too can be, and is being, addressed through the pre-school programme.

The breakthrough to farm pre-schools, which we would have seen as an impossibility three years ago, has been achieved in the border region. The miracle of a well-rooted system will still take a little time.

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SUE MATHIESON, reviewing campus, says the education crisis

QUIET

AS THE country moves haltingly away from apartheid the education structures have begun the process of reform into a racially integrated and relevant education system. At the schools level the task seems formidable — almost overwhelming. However, at the formerly white liberal universities a quiet revolution is taking place.

In 1991 14 percent of the student population at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, was African, and only 73 percent white.

This fact of increasing racial integration has posed the universities administrative and teaching staff with severe challenges, Black students as a whole were simply not coping within the existing system. Their failure rate was much higher than white students, particularly in their first year. In response to this a range of different programmes emerged to try to help black students to bridge the gap between their experiences of bantu education and the expectations of university level education.

However, it has become increasingly clear that it is not just a matter of bringing black students up to the educational level set by the white liberal universities, but that the universities are being called upon to transform themselves to become more appropriate institutions for the needs of black students who will eventually become the majority of students.

They also have the challenge of effectively preparing students for the task of reconstructing this divided and dislocated country.

The University of Natal Internship Programme is one of a number of different programmes attempting to facilitate this process of transformation. Academic internships are based on a one-to-one mentoring relationship between black students and predominantly white staff members, by which students are paid to assist staff on specific research projects, or other projects decided on by the department.

The success of the project depends upon a willingness on the part of both students and staff to engage with one another in the belief that there is a great deal that black students and staff do not

the internship programme at the University of Natal's Pietermaritzburg is so deep that it defies the attempt to find any easy or quick solution.

REVOLUTION

know about one another that can best be learnt on an individual level.

In general lecturers meet with their students en masse, often in groups of hundreds. In this situation it is virtually impossible to know how students are responding to their lectures.

Do black students understand what is being taught?

What difficulties do they experience?

How do they feel as black students who are still a minority in a university that was not designed to cater for their needs?

By engaging in a one-to-one mentoring relationship staff have the opportunity to learn from black students how they cope educationally as well as learning about their lives, their experience as students, the difficulties and challenges they face, their backgrounds and their aspirations. Students are given the opportunity of working with staff on a one-to-one basis and the opportunities this provides for exposure to their subject in a more personal, and often at a higher level, of getting more individual support and guidance and of being able to make an impact on the university by having a voice within the department.

In theory this all sounds very promising. But how effective is the internship programme in practice in achieving these aims? Our experience of working with the internship programme is that it is most effective in conjunction with other initiatives acting to bring about change at the university. Where departments recognise the enormity of the task they face in transforming the university, and are already engaged in the search for solutions the internship programme can facilitate that process of change. In some cases students have been involved in research projects to explore the experiences of black students within the departments; in other cases they have been involved in research in the community in the attempt to make university based research more relevant to the needs of the broader society.

The internship programme sponsors students in a wide range of internships.

There are three main categories of internship: academic research internship,

tutor development internship and community internship. There are no hard and fast boundaries between these different categories, and often they will overlap with one another. The majority of internships are academic research internships by which students assist an academic in a research project that is of significance either for bringing about change within the university or of benefit to the wider society. It is hoped that through this the student will learn research skills and also be assisted more broadly in their educational development. Senior students are also taken on as tutor interns to work with a tutor or lecturer and also to work less formally to assist in integrating junior students. It is hoped some of these tutor interns will go on to pursue an academic career, and in this way support the university's policy of affirmative action in the employment of black teaching staff.

Community internships place students either with university based projects with links in the community like the Institute of Natural Resources, or with service organisations working in the community, or in a small number of cases directly with community organisations. The aim is to give students an idea of the ways in which they can use their academic learning to benefit the communities from which they come.

Often this helps students overcome their sense of alienation from the university as they see the relevance of their university education to the wider community. It also helps communities to explore the ways in which they can bridge the gap with the university and see how the university can benefit them.

The internship programme is still a relatively new initiative, and in a sense is still finding its feet. It is still learning how to ensure that it is effective in achieving its aims.

However, the positive response of many students and staff, and the wide range of exciting projects being pursued is encouraging.

More than anything the internship programme has been successful in enabling the latent creativity of students and staff the space to flourish. ●

Different demands

UNTIL fairly recently university academic support programmes have been located at a central point on campus, outside of individual academic departments. Their aim has been to teach students the skills of academic reading and writing which students could apply in their different disciplines.

This model has experienced several important problems over the last decade or so of academic support. One is that students do not, in fact, very successfully transfer skills from one context to another. The complicated process that students must learn to go through in writing an academic essay, for example, needs to be repeated in the context of each subject.

CHRISTINE PARKINSON evaluates education development in Arts and Social Science at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg

This is not only a problem of transfer of skills. More and more it is becoming apparent that different disciplines ask different things of students, things which are 'second nature' to the experts in that field but far from obvious to many first year students. In the past, 'good' students were those who figured out the hidden curriculum for themselves, the 'weak' students struggled along on their own or fell by the wayside. A certain percentage of failures has always been accepted as normal.

In many cases, however, failure is not necessarily a reflection of lack of ability. The poorer a student's preparation for university has been the less able he or she will be to understand the hidden curriculum, let alone make it work to their advantage. Students from a different cultural, class and linguistic background are further disadvantaged in an English-speaking, predominantly white, middle class institution.

If we see education as a developmental process, however, then what students enter university with in terms of knowledge and skills becomes less important than the potential they bring with them. If we take a further step and recognise that a changing student population also means a changing university then we can



A South African tale

IT ALL began at about 2 a.m. We both woke up together: we had heard some loud noise. We had no idea what it was. Then there was another bang. It sounded as if someone had fired a shot into the sitting room. We both slipped on to the floor, afraid that the bedroom might be the next target.

Nothing else happened. Half an hour later we discovered that, sure enough, three shots had shattered windows in the sitting room. The wall had been dented, and a picture had been shattered.

We phoned the police. The man at the end of the phone said that the police didn't investigate incidents of that kind.

Two nights later shots did come through the bedroom window. We were terrified. We got under the bed, then felt that that might be too obvious a place, and slid on our stomachs into the bathroom.

Nothing more. Another call to the police, angry and desperate this time, but the same response.

We took to sleeping in a little room at the back of the house, on a mattress on the floor. Ten nights later a petrol bomb came through the window of this room and burst into flames next to our legs. We fled from the room, then came back half a minute later, but by that time the bedclothes and the mattress were on fire. We put them out quite quickly; but we were now deeply shocked.

We went as unobtrusively as we could to stay with my brother, who lives about two kilometres away. And we decided that we must get some help.

I spoke to a captain in the Security Branch. He was quite sympathetic, and referred me to a Major Smit of the CID. He in turn suggested that I should tell my story to Dr Hensen of the Investigation Section. And it was he who proposed that we should have an interview with ICIV, the Impartial Committee for Investigating Violence.

ICIV seemed quite an impressive group of people. There was a lawyer, a sociologist, a psychologist, and a person who said

that in her normal job she was a journalist. I was surprised and dismayed, however, that their questions focused not on what had happened but on my wife and me. They asked us about our jobs, our background, our cultural interests, our children (all grown up), our political views, our parents, our religious convictions.

'But what have all these things to do with the fact that someone has been shooting at us in the night?'

'We're afraid that's for us to decide. *We* are the investigating committee.'

'But surely it's a question of external, objective facts. The bullets and the petrol bomb didn't come out of our past.'

'You'd be surprised how many of the people we interview make that mistake. The fact is that you are a participant, no doubt an unwilling and unwitting participant, in a culture that presupposes violence, a culture that is based on violence. It's not a question of assigning blame; it is all entirely explicable.'

'What I want is the investigation of actual acts of violence. I want justice, not explanations.'

'You really must try to trust us: we are experts, you know. We've been putting together the pieces of a vast socio-cultural-economic jigsaw puzzle, and everything fits together. It's self-explanatory and self-contained.'

'I came to you because our lives are being threatened by someone or by some people we do not know, a person or people who may be quite unrelated to us in socio-cultural terms — who may in fact be opposed, for whatever reason, to all that we are and stand for. But what you say is that we must see ourselves as neatly-fitting pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. I feel imprisoned. What right have you to be so sure about what is happening to us?'

'Your objection is understandable, it is explicable. But we can assure you that a slightly hysterical cry of anguish isn't going to alter the shape of the overall pattern that we have discerned. Do you really think that with your little domestic hard-luck story you can challenge our interpretation of the root facts of the current violence?'

— **VORTEX**

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stop identifying the students as the problem, and work out how to change the university to better suit the student.

The Arts and Social Science Education Development Programme at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg) has reformulated the traditional ASP model in an attempt to face the challenge.

It enables departments to keep track of at-risk students, to monitor their progress and to attempt to identify and approach their specific needs. At the same time it allows for the possibility of restructuring academic practices to enable students to function better in the academic context. Education development tutors are in a position to begin working out what aspects are specific to particular disciplines and to make these more explicit and available to students.

In several departments curriculum development at all levels is on the agenda,

from syllabus reformulation to course structure and methodological shifts. This process has been part of the preparation for semesterization on the Pietermaritzburg campus in 1992. In some cases, however, departments have made the decision not to semesterize at the first-year level. This is because the first six months of university is recognised as being the period of greatest adjustment — intellectually, linguistically and emotionally — from high school.

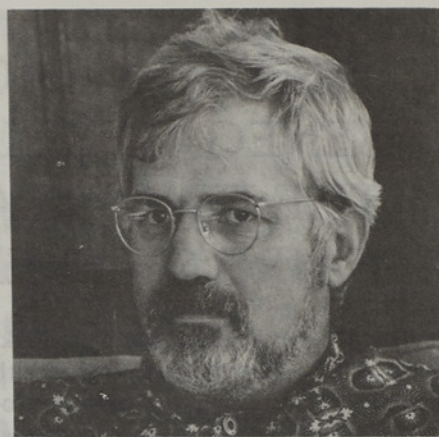
Although an important feature of the programme is to examine and monitor the effects of the curriculum and curriculum change on students, formal evaluation will not take place for another year, at which point an outside evaluator will be brought in. Potential directions for the programme, however, can already be seen. One is the total integration of education development functions into departments. This might mean, for example, that the traditional "add-on"

support tutorials become part of the mainstream tutorial programme, taught by regular academic staff and available to all students.

Another direction worthy of exploration is the foundation course model, such as is being developed in the Science faculty at UNP. One approach to this is to develop one or two semester-long foundation courses within individual departments. Another possibility is an integrated studies approach combining several disciplines such as Politics, Economics and Sociology, for example, or a course to help students develop a literary perspective involving English, Biblical Studies and History.

Whichever direction the programme takes, its aim is to support, from a learning and teaching point of view, the University of Natal's mission to extend the traditional base of university entrants, without, as is the fear, 'lowering standards'.

Professor Peter Vale, co-director of the Centre for Southern African Studies at the University of the Western Cape, recently led 12 South Africans from a broad spectrum of institutions and organisations on a visit to three West African countries. The trip was part of the Africa programme of the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (Idasa). These are his impressions.



Will we remain Africa's fool?

GET CAUGHT in one of Lagos' notorious traffic jams, and you soon begin to view the experience as a metaphor for Nigeria. Get caught in one late on a Saturday night, and the metaphor widens to embrace the whole of West Africa.

Agitation is added to melancholia by the darkness around, and the length of the delay; well over an hour and a half in our case.

Compared with this blaring of hooters and crush of vehicles and pedestrians, Johannesburg's morning snarl-up is a trickle. In the Lagos night cars and scooters mount pavements to make an extra metre or two towards their destination.

Above the din a siren screams: if this is the president returning from the new capital, Abuja, a passageway will have to be cut through the bedlam. (A previous president, General Murtala Muhammed, was assassinated in a Lagos traffic jam in 1976. The bullet-ridden Merc is displayed, somewhat ghoulishly in the national museum.)

Mercifully, this Saturday night it was a mere lowly functionary with no outriders: only an aggressive policeman in a Land Rover who hit the side of our bus as he squeezed past.

Then, as suddenly as it had stopped, the traffic started up again. Despite the hour, its breakneck pace was no different from that when we had left the city 12 hours previously. The human and mechanical tide did not weaken as we crossed one of the three bridges onto Victoria Island, the diplomatic and government area. It was difficult to believe that this was only a sleepy fishing village when the country became independent in October 1960.

Looking westwards across the Atlantic at dawn, it is easy to appreciate how

beguiling that hamlet must have been. In the morning mist the cane shacks scattered along the shoreline look positively alluring as their inhabitants slowly come to life. But in Nigeria, tranquil images like these do not endure for long. The country's sheer size, not to mention frenzied pace, leaves little time for quiet reflection.

Consider this: Nigeria has somewhere between 110-million and 150-million inhabitants; Lagos alone has about eight million.

(Qualifications are obligatory — like all other figures in this country, they could be way out or dead accurate. Who knows? Nigerians don't really seem to care. Perhaps this is what makes them so seemingly brusque about everything they do: perhaps this is the only way they can survive.)

Like the streets of Lagos to the two million drivers (or is it three?) that tackle them daily, Nigeria is not for the faint-hearted. It takes that rarest of all combinations, nerves of steel and the patience of Job, to order food, for instance. Local delicacies look and taste menacing to the initiated and, as elsewhere in the world, are best learnt at mother's knee. But even what passes for "western food" can be totally treacherous. Even that old faithful chicken can turn truly traitorous.

While the busy and overtraded local press is full of Nigeria's troubled transformation, our hosts seem reluctant to talk about local politics. Finally, our conversations seem to gel around the situation in South Africa. Nigerians are relatively well-informed, though nonplussed by our pained explanations of the violence in this country. After all, they lost probably three million people in a brutal civil war between July 1967 and December 1969.

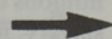
From the street, 38 Awolowo Road looks like a factory. It is actually a place of many personalities. Two ship's containers are stacked on top of each other at the front of the property. On closer inspection, it seems as if these have been turned into a suite of offices. Look behind them and you will find a tin barn which houses Lagos' favourite nightclub, Jazz 38; look behind the performer's stage, and you will find the home of Fran and Tunde Kuboye.

On three nights a week, as any good guidebook will tell you, Fran belts out a mean number under a banner which reads "Fran and Tunde Kuboye and the Extended Family Jazz Band performing in the cause of International Solidarity". Not only is Fran some looker but also a world-class talent, which is not surprising since she is the niece of the famous Nigerian singer Fela Kuti.

The business acumen of this couple takes one's breath away. Every square metre of this place and every spare hand is used in this endeavour. Members of the extended family admit patrons and sell beer and grilled meat. During daylight hours Tunde operates an import/export business from the container and, so the story goes, Fran practices dentistry from the same suite.

This finely tuned sense of economic reality is not only confined to Nigeria which, in the early and mid-1970s went through what locals now despairingly call the "oil doom" — it is to be found elsewhere in West Africa.

THE Hotel Savannah, exquisitely sited on Dakar's shoreline, is an incongruous place for learning about the desperate plight of the Senegalese economy. With only a three-month cycle to grow the staple crops, groundnuts and



THE CALM DIGNITY OF THE SENEGALESE LIES WAY BEYOND THE FINESSE AND SAVOIRE- FAIRE OF FRENCH CULTURE

millet, the agricultural sector is weak. Two other sources of national wealth look more promising: the country produces 1.5 per cent of the world's phosphates, and offshore fishing now yields \$41-billion to the national exchequer.

But the economic reality which hits home has less to do with statistics than with social relations. A representative of the local Chamber of Commerce expressed the view that culture underlay all human relations in Senegal, including business transactions.

On the ferry from Gorée Island a woman bead-seller demonstrated this. With the help of a French-speaker we bargained for two items. Her open face livened up and her white teeth clicked at each bid. We struck a deal and she unpinned not two, but three items from her stock. In handing them over, she folded her hand over mine as if to seal the exchange. She then moved on to other customers, conducting business in precisely the same fashion. As I left the ship she waited for me and other customers to shake our hands and wish us well.

Some might seek to explain it by borrowing from the familiar terrain of colonialism. True enough, the French have left a strong impression on these people; throughout Dakar their footprint is visible everywhere, from the noisy Renaults to the presidential palace which looks as if it might have been transplanted from a French provincial city. But the calm dignity of the Senegalese lies way beyond the finesse and *savoir-faire* of French culture.

Lodged deep within these people is an innate understanding of the human experience. An acceptance that life operates on many different levels and that the glue which keeps any social system and, indeed, any country together lies beyond courtesy — somewhere between respect and reverence. Poverty, of which there is a great deal, strengthens rather than soils this subtle human code.

To visit Gorée Island is to understand all of this more clearly. From this place, a stone's throw from Dakar, tens of millions of West Africans were sent into slavery, many dying in the process. As I

walked near the Slave House, a crying child passed, its sobs echoing in the narrow sandy streets and rising out across the ocean. This was surely a metaphor for this place of many, many tears.

Within the walls of that dank place, however, the affliction of that awful period in history cut deep into my soul as I read these words inscribed above the door of the children's cell: "*Innocent enfant lion du sourire et du pleur de la mere*" (Innocent child far from the laugh and the cry of your mother).

owner-cum-salesman, Kofi Joseph, stood at the entrance, his body stripped to the waist. As we bid his face would go dead-pan; once the offer was made, he would immediately respond with a carefully considered counter-offer. Periodically, he would shift his attention to another item, a joke, or an exchange of greetings with a friend. Each time he returned to exactly where he had left off.

Here, too, was a fine sense of economic reality at work. No need to access a computer to calculate the complexities of add-ins for transport, rent, light or water. These components (or their equivalent in Accra's craft fair) were factored in by the tumblers behind Mr Joseph's eyes. He knew risks, margins, profits and losses as keenly as he understood the fine weave in the cloth we finally all bought of.

AND why ever should this not be? After all, people were trading in

With centuries of experience and the delicately-tuned understanding of business and its role in human affairs, it may just be that the West Africans have something to teach us

GHANA, too, had its share of slavery and the castles dotted along its Gold Coast bear testimony to how early it was that European nations sought to enrich themselves by delving first for gold and later for people along these shores. As early as 1482 the Portuguese decided to erect a fortification at Elmina to protect their trading interests: frequent modifications have turned the initial structure into a ramshackle castle in dire need of repair. (The whole country, incidentally, looks as if it could do with a lick of paint. But in every way the brilliant colours of the national dress make up for the drab, grey buildings.)

A lean Dutch academic drew our attention to the country's historical niceties. He was keenly interested in drawing parallels between the good race relations in Ghana, where slaving was prevalent, and South Africa where — formally, at least — it never took place. As he spoke, my thoughts strayed back to the craft market in the capital Accra where we had again bargained the previous afternoon: this time the prize was the magnificent, locally-woven Kente and Adinkra cloths.

Three of us sat in a stall no bigger than the average suburban bus shelter. The

West Africa long before Columbus discovered America; long before Da Gama sailed around our own shores. With this experience, and the delicately-tuned understanding of business and its role in human affairs, it may just be that West Africans have something to teach us.

In the salubrious dining room of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs — my lips aflame after a mouthful of the local cuisine — I smiled at this joke used to illustrate the openness of the Nigerian press: On a London tube a slightly-built commuter got caught near a vocal and abusive Irish drunk. After several noisy intrusions, the commuter turns to his neighbour and declares: "Show me an Irishman and I'll show you a fool." "I'm an Irishman" says his beefy neighbour. "Yip", says the commuter, "and I'm a fool".

This joke stands, perhaps, as the most appropriate metaphor, not for the Nigerian press but for South Africa's relations with its own continent.

As we have been told so many times, South Africa has much to offer Africa. How we do this will determine whether we can share its pain and understanding or whether, as I fear, we will remain its fool.

SOUTHERN AFRICA BLUES

JACK SPENCE, Director of Studies at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, looks at the prospects in the post-apartheid era of shaping Southern Africa politically and developing it economically. He finds consolation in the contrast of the region with other parts of Africa and advocates unity to meet the dominance elsewhere of the "big battalions".

WHY THE 'off-beat' title? Because jazz lovers, at least, know that the blues mixes nostalgia (and regret) for the past with longing for a happier future.

This theme — to pursue the musical analogy — has featured in the widening debate over the political shape and economic substance of a post-apartheid Southern African region; at Chatham House, for example, in November at the publication launch of Jesmond Blumenfeld's book *Economic Interdependence in Southern Africa – From Conflict to Co-operation?* (Pinter Publishers for the RIIA) and a recent conference in London organised by ACODA (International Association for Co-operation and Development in Southern Africa).

The views expressed by the protagonists in the debate vary: there are, for example, the optimistic expectations of both the South African Department of Foreign Affairs and the ANC that the Republic's role in the region will be a benign one, based on mutual co-operation to develop the region to everybody's benefit. This view contrasts with the more pessimistic assumption that, notwithstanding the demise of apartheid, domestic instability and economic decline in the region together with an inevitable concentration of a post-apartheid government's energies on internal reconstruction, will leave little scope for grandiose, self-conscious programmes designed to achieve closer integration of the Southern African economies.

The truth probably lies somewhere in between: the removal of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic regime will — it is true — eliminate a major and traditional source of friction between the Republic and the SADCC states. There will be, at least, the prospect of relations

of a normal and straightforward kind, though not necessarily based on an automatic harmony of interests of the kind that ANC spokesmen have predicted. At best, these relations will contain elements of both conflict and co-operation and be relatively free of ideological tension — depending on the issue at stake and the extent to which it is a matter of crucial national interest.

But this outcome depends on a variety of factors, not least what happens in the transitional period of South African politics (between now and say, 1994).

For example, the so called New Diplomacy initiated by the De Klerk government is clearly based on the assumption that South Africa (as presently constituted) can and should take the lead in establishing a new regional order which might in time become a Southern African Economic Community. Hence the current efforts to penetrate the region (and further afield) economically in the hope that new trade and investment links will not only undermine what remains of external sanctions, but lead to full diplomatic recognition. As Peter Vale has remarked: the flag will follow trade.

Thus the Republic will be sure of a role as *a* if not *the* major regional player in Southern Africa both now and post-apartheid. In other words, the New Diplomacy is an attempt to position South Africa to take maximum advantage of whatever new regional dispensation emerges in the 1990's.

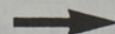
OF COURSE, the New Diplomacy is hardly 'new'; its basic assumptions underpinned the 'outward movement' of the 1960's, the 'detente' phase of the 1970's and its thrust was only eclipsed in the 1980's by the military definition of regional policy (destabilisation, *et. al*) to

which P.W. Botha and his generals subscribed in the 1980's.

Its current manifestation has, however, been devised and implemented without significant consultation — let alone agreement — with the ANC (the government's major partner in the negotiation process). This may, of course, simply reflect ANC unwillingness to be co-opted into the decision making process. Yet if this division persists a post-apartheid government will lack the advantage of a solid and helpful foundation laid in the interim phase. That government may, therefore, inherit policy guidelines, perceptions, and regional commitments entered into by its predecessor and all of which may prove difficult to jettison by a new regime aspiring to a different regional dispensation.

Yet another factor which will determine the structure and process of regional politics is the role of SADCC. Established in 1981, the organisation's primary objective was political — to reduce economic dependence of the member states on a hegemonic South Africa rightly deemed to be ideologically and militarily aggressive.

With regard to transport linkages and trade — two of the most obvious areas of dependence — the balance has remained obstinately tilted in South Africa's favour while commitment to sanctions has been rhetorical rather than substantive. Thus the persistence of civil war in Angola and Mozambique (in which the Republic was clearly involved if only to weaken SADCC efforts to promote integration) has prevented exploitation of east-west transport routes and led to greater reliance on South Africa's ports and railways.



Nor does it follow that the creation of a democratic South Africa and its entry into SADCC together with the rehabilitation of the war-torn economies of Angola and Mozambique will revive the impetus towards regional integration of the Southern African states on terms acceptable to all.

There is, first, the understandable fear on the part of the region's smaller states that the new South Africa — given its greater human and natural resources — will inevitably be the dominant partner in a restructured SADCC.

No matter, say the optimists: only South Africa has the capability to be the motor engine of economic growth throughout the region and the prospect of investment and increased trade emanating from their powerful neighbour will nullify any *political* reservations that neighbouring governments might entertain.

But what if the investment is capital intensive rather than job creative? What if the weaker economies are used as dumping grounds for cheap South African exports? What if South Africa reduces labour migration in the interests of its own unemployed or, alternatively, accepts only those with skills and expertise and whose loss will weaken neighbouring economies still further?

These questions assume, of course that a) a post-apartheid government will 'take off' economically and have resources to spare to put to good use in the region; b) that the state will encourage the operation of a free market at home and abroad; c) that South Africa's economic needs will be given priority over the interests of its neighbours and that no attempt will be made to exercise restraint in the use of superior economic power and leverage *viz a viz* the SADCC states.

IT IS possible, therefore, that the development of a post-apartheid SADCC may have a paradoxical outcome — greater rather than reduced dependence on South Africa with its neighbours forced to trade off economic advantage against increased political influence on the part of a powerful regional hegemon. This is, no doubt, the price the states of Eastern and Central Europe are willing to pay *viz a viz* the crucial role that a United Germany is likely to play in *their* economic development. But Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary have at least this advantage, that each will find sanctuary in the collective embrace of the European Community.

▲ A new deal for the region depends on a decent and effective outcome in the Republic . . . Southern Africa has human and material resources in abundance . . .

There is no equivalent counterweight for the states of Southern Africa and this in part explains why the nation of a Southern African Economic Community is a very distant prospect. There are other reasons, some of which I explained in an earlier contribution to *Reality* (October 1991).

What should be remembered by SADCC supporters is that its European counterpart was created on a step by step, functional basis over a period of forty years. SADCC, no doubt, will have to go down this hard road as well and, who knows, throw up a Monnet or a De Lors in the process to provide the dynamic, charismatic leadership that the creation of supra national enterprises entails.

Yet even the modest prospects for regional co-operation outlined here assume that the post-apartheid world will be relatively stable. SADCC (with a newly-incorporated South Africa) will, however, make little progress towards its self professed objective of economic integration if member states are simultaneously faced with seemingly intractable economic difficulties.

It is true that much of Africa is attempting to move towards the establishment of pluralistic systems of government and the liberalisation of inefficient, corrupt command-style economies. The emphasis by governments and international agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund is on good governance as the price of debt forgiveness. Renewed economic assistance has spurred this trend, and nowhere more visibly than in Zambia. There, a new government has swept to power on the ruins of Kenneth Kaunda's one party state.

IN PRINCIPLE, a replica of this outcome elsewhere in the region should help regenerate economic and political institutions and provide a basis for rational co-operation and integration via the mechanism of a revitalised SADCC.

In practice, however, any new government coming to office in the region as a consequence of the demands of externally imposed Structural Adjustment Pro-

grammes and popular discontent with the *ancien regime* will face profound difficulties in the short term: trying to meet the stringent requirements of say, the IMF and satisfy popular expectations will stretch the legitimacy and the capability of these governments and — perhaps — threaten a collapse into authoritarian rule.

And the same incentives and constraints will affect the policies of the first post-apartheid government. Moreover, the future of the region will depend on the success or failure of whatever new constitutional system is agreed over the next two years and — more important — the economic structure deemed appropriate to underpin its operation.

Investment from abroad, support from the IMF and the World Bank, all depend on the creation of a stable polity and a growth-oriented economy. In other words, a new deal for the region depends on a decent and effective outcome in the Republic. If this occurs, then there is a reasonable prospect of regional co-operation provided, of course, South Africa's neighbours survive the pains of a 'second independence' and acknowledge in all their dealings with South Africa the need to 'box clever' to keep the regional aspirations of their powerful neighbour in check.

FINALLY, all the states in the region have one consolation: unlike much of the Third World the risk of marginalisation is less acute.

Southern Africa — in contrast with other parts of the continent — has human and material resources in abundance. As a region it also enjoys the benefit of a well established economic infrastructure with long established links to the West.

Whether that favourable position can be maintained will depend on how far the member states can recognise their common interest in uniting together against a world which will be increasingly dominated by the big battalions.

This surely is the best incentive for all the states in the Southern African region to recognise that what they have in common is more significant than that which divides them. ●

Capturing Africa for Islam

ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST POLITICS IS A NEW PHENOMENON IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA. COLIN LEGUM WRITES THAT IT IS NOT YET AN IMPORTANT FACTOR BUT IT IS A DISTURBING ELEMENT IN SOME COUNTRIES.

PREDICTING the course of events in developing societies is, at best, a tentative exercise. There are still so many unknowable elements in the forces released by old societies caught up in a rapid modernisation process.

It is salutary to be reminded that not a single one of the eminent scholars writing on pre-independence Africa foresaw that the military would become a major political feature.

With the ending of the colonial chapter new social forces emerged in response to the challenge of modernising societies centred largely in the urban communities.

A new sense of political realism has replaced earlier illusions about the peace and prosperity that would come with independence.

For example, the initial ambition to concentrate resources on building industries at the cost of neglecting the rural sector and of favouring development in urban areas was finally shattered by diminishing food production and negative economic growth in the 1980's.

The likely political development as Africa enters the next phase will be determined by the success of handling major problems now facing the continent.

These can be listed as follows:-

- A population growth of about 3 percent per annum will require economic growth of at least 5 percent to sustain just the present low level of national expenditure on such vital needs as education, health and other social services.

The debt burdens incurred in the early decades of independence, and which currently absorb between a quarter and three quarters of the foreign exchange earnings of many countries, are unsustainable.

- The social and economic problems of rapid urbanisation have produced a growing class of unemployed.

- The growing lack of employment for educated young Africans, especially for university and secondary school-leavers, is already a source of radicalization, as now being witnessed in coun-

tries like Kenya, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire.

- The current surge for more open and democratic government has already begun to release new, often militant, political forces. The establishment of democratic forms of government will make conflict accommodation easier, but it will also usher in a new period of political turbulence such as has not been seen since the last phase of the anti-colonial struggle. While the creation of democratic political societies offers the only sure way of eventually achieving political stability, the next decade is likely to see even greater political instability until there has been time to establish a democratic tradition.

- The ravages of AIDS in a dozen African countries may be expected to slow down population growth but at a terrible cost of suffering.

How can we expect African governments and non-political leaders to respond to these challenges in the coming decades? Is the continent indeed a basket-case, as some would argue? Or can it regain the early promise of the first decade of independence when, it is important to recall, the economic growth rate of the continent averaged 4.5 percent, and reached 8 percent in a number of countries?

This steady decline from a relatively high performance to negative growth is generally attributed by Western analysts and commentators to such causes as wrong economic policies and priorities; inefficient government and maladministration; the misuse of foreign loans and economic aid in nonproductive development; extravagant expenditure on armies and military material; civil wars and other forms of commotion — and, as always, corruption.

Africa is now engaged in a democratic revolution. The battle cry is multiparty parliamentary government.

The predictable pattern of future political developments in Africa is that the rival parties will closely resemble those in Western Europe.

Finally, a new political phenomenon

has to be reckoned with: the introduction of religious politics by Islamic fundamentalists. Religion has in the past played no role in sub-Saharan Africa, despite the dominance of Muslim and Christian communities in different countries.

However, in recent years, the Call of Islam promoted by Col. Muammar al Qadhafi and the example of Iran shows signs of winning a response in some countries.

Religious politics have become a new feature in Nigeria, the continent's most populous state. It is not yet an important factor, but it is already a disturbing element.

There are similar stirrings among the predominantly Muslim states in other West African countries like Mauritania, Senegal, Chad, and Mali. Recent attempts have been made to introduce Muslim politics into Ethiopia and Eritrea. The biggest breakthrough for the Islamic fundamentalists has been in Sudan where a long-standing civil war between the mainly Muslim North and the mainly Christian and Animist South has been seriously complicated by the decision to turn the country into an Islamic Republic based on fundamentalist principles.

The growth of Islamic fundamentalist forces is proving to be a seriously disturbing element in both Algeria and Tunisia. Although Libya and Iran espouse different brands of Islamic political ideas, both are equally engaged in "capturing Africa for Islam." Indeed, Qadhafi already claims that Africa is an Islamic continent.

Islamic fundamentalism has its deepest roots in political frustration, manifested in a rejection of Western ideas and values. Unlike other political ideologies which attract mainly the educated elite, it appeals to both the middle class and to the rural population.

The danger is that unless the new wave of democratic leaders can succeed in diminishing the existing strained feelings of frustration and alienation, discontent will provide an increasingly attractive alternative for Muslim societies to turn to the Islamic fundamentalists. ●

VIVA! VIVA!

by DAVID BASCKIN

CANT

SOME profound genderist sinning in the last VIVA! VIVA! has resulted in a bulging postbag. Letters mostly from persons, but some from men too, express sensibilities of outrage, annoyance, irritation, hostility and sorrow. The insults are also quite varied, with "phallocrat" as the most electrifying. What a novel alternative it is to the more usual MCP sexists and woman hater. Bit of a mouthful, though.

ASYLUM

WILL THE New South Africa have room for the Animal Rights Movement? It was this thought, merely one among many, that crossed my mind as I watched the demonstration outside the Moscow State Circus in Durban recently. The placard holders were protesting against the use of animals for human entertainment. It seems that the circumstances under which the Russian bears live and perform, are quite different from the style of life they experience in the wild state. This, the argument goes, is not only cruel and unnatural, but impairs the bears' inherent sense of dignity and self-worth. The result is depression, alcoholism, broken marriages, cub abuse and ultimately suicide. In place of this appalling scenario, the Animal Rights Movement has a major rehabilitative programme already in place. Bears, freed from their lives of slavery in circuses and zoos, are taken by the Movement to their Bear Centre in the Drakensberg. There, a team of aromatherapists, foot reflexologists and born-again dolphin trainers slowly, carefully, respectfully and above all, lovingly, heal the emotional wounds caused by the brutality of the bears' former careers. On Day One, the bears are lead into a mock cave, decorated with full colour Shepherd cartoons from Christopher Robin. Honey is served by staff dressed as Pooh, while films are shown in which Ring Masters, Acrobats and Circus Owners

are forced to perform acts of humiliation and degradation. On Day Two, the Bears are taken to the Soft Room, where they are taught to sing If You Go Down to the Woods Today. On Day Three, a public meeting is held where Goldilocks cuts off her golden ringlets and shambles around on all fours making bear noises. On Day Four, white coated scientists holding test-tubes in one hand and microscopes in the other are carved into cutlets and consumed in a merry braai by all the delegates. Healed of all that ails them, a giant Illyushin piloted by Boris Yeltsin drops out of a cloudless sky and whisks the bears back to the joyous freedoms of the Russian steppes.

DEATH AND TAXIS

TAXITALK, "the mouthpiece of the Taxi industry", is a big glossy magazine that my petrol station gives away to customers. The September issue (September? Well, that's why it's free . . .) is packed with things I never knew, the second most startling of which is the price of new minibuses. A 15 seater Volkswagen Kombi for example, can be yours for as little as R15,000 deposit and a mere R2044 per month. With this kind of debt load, you have to drive pretty fast to make the bucks that pay for rent, food and driving lessons. This brings me to the most startling thing of all. Out of all the advertising, (and there's lots) there are only two full page colour ads, one of which, is for City Funeral Directors. Committed to the pursuit of excellence, a slogan they share with the University of Natal, City Funeral Directors gives you, the taxi-travelling public, a funeral you can really afford. For only R695 you get a fully trimmed coffin, documentation, refrigeration, use of 40 chairs, 2 tables, a Cadillac hearse and a host of other goodies too numerous to mention. Given the legion of dead drivers and dead passengers, it makes some sort of grisly good sense, I suppose.

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