

South Africa before
the deluge

On April 27 South Africans will participate in the country's first non-racial national election. Or perhaps a majority will. Reports from South Africa indicate that the level of intimidation of political opponents is so high that at least 14 percent of voters might be too scared to cast their ballots.

A further percentage of the electorate will not vote because their parties intend to boycott the poll. The Inkatha Freedom Party as well as groups on the right of the white constituency which despite their differences have formed a marriage of convenience called the Freedom Alliance have signalled they will not contest the elections fearing that their interests will be subsumed by a centralist African National Congress government.

" Inkatha, a predominantly Zulu party, whose powerbase is in the eastern province of Natal, has two demands on which it won't compromise:

1. The introduction of a double ballot paper, one for the national and one for the regional legislature. It believes that the present system is heavily weighted against essentially regional parties who don't have strong national representation.

* A devolution of power to the provinces which cannot be rescinded by central government veto.

In the same vein white parties, who believe that a multi-racial country will go the same way as multi-tribal countries to the north, are seeking a volkstaat, a white homeland, and say they will resort to violence to get it.

The Zulu King Goodwill, who at one stage seemed to be receptive to the ANC's overtures, has come out strongly in support of the Inkatha position. He said:

" Those who conquered us, namely the white nations of Afrikaner and British, are now relinquishing their sovereignty over the land of South Africa.

" The nation which was exercising sovereignty over the land is abdicating its power to open the door for new nations to exercise their sovereignty over the land.

" Under this set of circumstances I take the position that the sovereignty of the

Zulu nation is revived and I am advised that this position is also supported by the international law of decolonisation.â\200\235

The King said that since the ANC

had not defeated the Zulus in war they had no right to rule over them and so the Zulu nation would not be bound by South Africaâ\200\231s new constitution.

It is a common assumption that outside Natal where the ANC/Inkatha civil war â\200\224which has claimed ten of thousands of lives in the past eight years â\200\224rages unabated, the election is a shoe-in for the ANC.

The tales of intimidation show clearly that there are pockets of support among blacks â\200\224how substantial is unclear â\200\224for parties other than the ANC. Even the National Party is getting a look in. One black

â\200\234no reason for them to live if they donâ\200\231t understand the will of the peopleâ\200\235.

The plight of the leading liberals reflects better than anything the disillusion infesting white South Africans. Because of their long anti-apartheid stance, gravitation to the ANC seemed inevitable. But some who used their literary talents to castigate the National Party government now find the post-apartheid period looking equally illiberal. The writers Rian Malan, Andr   Brink and Breyten Breytenbach have all voiced serious concerns about an ANC government. The best known liberal politician Helen Suzman has said she will have nothing to do with the ANC while it remains in alliance with the communists.

The London Timesâ\200\235 R.W. Johnson writes from South Africa that the problem for those â\200\224even with the best liberal credentials â\200\224who criticise the ANC is that they are immediately suspected of supporting Inkatha. He says that after leading the anti-apartheid campaign from inside the white community, the liberal Demo-

Chief Buthelezi

NP candidate said he contacted 15 black NP organisers in the townships to ask their political views and all but one said they would vote for the ANC â\200\234because they were afraid that anyone who had their phonenumber would have their address as wellâ\200\235. >

What happens in the secrecy of the ballot room could contradict some of the opinion poll results.

But people are scared. In January the South African Institute of Race Relations reported a senior member of an ANC-aligned self-defence unit in Katlehong near Johannesburg who boasted of killing opponents â\200\234 like chickens â\200\235 because he saw

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cratic Party, has the support of just two percent of the electorate. This is partly because the National Party adopted many of its policies and changes in personnel have weakened the Democrat image. It is also due to the Democrat Party talking soft when the alternative parties are talking tough or even killing their opponents.

Being doveish is not reassuring when many believe they could be facing a holocaust.

That many liberals won't support the ANC is a clear indication that however it is presented for foreign audiences â\200\224 usually as a moderate social democratic organisation â\200\224 the ANC represents something far

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different. And this is why it is difficult for a liberal to feel truly at home in the ANC writes Johnson:

â\200\234Argument is currently raging about how many communists there are in the top

50 places on the ANC election list. Some

analysts say it is as high as 27, but nobody doubts that the Communist Party, as the most cohesive and disciplined group within the ANC leadership, will continue to act as the main initiator of ANC policy.

â\200\234Voting for the ANC list also means supporting some notably illiberal spirits, including Umkhonto officers accused of atrocities against their own men in the Angolan camps, radicals who openly call for other parties to be prevented from campaigning in the townships and, of course, the inimitable Winnie Mandela.â\200\235

The first problem for the ANC is winning the election. The size of their electoral support will be interesting to gauge.

Secondly, presuming the ANC forms the new government, how is it going to deliver on the extraordinary electoral promises it has made?

It has promised to build more than one million new homes, provide clean water and sewage services for all South Africans, improve access to electricity (to 2.5 million homes), provide ten years of free universal education and provide affordable telephones and health care.

All these might be admirable aims but the ANC is expecting to finance this without increasing taxes or borrowings (and in some areas intends to deliver tax cuts!) For blacks, promises such as these â\200\224unfulfillable as they are â\200\224 have taken some of the pain out of the widespread unemployment and the 50 percent poverty rate. A

guaranteed brighter future makes the consequences of sanctions and disinvestment easier to bear.

The price has been massive. The Wall Street Journal once calculated that between 1986 and 1990, lost investment, closure of factories, crippled industrial processes and the destabilisation of trade had cost R500 billion (about A\$200 billion). If the capital flight, emigration of skilled workers and

political and industrial unrest are also factored in, the overall cost over the past decade is around R860 billion (A\$350 billion).

The ANC has been moderating its economic position clearly to reassure foreign investors that it has reconsidered the socialist policies which were party dogma for so long.

The performance hasn't been convincing. Foreign investment is barely trickling in. Many of the companies which pulled out aren't planning to go back. Ford Motor Company, Kodak, Citibank, Proctor and Gamble, and General Electric have indicated they have no plans to return.

Some of the reasons are revealed in a study of US businesses by the Institute of Managerial Resources which reported a unhappiness over exchange controls, continued ANC talk of nationalisation and redistribution, the long history of wide scale strikes and industrial dislocation, uncompetitive tax rates, labour laws hopelessly biased to the workforce and [that] South Africa has the lowest productivity profile we could find. Without a suitable work ethic, SA cannot hope to draw investment.â

A more pressing problem than attracting investment is some way of stemming the haemorrhage of funds leaving the country.

According to the SA Reserve Bank over A\$6 billion left the country last year â only 40 percent of which is accounted for.

If the capital flight continues, the country would have to force up interest rates and thereby stifle whatever economic activity is occurring.

The Transitional Executive Council negotiated a loan with the International Monetary Fund for A\$1.2 billion to help shore up SA's foreign exchange reserves. In January it became clear that all this loan had done was to hold up the exchange rate while the well-off smuggled more money out of the country.

So despite the loan, South Africa is still scratching around for foreign exchange with which to pay for its imports. The irony is that South Africa has been running a trade surplus and has relatively few foreign debts, but through 1993 it watched as the capital flight was double the trade surplus.

The country's poor economic position leaves very little room for manoeuvring and electoral promises seem impossible to honour. How an ANC government tries to satisfy the aspirations of its supporters and to maintain fiscal restraint will be a sight to

behold.

Ironically by using sanctions to lever
power from the National Party, they crip-
pled the economy they one day wished to
inherit. Destroying an economy is easy
Making one function effectively is a trick
that eludes even the advanced nations
which have neither South Africa's present
fiscal status nor a history which serves to
poison any chance of recovery.

â\200\224 BRENDAN RODWAY

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stand struck by the ANC was a tactical
ploy to win major concessions at the
negotiating table.

* â\200\234Thenegotiated package .isa
famous victory. It represents ... the.
cuhmnaun of decades of struggle. â\200\235

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The African Communist, No 136, Fourth Quarter 1993, pub-
lished the report to the South African Communist Party
Central Committee by the former secretary-general of the
SACP and senior ANC official, Joe Slovo.

Here republished are extracts from his speech which
show that as far as the SACP is concerned the â\200\234moderateâ\200\235

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elected representatives of the people.â\200\235
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a united South Africa ... In all critical areas ...

democratic state will have overriding powers.â\200\235

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the future

we have won the battle
against federalisation. This was touch
and go...â\200\235

Â¢ â\200\234The national police will have
the right to move in [to any province].â\200\235

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of special majorities] was going to be the
battle royal ... In the end we won the
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