

Southern Africa REPORT

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May 1998

Dollar Diplomacy



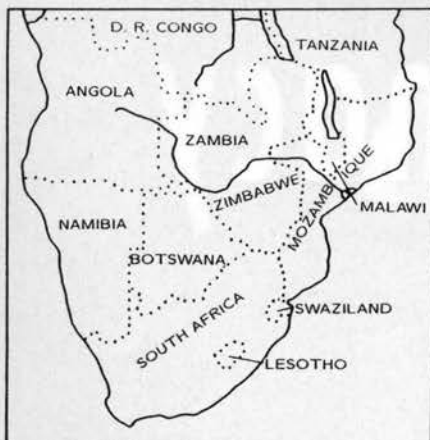
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US President Clinton speaking in Gaborone, Botswana

Dollar Diplomacy

If nothing else, last month's Clinton caravan through Africa captured the imagination of *SAR* writers. Thus, three authors from whom we solicited articles on recent developments in the region for this issue chose to peg their commentaries on the countries of their choice around the fact of that trip. Indeed, one of them (Colin Darch) finds the very absence of a Clinton visit to Angola to be an eloquent entry-point into assessing the furies that continue to stalk that country.

More directly to the point, however, is Larry Swatuk's disquisition on, as he titles his article on Botswana, "What Clinton Didn't See." For Clinton came to Africa ex-

PLICITLY to sell a pretty bald version of "neo-liberalism," lobbying strenuously both for its embrace at home (in the form of adoption there of the new US-Africa Growth and Opportunity Bill) but also in Africa itself. Needless to say, he was far less interested in the seamy underside of fall-out from such a policy option: the growth without real development that Swatuk finds to be the true story of the Botswana miracle, the markedly increased level of militarization, and the grey reality of formal freedom juxtaposed to substantive disempowerment that provides much of the substance of Botswana's vaunted democracy.

Interestingly, Clinton's missionary zeal on behalf of the magic of the

market, pure and unalloyed, was too much for South Africa's leadership to swallow quite whole. Trade and investment, not aid? Just a minute, Mr. President, said Mandela and Thabo Mbeki (as Hein Marais reports below). Rediscovering, momentarily, some possible downside to the acid-bath of global competitiveness into which they have chosen to thrust South Africa, they demurred gently from this and other one-sided formulae Clinton deployed during his trip. And yet, as Marais further argues, such concern did not spring from any deep-seated misgivings as to the cruel nature of the freshly ascendant globalized economy or from any profound and outspoken unease about Africa's place



Sharon Farmer - US WhiteHouse

within it. Rather, he suggests, reluctance to bask entirely uncritically in Clinton's presence was framed by some pretty sophisticated calculations about how best to play hard-to-get - how best, in fact, to jockey for position and leverage *vis-à-vis* the rival claims of Europe and the US to prominence in Africa - in order to advance South Africa's capitalist future.

Although the Clinton visit makes no appearance in Carole Collins' careful assessment of developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, she does find plenty of "dollar diplomacy," regional-style, to be at play there. With her useful article - the first we have carried on Zaire/Congo in *SAR* - we mark the Congo's entry into SADC, but we also follow the money, not least to South Africa itself where the ANC government is to be found working hand-in-glove with various business interests the better to wedge their way into the post-Mobutu realignment in the Congo's external linkages. Of course, Collins notes other regional dimensions to the Congo drama, not least its implications for the fate of Angola: there changes in the

Congo may at least have served the positive purpose of helping further to weaken UNITA. As for the long-suffering people of the Congo themselves, Collins finds far too many of the patterns and practices - the arrogance of power, the creeping authoritarianism, the corruption - familiar from the bad old Mobutu days reasserting themselves. Bad old Mobutu days? The final irony, noted at the close of her article, is the presence of some denizens from that evil time - Mobutuist generals and other hangers-on - still hovering menacingly in the wings. Whereabouts? In South Africa, of all places. One region, many fronts, indeed.

In fact, it may be that we need a new kind of score-card to keep track of developments in the new, post-apartheid region of southern Africa. Writing in a hopeful vein last year, so progressive an American publication as *The Nation* could find considerable virtue in the increased activism on the continent of Mbeki and Uganda's Yoweri Museveni. Suggesting that these two, in particular, "have proven that you no longer need to be Uncle Sam's proxy to get his dollars if you

have influence on the continent and if your policies follow the market," the magazine concludes that such developments "signal the dawn of a new era - let's call it post-neocolonialism - in which Africa governs itself"!

Our turn to say, "Just a minute." Is it too prosaic of us, too relentlessly old-fashioned, to ask for a definition of "neo-colonialism"? Yes, it's true: Mbeki, Museveni and their ilk are playing power politics with some confidence and considerable style. The present issue of *SAR* is, in part, a testimony to that fact. And yet, as *The Nation* concedes, both Mbeki and Museveni can step out so boldly onto the continental stage in large part because of their startlingly uncritical acceptance of highly suspect, made-in-Washington, neo-liberal policies and practices. An "African Renaissance" (to invoke the phrase used recently by both Bill Clinton and Thabo Mbeki)? If it looks like neo-colonialism, and it walks like neo-colonialism, and it smells like neo-colonialism, just how much of a Renaissance can it possibly be?



Southern Africa: A New Congo in a New Region?

BY CAROLE J. L. COLLINS

Carole J. L. Collins, a journalist and former southern African representative of the American Friends Service Committee, has written extensively on Mobutu and his ill-gotten wealth. She last visited eastern Zaire as a consultant for the US-based Unitarian Universalist Service Committee in September 1996.

Rapid changes

The Democratic Republic of the Congo – the resource-rich central African nation of 45 million impoverished people once known as Zaire – is finally back. Last May the DRC reverted to the name stolen from it 26 years ago by Mobutu Sese Seko, the same thief who, with US and other western powers' acquiescence if not connivance, also stole his people's wealth.

Laurent Désiré Kabila – a once-obscure follower of Congolese populist Patrice Lumumba – declared himself the Congo's new President May 30, 1997. Kabila emerged to head the rebel Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL) which, with Rwandan and Angolan military backing, toppled Mobutu. Mobutu's death in Morocco last September seemed to punctuate the end of a painful era.

But things are not always what they seem in central Africa. And the DRC displays an astounding capacity to re-integrate elements of its past in the present. Discredited Mobutists are now being rehabilitated. Sakombi, Mobutu's one-time spin-meister, who helped craft Mobutu's cult of personality, is the new regime's Information Minister. At the same time, former Mobutu opponents are again heading for jail (most prominently Eti-

enne Tshisekedi, head of the Union for Democratic and Social Progress, who was sent into internal exile, a favoured Mobutist and Belgian colonial practice, on Valentine's Day).

Ten months after Mobutu's precipitous flight from Kinshasa, one can understand the many contra-



Laurent Kabila with Nelson Mandela in Pretoria in August 1997

dictory pressures exerted by varied actors on and within Kabila's new, relatively inexperienced cabinet and government. Lacking – and, as is apparent from recent events, making no effort to build – a broad-based consensus on key policies, Kabila's ADFL government has pursued increasingly erratic, even contradictory, policies. In January, e.g., it suddenly cancelled foreign investment contracts barely months after they were signed, and suspended a national reconstruction confer-

ence after several regional preparatory conferences made demands for greater democracy and respect for human rights. Such moves have left Congolese civil society and international investors and donors confused by the mixed signals.

Recent acts, however, seem to mark a decided turn towards authoritarian rule, acts which risk squandering the popular good will the ADFL earned by toppling Mobutu. These moves reflect an apparent effort to consolidate power around a relatively narrow regional and political base.

Such actions have included:

- increasing arrests of any perceived political opponents who reject the ADFL ban on party political activities, publicize human rights abuses or back peace negotiations with the armed Mai Mai rebel groups in eastern Congo;
- stacking the Constitutional Commission with adherents to Kabila's small Lumumbist tendency (excluding other longtime but peaceful opponents of Mobutu);
- politically rehabilitating a few notorious Mobutists who now owe whatever legitimacy they have to being favoured by Kabila;
- appointing to key Cabinet and security positions disproportionate numbers of people either from Kabila's home province of Shaba or who, after long years in exile, depend on Kabila for their legitimacy; and
- waging a harsh military campaign against armed rebels in eastern Zaire with high civilian casualties.

Such moves are increasing the prospects for a more unstable Congo and raising concern among neighbouring countries already awash with refugee flows and 'soldiers

Adil Bradlow – PictureNET Africa

sans frontiers' which have, in turn, heightened economic difficulties and aggravated domestic conflicts.

The southern Africa role

Most attention has focused on the key Rwandan decision in October 1996 (in collaboration with Uganda and Burundi) to help create and militarily assist the ADFL. Kabila rapidly manoeuvred to become the head of the ADFL. He received early support from Rwandan Vice-President Paul Kagame and the other 'soldier-statesmen' (Museveni, Buyoya, Afwerki and Zenawi) oft touted by American policy makers as the basis for a new African 'renaissance'. A year later, many of these same leaders now have serious reservations about Kabila's consistent efforts to marginalize, even repress, those anti-Mobutu forces (opposition political parties, human

rights and development NGOs) that had refused to oppose Mobutu by force of arms.

Several southern African governments – notably Angola, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia – moved early on to aid Kabila, covertly or overtly, as his forces advanced across the vast Zairian expanse to Kinshasa in the first half of 1997. For them, the uprising provided a gratifying opportunity to pay back Mobutu and his supporters for their years of complicity with white minority rule in South Africa and sustained support for UNITA forces in Angola. Various southern African governments provided troops, military supplies, transport and political support at key moments to facilitate Kabila's military advance – or, perhaps more precisely, accelerate Mobutu's collapse.

The South African stake

For South Africa and many other southern African nations, an ADFL victory could provide an opportunity to accelerate their access to the Congo's vast mineral and hydroelectric resources – without having to pay the exorbitant bribes necessary during Mobutu's reign. South Africa felt it had a good chance to expand its economic interests at the expense of European or North American competitors, if it could help craft a 'soft landing' for Mobutu's exit that would avoid a destructive battle for the Congo's capital city Kinshasa. Hence Mandela's and Mbeki's extensive diplomatic involvement in the spring of 1997. South African diplomacy reportedly helped persuade Mobutist forces to hold off pillaging Kinshasa



Eric Miller – Impact Visuals

Kasese refugee camp near Kisangani, 20 April 97, a day before it was sealed by the rebels and 60,000 disappeared



Eric Miller — Impact Visuals

Kisangani airport, April 97 — people being repatriated to their home in Bukavu

in hopes they could still negotiate a political future for themselves before the city fell. Kabila was sometimes bitterly critical of these efforts, fearing that international pressure might halt his advance and lead to a partition of the Congo. Meanwhile, RSA companies began competing with US, Canadian and European corporations (e.g. American Mineral Fields) to sign business agreements with Kabila even before his cash-strapped ADFL seized Kinshasa.

Last April, DeBeers, the RSA-based diamond giant, seemed on the skids in the new Congo. Accused by Kabila of “irregular business practices” (specifically payoffs to Mobutu which helped finance the latter’s survival) and trying to mo-

nopolize DRC diamond production, DeBeers lost its exclusive contract to buy the total production of MIBA, the diamond parastatal. But by August, DeBeers seemed to have made up lost ground, emerging once again as the major buyer of DRC diamonds. A February report in the Wall Street Journal said DeBeers now hopes to negotiate an exclusive joint exploration deal with Kabila’s government for prospecting rights to as many as 240,000 square km in known diamond areas. DeBeers and Anglo-American are jointly funding a feasibility study for electrification of the two Kasai provinces, where most of the DRC’s diamond wealth lies.

Early on, Kabila moved to nationalize the Belgo-South African

joint venture Sizarail and even jailed its Belgian head, Patrick Claes. [After months of Belgian pressure, Claes was released in February.] But in December, the South African government sent a delegation to the World Bank-convened “Amis du Congo” meeting in Brussels as a sign to the donor community of its support for the DRC. South Africa’s corporate sector also showed up in Brussels, including Billiton’s Gavin Turner, Standard Chartered Bank’s Brian Scanlan, and the Sandton-based manager for Overseas Bechtel Inc., Peter Heap. A South African bank consortium is exploring a \$40 million investment in the DRC’s electricity parastatal, and South Africa will help rehabilitate the Kinshasa-Matadi 380 km road.

Angola's opportunity

For Angola, the Kabila-lead uprising offered an unprecedented opportunity to deny both Jonas Savimbi's UNITA and the FLEC Cabinda-based rebel forces their vital rear bases once and for all. The Angolan army collaborated with ADFL units to retake UNITA-held diamond-rich territory near the Zaire border, long essential to financing UNITA operations. It also helped transport Gendarmes Katangists, living in exile in Angola from which they launched two armed challenges to Mobutu's rule, in 1977 and 1978. They proved crucial in helping expedite Mobutu's military collapse.

Angola then moved to project Angolan power into the brewing Congo-Brazzaville civil war, cutting rear base support that UNITA-backed FLEC rebels had come to rely on. Starting last October, Angolan troops and MIG fighters played a decisive role in defeating troops loyal to the democratically elected president Pascal Lissouba and helped install Lissouba's old rival (and long-time MPLA ally) Denis Sassou-Nguesso. (This hasn't resolved Congo-B's power struggles however; Brazzaville has recently been re-divided between armed forces allied to Lissouba and Sassou-Nguesso.)

Angolan president Eduardo Dos Santos may be the most direct beneficiary of Kabila's military success and may be helping ensure Kabila's current security as well. Reportedly at Kabila's request, Dos Santos has stationed Angolan troops in Kinshasa since December, ostensibly to enable them to be deployed to Brazzaville if needed. Many Congolese believe, however, that they are there to reassure Kabila, who faces significant disaffection among the DRC's armed forces and commands the loyalty of no troops of his own.

In October, Dos Santos publicly called for an increase in multi-lateral cooperation within the framework of the Economic Community of Central

African States (CEEAC). CEEAC could help link southern, eastern and western Africa in an eventual common market in Africa, he told his counterparts from Gabon, the DRC and the Congo Republic. He went on to argue for a collective security system.

Zimbabwe and Zambia, too, opted to support Kabila's forces. According to the Zimbabwe Independent, Zimbabwe provided up to \$200 million in arms and ammunition, as well as uniforms, boots and dry food rations. The newspaper reports most of it was transported to Lubumbashi where several Zimbabwe military intelligence officers were deployed to help plan the ADFL advance to Kinshasa. Zambia allowed ADFL troops to cross its territory during their westward advance. It has since signed a defense protocol with the DRC.

For Zimbabwe, a Kabila victory opened up the prospect of new trade markets in the Congo. Zimbabwe Defense Industries estimates it has signed deals worth over US\$106 million with the DRC (goods already supplied include various types of arms, boots and uniforms, mealie-meal, kapenta fish and tinned foods). Their relationship is not running smoothly, however. It has experienced payment problems and is not cooperating with Native Investments, which recently received a \$23 million government-secured credit window financed by six banks, so that Zimbabwean companies can supply products to the DRC with some assurance of payment. Last October, Zimbabwe Industry and Commerce Minister Nathan Shamuyarira spoke of the possibility of a new development corridor to the DRC via Zambia. The strengthened transport and communications links could help mobilize new resources and generate economic growth and development. (During the same month, Zimbabwe and the DRC signed a bilateral trade agreement last October; several Zimbabwean companies have also announced in-

vestment deals worth more than US\$30.4 million.)

An expanded SADC

During the Cold War, the US tried without success to pressure SADC to admit Zaire as a member, citing as justification its many rail and road links to the southern Africa region. Because of his close ties to white South Africa and UNITA, however, Mobutu had few allies among the region's governments. But given its stupendous mineral wealth and abundant hydroelectric potential, the region's governments and business interests have always maintained a potential interest in the Congo.

Kabila's coming to power dramatically changed the situation. In September, a SADC summit in Malawi approved the DRC's request for membership. South Africa actively solicited the DRC's admission as the 13th member of SADC (slated to become a regional common market by 2005), in expectations it would facilitate greater South African participation in the DRC's reconstruction. It also provided a team to help the DRC "establish viable monetary and fiscal authorities." Other SADC members have a particular interest in Zaire's abundant water and potentially massive hydro-electric capacity (the Economist Intelligence Unit recently noted the Inga dam's potential output is more than the current installed capacity of all SADC countries). Namibia reportedly wants to build a pipeline from the Congo River to its water-starved central region. What remains unclear is whether the DRC's new SADC ties will compete with or complement the emerging collaboration among countries forming a central-eastern African political bloc (comprising Uganda, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi), but one with economic aspirations.

Continuing storm clouds

The DRC's development prospects



Wim van Cappellen - Impact Visuals

Kinshasa

have been dimmed by continuing international controversy over Kabila's intermittent obstruction of a UN Commission of Inquiry investigating alleged massacres of Rwandan refugees during Kabila's military advance. Kabila's renewed harassment of human rights groups - the beating of Floribert Chibeya, a leader of Voix des Sans Voix, in late March and the April 3 banning of the human rights group, AZADHO - has also drawn international criticism. Growing unhappiness with such moves has sparked calls to suspend foreign aid by the US and European donors.

Many of Kabila's African allies reject linking aid to the new Congo to the UN human rights inquiry. Notwithstanding reservations about Kabila, leaders from Uganda's Museveni to South Africa's Mandela have sharply reminded western donors that they never tried to use the same approach to curb Mobutu's human rights abuses. African leaders argue western interests should

allow Kabila a reasonable amount of time to reorganize the government, rather than hold the development needs of the Congolese people hostage to Western-defined human rights concerns.

While South Africa's government has been one of Kabila's biggest political allies, it has seemingly failed to disrupt a regrouping of Mobutist forces, some of whom are based in South Africa. In de facto alliance with elements from UNITA, they include the former Hutu-dominated Rwandan government (ex-FAR and Interahamwe). On 13 December, three former Mobutu generals (Baramoto Kpama, Nzimbi Nzale and Mavua Mudima) were briefly detained in South Africa after returning from Kahemba, an area still controlled by UNITA forces and awash with ex-FAZ and Hutu militiamen. Their arrest may have pre-empted a coup attempt.

South African police attempting to deport the three (as Kabila has

sought since last summer) recently informed a South African court that Baramoto had been negotiating with the South African mercenary outfit Stabilco, run by former Executive Outcomes operative Maurice le Roux, for "a small army." Both Africa Confidential and Belgian journalist Colette Braeckman (in *Le Soir*, 6 Feb. 98) report efforts by former Mobutu troops in the Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Togo, Chad, Angola, Libya and inside the DRC itself, to link up with these generals and/or a Mobutist group - Rassemblement des Congolais pour la Democratie (RCD) - formed in Europe to oppose the ADFL government. And so, however much of an opportunity for trade and investment the new Congo may seem to represent for South Africans and others, the country's travails - and those of its long-suffering people - could be far from over.

ESAP

Clinton in South Africa

Another Scramble for Africa

BY HEIN MARAIS

For 12 days in March and with a caravan of thousands in tow, US President Bill Clinton hopped, skipped and jumped across the African continent, leaving in his wake enough flattery, contrition and promises to wilt the hardest sceptic, it seemed. Is this just the ghost of Cecil John Rhodes in the era of jet travel and footloose capital or is there more afoot?

Hein Marais' new book, South Africa: limits to change - the political economy of transition, has just been published by Zed Books.

Renaissance

From Accra to Cape Town, Clinton talked up the African "renaissance," marvelled at Africans' fortitude and proposed a "dynamic partnership" which could propel the continent into the new millennium, into what he called "Africa's century."

He kicked off his sojourn in remorseful mode, offering one of the largest crowds ever to gather in the Ghanaian capital, Accra, something akin to an apology for the slave trade. With that out of the way, he turned to the rhetorical cornerstone of his trip: the US's desire to be part of what he called "the beginning of a new African renaissance."

"A decade ago, business was stifled," he said. "Now Africans are embracing economic reform. Today from Ghana to Mozambique, from Côte d'Ivoire to Uganda, growing economies are fuelling a transformation in Africa."

In Uganda he spoke of the need to unfetter Africa's huge potential, and struck a deal with eight nations (Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, D. R. Congo, Rwanda, Zimbabwe and Tanzania), ostensibly to help develop and integrate them deeper into the global economy. In Senegal, he promised to ask the US Congress

for US\$1.6 billion in debt relief for African countries.

During a jittery stopover in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, Clinton waxed repentantly as he recalled the US's studied inaction while hundreds of thousands Tutsis were slaughtered by Hutu extremists in 1994. "All over the world," he said, "there were people like me sitting in offices, day after day, who did not fully appreciate the depth and the speed with which you were being engulfed by this unimaginable terror."



Bob McNeely - US WhiteHouse

Well, not quite, as Mark Gevisser has pointed out in *The Nation*. In fact, Clinton chose to sit on his hands, pointedly ignoring a CIA report that had forecast the genocide, "because it wasn't in his political interest to act."

Crisis response

But with haughty flourish, Clinton used the Rwandan genocide to boost approval for a US-supported African Crisis Response Initiative. Most of his hosts gave the proposal an in-principle thumbs-up, although Nelson Mandela lectured Clinton that

he would not allow South African troops to serve under US commanders. Other African leaders seem to harbour no such scruples; US Special Forces teams are already training Senegalese troops as a prelude for such a security "partnership."

Elsewhere, he appreciatively noted the emergence "everywhere (of) a growing respect for tolerance, diversity and elemental human rights," and again proffered Washington's helping hand in safeguarding such achievements.

Again, his cocksure rhetoric was hardly matched by a respect for facts. In Uganda, one of the US's closest African allies, Yoweri Museveni continues to resist introducing a multiparty democracy. These things take time, US special envoy to Africa, Jesse Jackson, told one inquiring journalist. As for Nigeria, Angola and Gabon - hardly avatars of democracy and human rights but a trio that just happens to rank among the US's four largest trading partners on the continent - Clinton's travel agents deftly avoided stopovers there.

It wasn't until the US President touched down in South Africa that the rhythm of obsequious receptions he had savoured elsewhere was upset. While politicians waited in Cape Town to hear the first US head of state address the South African parliament, protesters called on him to lift the US embargo against Cuba and urged him to add his signature to a world-wide ban on the use of land mines, while Muslim groups condemned Washington's policy towards Iraq and its indulgence of Israeli intransigence.

But inside Parliament sat people with their own, subtler misgivings - among them President Nelson Mandela and his deputy, Thabo Mbeki.

In an interview broadcast by Radio France International on the day Clinton began his visit to the "South African miracle," Mbeki chided one of the main themes of Clinton's African tour: a shift away from development aid and towards forging new trade and investment links with African countries that toed Washington's line on political and economic reforms.

"We have been speaking out against the reduction of aid to the African continent," Mbeki declaimed. "It is wrong, it doesn't help ... What all of us want to see achieved is sustained and sustainable development on the African continent. I don't think you can exclude aid if that is the objective."

At Mbeki's urging, the South African government initially refused to endorse the US-Africa Growth and Opportunity Bill, saying closer economic ties should not be made conditional on prescribed political and economic reforms. He also complained that it would benefit American businesses more than African people.

Marketing the bill

If there was a definitive sub-text to Clinton's foray, it was his bid to market that Bill which is currently before Congress. It aims to establish a US-African Economic Forum (modeled on the Asia-Pacific Economic Forum), which is seen as a precursor to an eventual free trade pact the US hopes would embrace key states in sub-Saharan Africa. Washington hopes to have that pact in place by the year 2020.

The bill also promises African nations that introduce IMF-type economic adjustments greater access to US markets through reductions in tariffs and import quotas. To sweeten its appeal, the US is mooting debt relief to countries that introduce the required reforms, loan guarantees to spur investment by US firms and improved technical support to boost African countries' abilities to take advantage of the "new market opportunities."

Whether or not African countries qualified for support would be determined by Washington's satisfaction with their political systems, human rights performances and economic adjustments. Sound familiar? Indeed. According to Rob Davies, chair of South Africa's parliamentary portfolio committee on trade and industry, the Bill sports very few reciprocal features: "It is a rather one-way determination and it is just straight, direct conditionalities." Beneath the tinsel he detects "the usual, uneven process of liberalization."

Yet SA has been a lone dissenting voice, despite the highly qualified support it has now offered to the initiative. Other African countries have scoffed at SA's qualms - in late March, Museveni saw fit to lash out at the government for recoiling from this "golden opportunity."

At face value, SA's ambivalence seems puzzling. The country ranks among only a handful in Africa that currently can meet the conditions attached to the US Bill. Moreover, its economic strategy hinges on attracting massive capital inflows and boosting its manufacturing exports, precisely the carrots dangled by Washington.

But the SA government's thinking appears to be more canny than most observers realize. Informing it is a more sophisticated understanding of the global economic context and of the manoeuvring space the country might be able to elbow open.

Coveted prize?

Acolytes of the "African renaissance" draw heavily on recent statistics that, in broad strokes, conjure a picture of sturdy continental revival. The International Finance Corporation (the private investment arm of the World Bank) noted last year that, continentally, "GDP may have increased by more than 5% in 1996, the best in more than 10 years," and that, "more interestingly, growth has been more

widespread, exceeding 3% in nearly 30 countries and 5% in 20."

All this encourages the notion that the continent has again become a coveted prize for the dominant economic powers, and that a new "rush for Africa" is at hand. If Washington is to be believed, a new Eldorado is there for the taking.

According to the US Commerce Department, the average annual return of investment in Africa is 30%, compared to 12% in Latin America, 13% in Asia and 17% in the Middle East. "I hope they are listening back in America," Clinton told a business audience in South Africa in March, adding: "This is a good deal folks."

The Coca-Cola corporation seems to agree. It has embarked on a five-year US\$600 million spending program in Africa. "We believe we can obtain sustained double-digit growth in Africa for many, many years to come," predicts its senior vice-president Carl Ware. The firm is showing the way in South Africa, too, where it intends investing US\$100 million over the next 5-7 years. Meanwhile, US exports of telecommunications equipment to Africa have grown by more than 60%, largely thanks to the upgrading of privatized telecommunications networks.

But before you break out the champagne, consider the following. Although increasing in absolute terms, Africa's share of global foreign direct investment (FDI) in 1996 reached its lowest ebb since the early 1980s. According to a 1997 World Investment report by Unctad, "on average, Africa's share of developing country inflows has more than halved, from 11% during 1986-1990 to 5% during 1991-1996," dropping to 3.8% in 1996. Unctad's conclusion is sobering: "Africa has not participated in the surge of FDI flows to developing countries."

In sub-Saharan Africa, Nigeria attracted 44% of the FDI inflows - the other 46 countries together

garnered a mere 0.6% of global FDI flows. In fact, Malaysia and Poland respectively attracted more FDI in 1996 than sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. The latter's share of global trade, meanwhile, has dropped from 3% in the 1950s to around 1% in 1995. Its share of global manufacturing amounted to only 0.3% in 1995. In short, measured against global trends, there is little evidence that sub-Saharan Africa stands on the threshold of a revival that could eventually rival that of the South-East and East Asian regions.

Neither do current US relations with the continent alone explain Clinton's rhapsodic courtship. The continent barely features in the economic vista of the US: exports to Africa amount to only 0.9% of total US exports, while imports make up 2% of the country's total.

Predatory?

Like Clinton, Thabo Mbeki himself ceaselessly talks up the "African renaissance," but it's highly unlikely that he is ignorant of these trends. Priming the misgivings he shared with Clinton is a concern that the role being carved out for the US in Africa might be mainly "predatory." Galvanizing it is the desire to preempt EU efforts to append attractive African economies to its own regional bloc.

A new, secret South African intelligence report concurs with this view. The US, it argues, is engaged in a struggle for economic hegemony on the continent. At stake, its authors claim, are Africa's huge energy reserves and massive, dormant markets. A strong alliance of US government, industry and intelligence services is propelling the economic engagement, the report claims.

What the report misses (but other South African analysts are alert to) is that this hegemonic struggle between the US and EU needs to be couched within the frame of a distinct reading of

globalization. Underway is not an unequivocal trend towards a single integrated world economy but rather the emergence of a more regionally segmented world system – which requires the "incorporation" of weaker regional blocs in the developing world into contending economic cores in the industrialized world.

The overtures to Africa therefore need to be seen, says South African researcher Dot Keet, as a part of the "neo-mercantilist rivalries" between economic powers that are "striving to pre-empt the other by carving out ... de facto global spheres of pre-eminent influence." Within that process, those powers are engaged in contests to acquire dominion over or privileged access to foreign markets, natural resources and the absorption of new technologies.

Spurring the US, too, has been its failure to extend the North American Free Trade Agreement further southwards into Latin America. That objective has, perhaps temporarily, been forestalled by the creation of the powerful Common Market of the Southern Cone (Mercosur), which has concentrated on building intra-regional trade and investment relations.

Clinton's agenda . . . and Mbeki's

"With the demise of the super-NAFTA project, Clinton has to look for an alternative," argues one South African analyst. "Africa is the only alternative one. Poor and undeveloped Africa may be now, but it is a continent with immense potential." Or, as Clinton's put it in Cape Town: "As Africa grows strong, America grows stronger."

This tempts the view that the US sees SA as an important economic and political launchpad for its African forays. Clinton made a point of encouraging such aggrandizement when he told politicians in Cape Town: "We seek to be your new partners in the work that lies ahead. I came here to say simply this: Let us work with each other.

We, like you, need strong partners to build prosperity."

But in the short-term, South Africa's importance to the US venture probably hinges less on its role as an economic staging post for US penetration than on its political/diplomatic authority on the continent. (Similar motives underpin Washington's dalliance with Museveni, but there they're augmented by broader, geopolitical ones that see Uganda as a regional bulwark against Islamic influence from the north and as the lever for rupturing French dominance in the Great Lakes region.)

Underway, in other words, is not so much a scramble for Africa as a jostle between the US and the EU to get their feet in Africa's door. And at the hub of Mbeki and Mandela's cocksure chats with Clinton lay the hope that it's in the midst of that skirmish that SA could carve out some bargaining space for itself.

* * *

High diplomacy, the "New South Africa" style? According to such a reading, increased US economic links with South Africa would serve mainly as incentives to cement the requisite political and diplomatic relationships. Although Mbeki and key government advisers are somewhat irresolute at the moment, there are signs they believe the current conjuncture could offer South Africa greater bargaining leverage *vis-à-vis* both the US (with respect to the interventions like the US-Africa Growth and Opportunity Bill and even in relation to some of the injunctions of Bretton Woods institutions) and the European Union. After all, SA remains embroiled in laborious dickerings with the EU around a free trade deal, which is being held up by disagreements over conflicting concessions sought by Pretoria and Brussels. Using the US outreach as a catspaw, SA may hope to make gains on that front too.

SAII

Botswana

What Clinton Didn't See

BY LARRY A. SWATUK

Larry Swatuk is a lecturer in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies at the University of Botswana.

"In coming to Africa my motive in part was to help the American people see the new Africa with new eyes, and to focus our own efforts on new policies suited to the new reality."

US President Clinton, Address to the Great Hall of Parliament, Cape Town, South Africa, 26 March 1998

"We have seen the promise of a new Africa," Bill Clinton told about 5,000 guests at the state house in Gaborone in March 1998. "Its roots are here deep in your soil for you have been an inspiration to all who cherish freedom." Addressing President Masire directly, Clinton continued, "You sparked the engine of an economic miracle ... I am deeply honoured to be among those to be here as you leave your distinguished tenure."

In the wake of Masire's decision to voluntarily step down after 18 years as President, constant reference was made throughout Clinton's tour to "Botswana's commitment to democracy and Masire's voluntary and peaceful handover of power to [Festus] Mogae." Sure enough, the US is happy to support liberal democracy in the region, but for America, the "promise of a new Africa" lies pretty clearly in globalized trade, the focus of its policy in Southern Africa. Botswana with its neo-liberal economy will fit in quite nicely.

Unlike President Mandela, Masire heartily embraced US legislation ostensibly designed to promote

trade and investment in Africa. The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) is presently with the US Senate, having passed the House of Representatives in Congress. According to Greg Mills, Director of the South African Institute of International Affairs, AGOA sets in motion the formation of a US-Africa Economic Forum, pursuit of a free-trade zone by 2020 with qualifying African states, expansion of the General System of Preferences, support for debt relief and loan guarantees to assist African investment. Mandela's worry is that in order to qualify for free access to the US market, African countries will be forced to pursue free market reforms and

also meet certain democratic conditions – actions that may compromise African decision-making autonomy and subject small, "emerging markets" to international forces with whom local producers are unable to compete. Moreover, in the absence of debt relief, economic and political liberalisation are likely to bring havoc rather than stability.

In the words of Mahmood Mamdani, "before getting swept up in the euphoria surrounding Bill Clinton's visit, it would be wise to keep in mind the bottom line defining it: the United States president is visiting Africa in pursuit of American interests." And it is in America's interest that



Bob McNeely – US WhiteHouse

a particular variant of liberalism proceed apace. Botswana, as a disciple of this liberalism, is being rewarded with global attention – the Clinton visit as “free” advertising. But what remains is Botswana’s reality, most of which Clinton didn’t see. And for good reason, since recent developments in Botswana’s political economy call into question the value of economic liberalism as practiced in the heart of Southern Africa. Here’s some of what Clinton should have seen.

Changing of the guard

Behind the peaceful transfer of power there is real turbulence. The BDP is riven with factionalism, the party split into two groups, one behind the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mompoti Merafhe, the other behind BDP Secretary General, Daniel Kwelagobe. This factionalism stems in part from a parliamentary motion supporting a public register of all assets and business interests held by the “President, Vice-President, Ministers . . . and Members of Parliament.” Merafhe, as part of a “younger” breed of politicians who did not benefit as the older generation did from the building of the Botswana state and modern economy, led the faction supporting the motion. Kwelagobe, as part of the “old guard” led the faction opposed to the motion.

This factional in-fighting extends to projected BDP strategy for contesting elections slated for 1999. The BDP faces for the first time the very real prospect of losing power. The BNF, which took 13 seats (up from 3) in the 1994 elections, in many ways represents not so much a sound alternative to the BDP, but a focus for myriad and growing grievances by young unemployed and under-employed people living in and around cities. Many observers feel that Masire got out while the going was still good.

Jobless growth

Botswana’s economic growth, particularly in the last decade, has been largely jobless, fuelled by expansion

in the highly mechanised mining sector. Meanwhile, the beef industry has cut back and construction has only grown through government spending. Government has actively pursued vehicle-assembly and EPZ-type industry, with a new Hyundai plant in Gaborone touted as the wave of the future. The truth is, however, that the Botswana government’s vision for the future, outlined in the Presidential Task Group publication, Vision 2016, is “more of the same”: diamonds and beef with a sop to small business and the hope that tourism will pick up the slack. Unfortunately, this vision is short-sighted and does not begin to address Botswana’s emerging problems.

The outcome is that growing unemployment, particularly among educated school-leavers, is a serious problem in Botswana, official estimates being roughly 30 per cent. However, much of so-called “employment” in Botswana is labelled “agriculture,” a catch-all category that helps to mask true unemployment figures. Over the last thirty years, Botswana’s economy has shifted from overwhelmingly agricultural to mixed. Industry and services now account for more than half of formal employment in the country. This shift signals a deepening of the capitalist economy, with linkages in various sectors, particularly the beef and diamond industries. As a result, labour is increasingly concentrated in urban or peri-urban settings. Notwithstanding regulations making it difficult or impossible to strike or even assemble in demonstration, workers are increasingly emboldened to state their grievances against government and other employers.

Violence, thought to be anathema to the Botswana “culture,” has flared. Riots in Mochudi during February 1996 quickly spread to Gaborone. State response was anything but enlightened: beatings, arbitrary detentions, tear-gassings, closing the University campus, and

one death, heightening peoples’ frustration with a government increasingly seen as authoritarian and irredeemable.

Resource-use conflicts

Complementing these urban problems are heightening conflicts in the countryside. While Gaborone remains the fastest urbanising city in Africa, growing 10% annually, the country’s wealth continues to be generated far from this urban centre. Tourism now generates significantly more revenue than the cattle industry, though ranching continues as an important component of GDP, and a defining element of Botswana culture. At the same time, minerals remain the main “engine of growth,” with diamond mining contributing more than 90% of Botswana’s foreign exchange earnings.

Recently, these three activities – tourism, cattle and mining – have led to conflicts over resource use particularly in the Delta and the Central Kalahari. How they are being “resolved” says much about the continuing narrow-mindedness of Botswana’s leadership in supporting cattle owners and big capital.

In 1996, the government slaughtered 300,000 cattle to halt the rapid spread of cattle lung disease in Ngamiland. The disease was blamed on “an anonymous Herero herdsman,” alleged to have crossed illegally into Botswana from Namibia in 1995. Blaming a foreigner was a convenient tool, enabling the almost immediate construction of a 140 km-long fence from the eastern part of the Okavango Delta north to the Namibian border. The fence was started in 1991 but stopped in response to local opposition and countless wildlife deaths.

On both sides of the border, such fencing is opposed by all those not benefiting from cattle ranching. Yet, despite a 1992 government study attesting to the devastating effects of fencing on the region’s wildlife, fences like the Caprivi and the 175 km Setata continue to go up.

In the Central Kalahari, fences also affect the San, many of whom are supposedly still dependant on wildlife. Yet much of the Central Kalahari is being rezoned to support expanded ranching and mineral exploration. In response to a question on this development, President Mogae, then VP, is said to have remarked, "How can you have a stone-age creature continue to exist in the age of computers?"

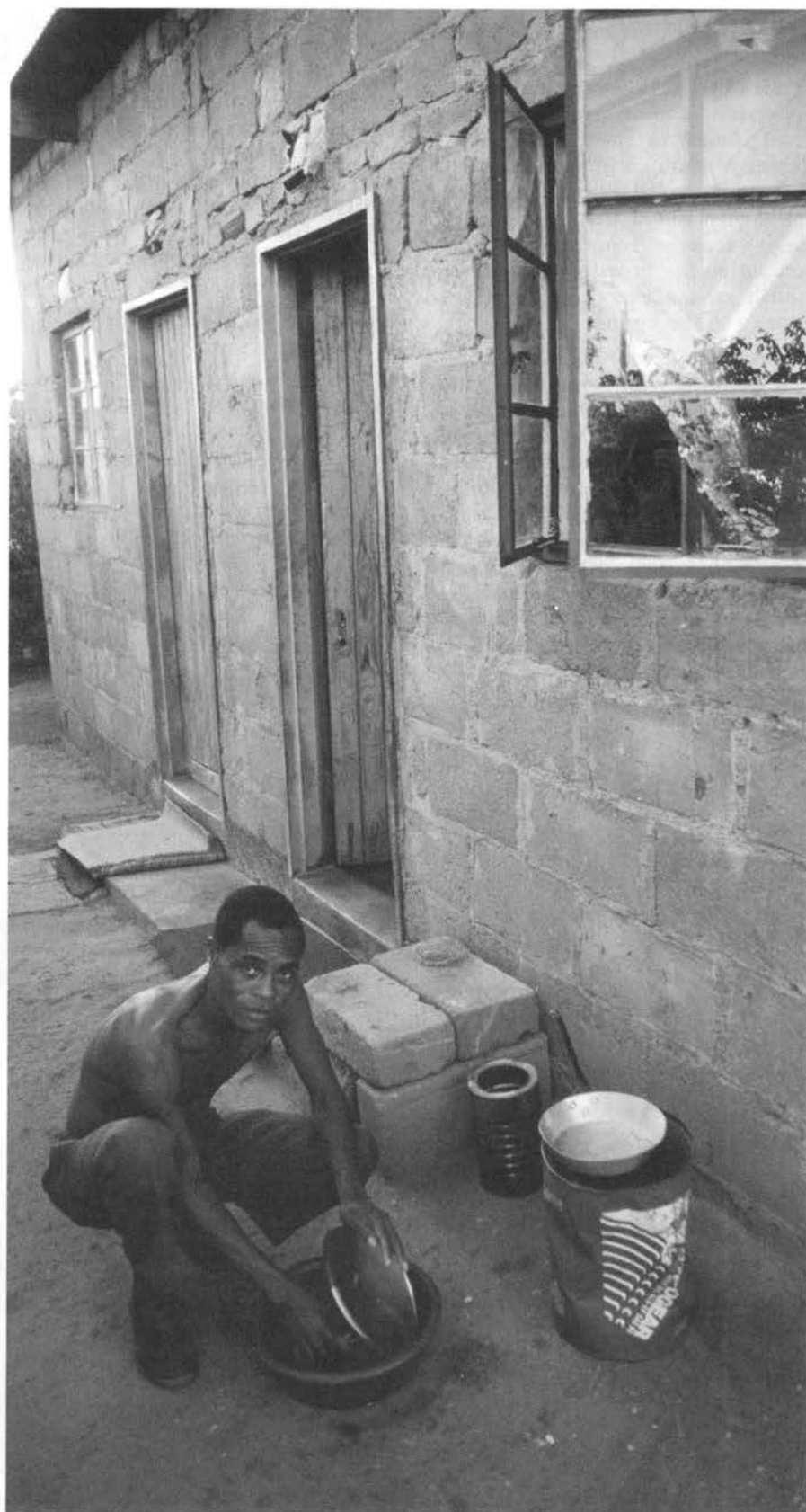
San are also being relocated from within the Central Kalahari game reserve to make way for new tourism operations and for prospecting by De Beers and Anglo. About 3,000 San are being moved to a bleak settlement called New Xade some 45 km beyond the reserve's western border.

These developments illustrate the continuing intersection of interests between large cattle ranchers, mining capital and the state in Botswana. More significantly, they suggest that this paragon of "democracy" often shows tendencies toward a short-sighted authoritarianism more reminiscent of apartheid engineering than openness, accountability and respect for human rights.

Manufacturing unity

Perhaps in response to domestic difficulties, the Government has resorted to manufacturing unity by turning Namibia into a threat to "national security." Parading an environmental concern, Botswana is militarizing on a large scale.

One focus is Namibia's plans to construct a 250 km pipeline to bring water from the Okavango to Windhoek, the increasingly water-stressed capital, possibly threatening Botswana's own supply in the process. Interestingly, Botswana's government this time finds itself the "good guy" for a change, and is actually working closely with several local and international NGOs to confront the Namibian government. Yet, whatever the merits of the case, the way the issue is being framed in Botswana serves to divert public at-



Don Boroughs - PictureNET Africa

tention from pressing issues closer to home.

Meanwhile, Botswana and Namibia dispute the ownership of three small islands in the Chobe River. Recently, members of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) have occupied one smaller island, the Situngu. According to recent reports, the BDF's occupation fits in with plans to establish camps every 10 km from Situngu to the border.

Yet there is very little likelihood of a shooting war developing. Indeed, Botswana and Namibia have met yearly since Namibia's independence in a Joint Commission on Defence and Security. Judging from the communique issued from that meeting, the two sides are more interested in jointly combatting drug trafficking, poaching, vehicle theft, illegal migration and other forms of cross-border crime than they are in confronting each other.

The worrying item is that the increased military presence in the north west of the country dovetails with Botswana's determined military build-up, an activity that has raised much concern in the SADC region.

Defence expenditure increased from 4% of GDP to roughly 7% in 1997. According to recently released figures in the 1998 budget speech, spending is due to increase further still. Despite conflicting reports, it seems that in the last two years Botswana has placed orders for fighter jets, military battle tanks, trucks, portable weaponry, light tanks, primary and secondary radar systems at Gaborone and Maun airports, and several patrol boats. All told, the purchases cost several hundred million dollars and will require millions more in upkeep and training for qualified pilots.

Namibia would seem not to want to join in. Its Foreign Minister, Theo-Ben Gurirab, says simply, "We've gone through war and destruction. The last thing we should be spending money

on is military equipment." But Botswana's then-commander of the BDF, Maj-Gen. Ian Khama, now Vice-President and Minister of Presidential Affairs, has taken a totally different tack: Botswana, he says, acquired "no army, no infrastructure, nothing" at independence. "Now, 18 years on ... we are developing to provide a force that will not see our security com-

promised." Regional observers wonder where the threat to Botswana's security will emerge. However, Botswana openly acknowledge fears that the regional peace will one day turn sour, including fear of a deluge of illegal immigration from the north - Zimbabwe, Zambia and particularly Congo-Kinshasa.

It's possible that the military build-up coincides with Botswana policy-makers' desire to play a strong role in SADC and wider-African regional peacekeeping, which may account for Botswana's goal to increase the armed forces from 7,000 troops to approximately 10,000 before 2000. Legitimate questions remain, however. Is the acquisition of military force the only way to ensure peace in the region? Should a state with approximately 40% of its population living in absolute poverty be spending hundreds of millions of dollars on weapons?

1999 and beyond?

Unemployment, jobless economic growth, political in-fighting, conflicts over natural resources within and between states, and increasing militarisation in a region too familiar with the human and material costs of war: these are some of the realities that Bill Clinton should have seen. At the same time, it's questionable whether he would have seen that many of these problems are exacerbated by the state's commitment to economic liberalisation and a narrow understanding of democracy.

In many ways, Botswana is at a crossroads: to continue with business as usual will only increase existing problems. Yet, given the linkages long developed between the state and international capital, one wonders if its leaders have the capacity to make the necessary creative policy decisions. It doesn't seem likely. Perhaps the only thing that will shake Botswana out of its diamond-induced stupor will be a BNF victory in 1999.



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NSA

Angola Quicksand

BY COLIN DARCH

Colin Darch is a specialist in Lusophone Africa and lives in Cape Town.

In the first trip to Africa by a US president in over two decades, Bill Clinton visited six African nations – Ghana, Uganda, Rwanda, South Africa, Botswana and Senegal. Significantly, he didn't visit Angola, an important African trading partner of the US, and one of American foreign policy's economic successes or enduring embarrassments, depending on your point of view. So, instead of the Leader of the Free World, the Angolans got a visit on 30 March from Joseph Wilson, Clinton's assistant for African affairs, with a message from the president emphasizing his support for the peace process. Wilson, accompanied by spe-

cial envoy Paul Hare, told reporters it was essential that the last few steps in the process be taken: "We hope that all parties will respect the timetable," he added, without apparent irony or impatience.

No-show

It's not as if the Angolan government hadn't tried its hardest to persuade Clinton to come. "I don't understand why we spend \$1.2 million dollars a year for the services of three lobbying companies, and then we can't make the most of the investment," an Angolan diplomat based in the US told the Lisbon weekly *Expresso* before the president's trip. But the efforts of the expensive lobbying consultants, and even the vigorous support of US oil companies active in Angola, all failed to per-

suade White House planners that a side trip to Luanda was a good idea.

There are some obvious reasons why the planners may have been right. Even though the US is Angola's number one trading partner, and the main mediator in the peace process, there is relatively little progress to show for American or UN involvement, and the potential for embarrassment remains high. The Angolan government and UNITA remain profoundly suspicious of each other, and UNITA's constant – and effective – delaying tactics in implementing the 1994 Lusaka Protocol have nonetheless left it more internationally isolated than ever before. The patience of the United Nations especially has worn dangerously thin, as it con-



John Liebenberg – Afrapix/Impact Visuals

South African military crossing the Kavango River as they withdrew from Angola in 1988



Joao Silva - PictureNET Africa

Savimbi at new headquarters in Bailundo on 7 Feb 95

tinues to expend millions of dollars on its fruitless Angolan operations. On 21 March this year, the Security Council endorsed a plan to withdraw peacekeepers from Angola by the end of July, calling on UNITA at the same time to complete demobilization and to end what the Council diplomatically referred to as "its pattern of delays."

The United Nations is not the only role player that is losing patience, however. "It isn't worth making the whole peace process depend on a meeting between José Eduardo dos Santos and Savimbi," an MPLA source told a Lisbon newspaper in February, adding in a threatening if somewhat mixed metaphor that "Angola cannot continue to be the orphan of the Lusaka Protocol — we may have to cut the [umbilical] cord."

In the meantime, as Clinton's entourage hit the road, the issues of the size of Jonas Savimbi's personal bodyguard in Luanda and the demobilization of UNITA forces at Bailundo were still being negotiated. UNITA was threatening to demand an unconditional lifting of the UN-approved sanctions against it as a precondition for continuing with the

peace process, and the government was saying that it would not nominate any UNITA members as ambassadors as long as UNITA continued to maintain offices in foreign countries. A Clinton visit during this slow and tortuous implementation of the peace process would have involved obvious political risks for the somewhat embattled president, under siege back home as a result of accumulating evidence of sexual misconduct, and needing a triumphant African progress above all things.[†]

Quicksand

The current phase of the peace process in Angola is now four years old, characterized throughout by delays, false starts and brinkmanship, most notably by UNITA, all tolerated, *nota bene*, by the US ad-

[†] There may have been other difficulties as well. Angolan government troops remain in both Congo Brazzaville and in Congo Kinshasa, to Washington's irritation. And although Luanda has signed a security agreement with Laurent Kabila's government, there is no such justification for their presence supporting President Denis Sassou-Nguesso, who came to power by a *coup d'état*.

ministration. The Angolan government and UNITA signed the Lusaka Protocol as long ago as 20 November 1994, after an even more prolonged negotiation process, during which UNITA especially combined delaying tactics with cynical attempts to gain military advantage through continued fighting. In the end, it was not even Savimbi himself, but UNITA secretary-general Eugenio Manuvakola who signed the document, as UNITA troops were driven from Huambo by government forces, and as international disapproval of the movement's manoeuvres hardened.

To implement the Protocol, the United Nations passed resolution 976 on 8 February 1995, establishing a new verification mission, UN-AVEM III, with 7,000 blue helmets, at an estimated cost of over \$380 million. A joint commission under UN supervision was also set up with government and UNITA representation, and three observer nations, the US, Russia and Portugal. But throughout everything that followed — meetings, resolutions, international pressure, the extension of the mandate for UN intervention, and the imposition of sanctions — Savimbi and UNITA have continued to delay and resist.

On 9 January this year, hope was rekindled that the process could keep moving, however slow the pace, with the Angolan government and UNITA signing what was described as a "final timetable agreement" [!] for implementing the aging Lusaka Protocol. Issues still to be resolved in January included deciding the size of Savimbi's security detachment, completing the demobilization of UNITA troops, and extending government control to municipalities, mainly in Moxico, Huambo and Malange provinces. Yet several serious incidents occurred during this last process, when tension between UNITA soldiers and armed government police detachments spilled over into fighting. Meanwhile, incidents such as the downing on 24 January of a private South African

transport aircraft, attempting to deliver diamond-mining equipment to UNITA at Andulo in Bié province, did nothing to reduce government suspicion of UNITA's good faith.

In the January timetable, UNITA had undertaken amongst other things to demobilize all its troops, hand over key areas to government control, move its headquarters to Luanda and convert its radio station into a non-partisan facility. At least senior UNITA officials were outspokenly frank about the move to the capital: "It's an illusion to think that Savimbi will go to Luanda so early," commented one of them.

Same old UNITA

None of the nine conditions for January had been met by the end of February, and yet another timetable had to be negotiated on 6 March. Just before this, at the beginning of March, a major crisis had threatened when UNITA appeared either unable or unwilling to meet a UN deadline for declaring the demobilization of all its troops, blaming the failure in the last resort on problems with its fax machines. It is still widely believed in Luanda that Savimbi has several thousand hidden troops in reserve, and a Voice of America report alleged in mid-February that a number were being trained in a camp across the border with Congo-Kinshasa. Although such reports remain unconfirmed, the discovery of arms caches in Uíje in January, for example, has sustained the suspicion that there may be some truth to the idea that UNITA remains an armed movement.

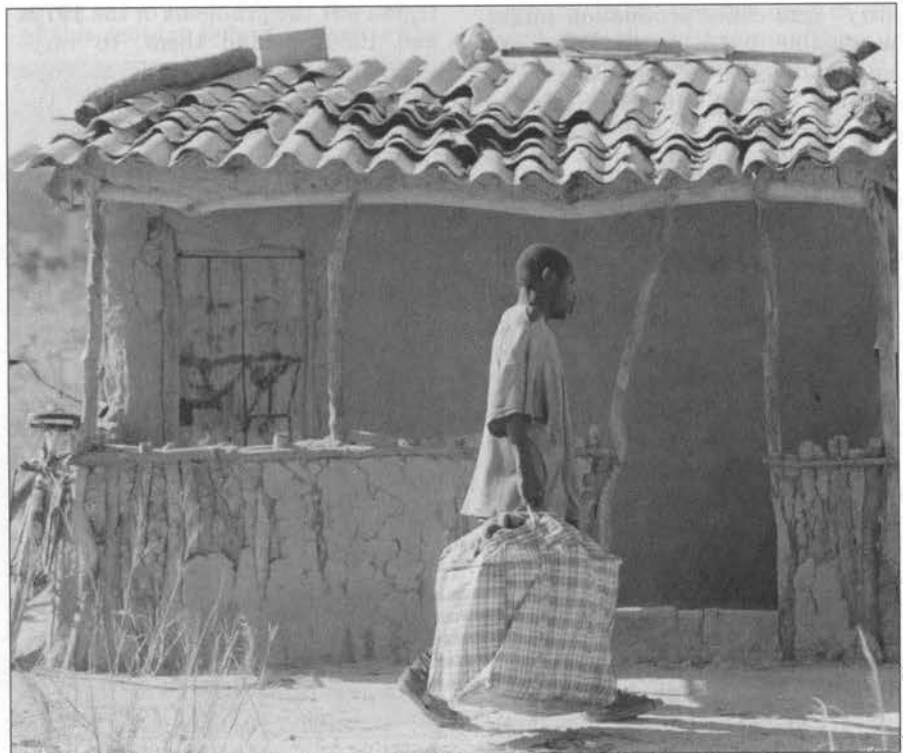
The UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, in a series of reports to the Security Council, has focussed on UNITA's apparent unwillingness to move towards "its transformation into a purely political party [with] no more armed personnel or weapons under its control." On 13 March Annan was even sterner: "I do not believe that the international community is ready to accept con-

tinued procrastination," he warned, while deploring UNITA attacks on UN personnel and pushing for the complete withdrawal of UN military personnel by the end of July. Annan also emphasized that economically, as far as the UN is concerned, Angola is on its own: "as the long term security situation improves and the need for short term relief interventions diminishes," he wrote, "the United Nations system is focusing increasingly on ensuring a smooth transition ... to rehabilitation and development."

It is true that Angola remains potentially one of the wealthiest nations in Africa, with crude oil reserves, diamonds, a wide range of other mineral resources, energy potential, and untapped industrial and agricultural capacity. Official Angolan government statistics are notoriously unreliable and selective, and usually outdated, so it is always hard to assess economic realities accurately. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 1990s, the Angolan economy had begun to

show some signs of growth. When fighting began again after UNITA lost the September 1991 election, however, the external debt and the inflation rate soared into the realm of hyperinflation, to 1800 percent in 1993, while levels of production have remained low. But even in its present devastated state, Angola's GDP is the third largest in the southern African region, and growth for 1995 and 1996 has averaged close to ten percent, according to some sources. The London-based Economist Intelligence Unit has predicted continued high growth for 1998.

At present, the economy is grossly distorted by such factors as the increase in government spending necessitated by extending control into former UNITA areas. In the last quarter of 1997, inflation rose again, and the national currency's black market value dropped sharply. Unemployment is presently estimated at 45 percent, and nearly seventy percent of Angolans live below the poverty line.



Unita combatant arrives home after 18 months in UN demobilization camp

Joao Silva - PictureNET Africa

Oiling the works

The main foreign exchange earner in Angola continues to be oil. There are over fifteen foreign oil companies operating in Angola, including such giants as Chevron, Exxon, and Texaco. The country is the second largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa, providing around six percent of total US needs, with 780,000 barrels a day in 1997 and a projected 870,000 barrels a day in 1998, worth about \$4.5 billion per year. Oil exploration continues apace – SONANGOL was granted new prospecting rights in “Block 9” in Kwanza Sul, for instance, at the end of March. Crude oil accounts for 90 percent of exports, 80 percent of government revenue and over 40 percent of the GDP, although little of this revenue has been available for development during the years of war.

In the agricultural sector, coffee was a major Angolan cash crop in colonial times and for some years afterwards, but the sector has now collapsed entirely. The government is optimistic that a “re-entry” into coffee production might be possible, based on state support for smallholder cooperatives, in a world market where prices are presently high.

Current government plans, meanwhile, are focussing on major infrastructural renovation, with the specific twin objectives of extending the electricity grid for the whole country, and getting the railway network running again. Angola is exceptionally well endowed with under-exploited hydroelectric potential, estimated in the 1980s at over 7,000 megawatts. Luanda has budgeted \$200 million for the repair of major dams during 1998 – only half of the country’s six major dams are still providing any hydroelectric power at all. The remaining three are the Lomaum dam on the Carumbela river, between Benguela and Huambo, which was destroyed by UNITA in 1984; the Mabubas dam, the oldest in Angola, on the Dande river outside Caxito, destroyed in

1992; and the Gove dam on the Cunene south of Huambo, which has been out of action since the late 1980s.

Troubled future

The one and a half million people crowded into Luanda’s crumbling slums celebrated in a minor key earlier this year the 422nd anniversary of the founding of the oldest city in southern Africa. Four centuries after the arrival of Paulo Dias de Novais in 1575, this wealthy and powerful country, populated by displaced, war-disabled and poverty-stricken people, continues to face a deeply troubled future. The behaviour of Jonas Savimbi and the threat to peace represented by his UNITA movement remain the central problem of Angolan politics, as they have for the last two decades. The apparently endless peace process, and the cost to the international community of maintaining a United Nations presence in the country have locked Angola into a time warp. As other nations in the region put the problems of the 1970s and 1980s behind them, to varying degrees, and struggle to cope with the post-modern world, Angola’s main political problem remains one with roots in a different political epoch.

Angola’s immediate economic future will remain bleak even if Savimbi abandons his lifelong and compulsive habits of stalling and reneging on solemn agreements. Burdened by foreign debt, facing the virtual destruction of the social and economic infrastructure, the Angolan government has little room for policy manoeuvre, and is hampered even more in the development of independent economic strategies by IMF- and World Bank-dictated liberalization policies. US companies, for example, were returning to Angola with a vengeance: in September 1997 Coca Cola announced plans to build a \$33 million bottling plant outside Luanda, and sugar giant F. C. Schaffer has con-

ducted a \$350,000 feasibility study in Benguela province.

But beside the investment, the fact is that US and Western intervention in Angola has played a major role in sustaining the state of war in that country, even after massive and overt conservative support for Savimbi and UNITA stopped at the beginning of the decade. Savimbi is well aware that he can violate the Lusaka Protocol pretty much as he wishes without provoking the kind of intervention that might put an end to UNITA as a movement. The MPLA government’s radical agenda of social reform of the 1970s and early 1980s is now a dim memory, as the country’s economic policy is dictated by a combination of the IMF and World Bank liberalization programmes, and the domination of export earnings by Western oil companies. The economic independence which threatened US interests a decade ago has been rolled back. And yet it’s entirely possible that Jonas Savimbi and UNITA will continue to destabilize Angola for the foreseeable future.

* * *

Here is tangible evidence of just how hard it is to put the cork back in the bottle once the genie of destabilization has been let loose upon a country. One more reason for Clinton not going to Angola? Amidst all the apologies – for the slave trade, for American Cold War support for dictatorships in Africa and for its failure to intervene in the Rwandan genocide – that dotted Clinton’s progress through Africa, nothing was said of the US role in sustaining a state of war in Angola by its direct and indirect support for UNITA throughout the 1970s and 1980s (to come no closer to the present). In all probability Clinton would not have mentioned these realities even had he touched down in Luanda. But certainly his planners spared him any temptation to do so.

SAI

Royals and Rurals Impasse in Swaziland

BY OUR SWAZILAND CORRESPONDENT

It would be easy to see Swaziland as "quaint" since public life there is awash with tradition. People are identified by their traditional status: there seem to be as many Princes as in Saudi and there are a few hundred Chiefs amongst a population of only a million. Any directory is full of people who give their surname as Dlamini, to show they belong to the royal clan. Men will routinely sport the printed cloth, which constitutes traditional dress, over one shoulder at meetings and in the office and not just on the big occasions. There are in fact major ceremonial occasions at certain times of the year, most presided over by the monarch, a practice which, as elsewhere, serves to reinforce the legitimacy of the traditional system. And yet the

actual substance of this system is by no means merely quaint. The essential nature of this traditional system is that of a hidden second government which shadows the Cabinet and Legislature. Comprised of a Swazi National Council and other bodies set up by the King to "advise" him, the composition of this second government is not publicly known and makes decisions in what manner who can tell.

Tradition?

Some observers have always seen this system and the persistence of the monarchy as epitomizing a positive contribution made by "tradition." They claim, with some accuracy, that the institution of the monarchy and the "statesmanship" of the old King, Sobhuza, over much of this century helped to ensure the

continuity and indigenous character of a way of life and to preserve Swaziland's statehood in the teeth of apartheid South Africa. Who would deny the significance of the fact that the country remained independent, and although even less ready to cross South Africa than other states in the Southern African Customs Union, Swaziland did in the past turn an occasional blind eye to ANC activities in the country. And it did provide a haven for a large number of refugees from the war in Mozambique - even though it now tends to blame Mozambicans for all the crime and other ills of the country.

True, as noted, some aspects of the traditional system are quaint to the point of comic opera. For instance, in the last few months and faced with the forthcoming climatic threat from *el niño*, public debate has revolved around the issue of whether prayer to god or reliance on the noted rain-making powers of the King would provide the best counter-measure. One senior official involved in forums looking at constitutional change took the latter view. Meanwhile other officials can be found bending over backwards in the press to justify such "traditions" as the ceremony in which maidens dance in their thousands before the King, who then has his choice of additional wives from amongst them. (Just as surreal but more overtly political was the recent claim by an ex-prime Minister that the Maputo province of Mozambique belongs to Swaziland!)

As noted, however, it would be a mistake to see the system as a whole as mere comic opera. As many Swazi radicals have come to feel, the semi-mystical references back



Adil Bradlow - PictureNET Africa

Royalty: Swazi King Mswati III and Queen Mother Indlovukati with British Prince Charles - Oct 97

to a supposed set of beliefs and practices that are quintessentially Swazi – invocation of “Swazi law and custom” being the common currency of official political discourse from the traditional wing of the government – serve as an all-purpose justification, or smoke screen, for activities deeply at odds with the interests of most Swazi people. Moreover, the dual structure of government and the influence of unnamed appointees makes for ineffectiveness and even more delays than under a normal bureaucratic system. Grinding slowly, this structure thus serves as an effective instrument in limiting power and, as we shall see, in keeping resources in the hands of a few. It successfully obfuscates decisions, and makes responsibility for blame all the harder to pin down. It inhibits any modernization of land tenure into conventional capitalist forms of property rights, thereby maintaining the sole basis for the local power and (shaky) legitimacy of chiefs who in turn prop up the whole monarchical system.

Under this cloak there also occurs a great deal of well-mannered repression. A crucial moment came in 1973 when the constitutional niceties inherited from the Westminster model – a structure that did provide for political parties (one of which was quite progressive) and some basic human rights, and for the exercise of quite circumscribed “constitutional” powers by the monarchy – were swept aside by a royal edict. In the years since the coup from the palace, no political parties have been allowed, and the activities of human rights and other local associations of a possible ‘civil society’ are circumscribed. Trade unions are legal but have only limited freedoms to operate.

Land and loot

Perhaps the most crucial thing to understand about this system is that, at its core, there lies a formalized structure whereby power-holders systematically loot public resources. Since the middle of the

century funds – from public subscription and from levies on migrant labourers (funnelled into a royal investment fund, Tibiyo Takangwane) and from the exchequer and even from the UK Government – have been used to buy back a sizable chunk of the farms that were alienated to white settlers at the turn of the century. Much of this acquired land is assigned a legal status under a mythical formula whereby it is held by the King “in trust for the Swazi nation” This formula in turn is designed to legitimate the fact that such holdings are run as a business or joint venture with foreign capital by the royal investment company, Tibiyo (for short), mentioned above. True, some of the farms acquired by Tibiyo or by the government have been used so that Swazi peasants and former farm labourers could benefit from some resettlement, but these programmes came to an end in the late 1980s. And other land is held as state ranches, which are also made available for use by livestock from the peasant areas.

But great swathes of land are also given over to plantations of sugar, citrus and other crops under irrigation, or to timber forests which are off-limits to local people and their cattle, or vast commercial ranches, for cattle or game. These provide a large part of the export earnings and of GDP. And yet the royal company, Tibiyo, is not liable for tax and it does not have to publish accounts. Through this part of the hidden government system there is, in effect, a massive comprador economy with parallels to Banda’s holding company in Malawi, or even to the cruder pillage of public assets by Mobutu in Zaire: with the exception that the royal insignia and the traditional trappings give this extortionate system a legitimacy that these ex-rulers never had.

The remaining rural areas, where Swazi small-holder families have continued to eke out an existence, have been termed “Swazi National

Land.” These were administered in ways similar to those in the “reserves” of the former bantustans of South Africa. They amounted to about a third of all land at the beginning of the century, and as a result of previous acquisition of land from commercial farms now make up over 50%. The pattern of land use divides these communal areas into extensive grazing areas to which there is open access for the livestock of all members of the community, and areas for fields and dwellings for the individual homesteads. Local chiefs claim to administer this land “in trust,” but also demand all heads of homesteads in their communities to swear allegiance to them, so that the people as well as the land in some sense “belong” to them.

This has not constituted a fully-fledged “feudal” system, however: as far as the people are concerned this form of allegiance (*khonta*) amounts to a kind of local citizenship – even though there are still some remnants of an obligation to provide labour to the chief which are occasionally invoked to promote public works or personal aggrandizement. Moreover, as far as land is concerned, the chiefs do not really “own” it and cannot dispose of it freely. And yet they do claim power over access to it, by “granting” fields and residential sites for new homesteads, and access to grazing land (this, in theory, being limited to those who are members of the community by virtue of their having sworn allegiance).

Rural tensions

Times are changing, however. The pattern of power over access to land and the social control which could be, and in the past were, associated with it has in practice become much more limited. In part this is because, with a rapidly growing population and no internal open frontiers, there is a severe shortage of spare arable land for chiefs to allocate as “new” homesteads. There is only a small minority of rural families, perhaps 10% or less, that are, strictly speak-

ing, "landless." Nonetheless, the next generation of farmers – many of whom are women no longer tied to some male migrant labourer – increasingly turn to their parents or extended family to carve out a plot from the existing family holding for them. As one result, this means that they do not directly owe the chief an obligation for granting them land (even though they remain identified as a member of that particular chief's community). Equally importantly, because of their reliance on their families for land, increasing proportions have only tiny plots or are forced to delay marriage and a family or are resource poor in some other respects. Thus, in many communities 30-40% of households have no cattle – cattle being not only a source of respect in the local culture, but also, more practically, being vital as ploughing oxen and as an additional source of food and income.

The shortage of land also leads many people to look for space for new homesteads outside their own chiefdom by seeking to *khonta* to a chief elsewhere and, for a consideration, get land from him. The chief has an incentive to grant land to incomers in this way even if there is a land shortage as it is the only means by which he can translate his partial control of land into a return in cash or kind. But in doing so he also worsens the land shortage and fuels conflict over land. Chiefly authority should also, in theory, extend to the communal grazing areas and thus make possible some environmentally sustainable regulation of the pasture, but in practice chiefs do not exercise much control and there is a tendency for degradation. It is true, however, that this problem is generally over-stated by professional environmentalists and the chiefly and bureaucratic establishments who are happy to blame the victims for problems that are rooted in the much broader system of inequality in land ownership between the peasants in the Swazi National Land and the large commercial holdings.

The chiefly influence over land has also in the past limited the evolution or legislation of capitalist property relations and a free market in land and dampened down major differentiation in land holding within the SNL area, although sharp differences in other productive resources and in off-farm income do exist. However, as land shortages grow and money by those with other sources of income is ploughed back into developments such as small-scale irrigation, differences are on the increase as are transitional phenomena like leasing of land. At the same time, the scramble for land as a welfare stake for the poor and young (for they will seek to get income from a range of labouring and petty trading activities not just from farming), or as the basis for accumulation by the better-off, leads to conflict over access, flames that are fanned by the chiefs often allocating land at their own whim, as we have seen. In sum, the necessary "rationalization" of land access along any democratic lines that would involve genuine peasant control over the process is likely to be resisted by chiefs and the monarchical system, but so too is any shift to individual, classical capitalist property rights. The result? There is political tinder aplenty in the rural areas, with growing discontent and local incidents that have led to killings in recent months.

Resistance and democracy?

It is true that such quasi-political developments in the rural areas seem unlikely to be articulated politically with more urban based demands for reform in the near future – even though such an alliance of forces may well hold the key to longer-term reform. Nonetheless, pressures from opposition forces in the broader system, plus the atomized disorder we have seen to be brewing in the countryside (in which the chiefly structure is recognized as part of the problem), have led to calls even in "traditional" Swaziland for a more representative and answerable

political system. Most importantly, there is a vigorous section of civil society, especially the trade unions, along with human rights and other groups, that is in the fore-front of the campaigning around such issues. In the Swazi National Land areas, there is, as noted, little organized protest politics, but grumbling about chiefs and the corruption of the system of land allocation can be heard, and simmering local disputes provoked by this situation do boil over into open and violent conflict between supporters of different chiefs and the like.

Still, the hierarchy as a whole seemingly has no real idea as to how to resolve the growing irritations, frictions and confusions that the dual system of government is giving rise to. Even those who are part of the traditional system and yet see some of the irrationalities of the chiefly and monarchical system clearly enough to join in calls for change and reform are prepared to go only so far. Such "modernizing" elites recognize that their own power and influence is so woven into the fabric of neo-traditional domination that any half-way meaningful reform may merely open the way to struggles for deeper changes they could not hope easily to control.

There is, of course, some external pressure on Swaziland as well, as part of the post-Cold War agenda of "democratization." Perhaps even more influential have been the strongly worded statements from South Africa. Mandela and particularly Thabo Mbeki have publicly weighed in with comments regarding the only country in the SADC region which is not, at least notionally, "democratic" – pressure which has the added resonance of coming from a country on which Swaziland is heavily dependent economically. The pressure from big brother next door has also been reflected in the stance of the South Africa trade unions which gave backing to a stay-away by Swazi unions, on essentially

swaziland



Don Boroughs - PictureNET Africa

political grounds, early in 1997. (However, the limits of the internal pro-democracy movement were illustrated when the unions omitted to coordinate things with COSATU in SA before a second general strike in October, one which was not widely supported, and resulted in a loss in influence by the unions and by the pro-democracy movement on whose behalf they were acting.)

* * *

The regime's response to such internal and external pressures has been to initiate a modest modernization programme. In 1996, a World Bank official was brought in to take over the Prime Minister's job from one of the princes, and he has sought to improve government structures and performance - a development which many on the "modern," bureaucratic side of the government welcome. Those traditionalists who do realize, more long-sightedly, that other measures of orchestrated change may be needed in order to pre-empt the emergence of a more radical agenda have also seen to the setting up of a Constitutional

Review Commission which was supposed to consult widely and recommend change.

Not surprisingly there was scepticism from the outset, not least because a similar review in the early 1990s did head off protests at the time but delivered little change. Some opposition figures did initially participate but the Chairman of it has made gross errors - he may have been appointed, some argue, precisely because he cannot be taken seriously - and the few opposition members of the Commission, like a senior trade unionist, who were tempted to participate quickly withdrew from the Commission. And the King himself seems intent on keeping as much as possible of such discussion firmly within traditional structures, the *tikundla* (or tribal councils).

Moreover, in the midst of what was supposed to be a public debate about changes to the system, the government drafted a Bill to seriously restrict the media. True, this produced an outcry that has for the moment put it on a back burner, but it is of a piece with a system

were the King rules largely by decree and all political activity continues, formally, to be banned under the state of emergency, referred to earlier, that was declared in 1973. And when, in February, the King announced elections to be held at the end of this year (while simultaneously warning against any further strikes) it was done in a context in which, as *Southscan* put the point, "the major political grievance has not been addressed - under present laws political parties are banned"!

In the end, then, there seems little readiness in traditional circles to countenance significant political change. Yet neither is there a coherent strategy for mounting an alternative to repression. Popular forces are partly mobilized but are not yet an irresistible political presence. Perhaps some limited change of significance will yet be stumbled into but, as the millennium approaches, the question of just what kind of "neo-traditionalism" Swaziland will carry into the twenty-first century remains a very open one.

SAR

FYI: The Struggle Continues

SOUTH AFRICA CONFRONTS GLOBALIZATION

A Conference to Build Civil Society Alliances

Edenvale, 12-15 March 1998

Brief Conference Report

Introduction: Background to the Conference

The "South Africa Confronts Globalization" Conference has been a unique and extremely important development.

Twenty-nine organizations representing workers, women, students, youth, urban and rural communities, disabled people, the churches, health, environmental, culture and media interests, came together to plan this conference. Many more NGOs and individuals also participated. More than 150 people attended the conference, coming from eight of South Africa's nine provinces.

The aims of the conference were to:

- a) contribute towards a growing understanding and critique of economic issues,
- b) consider a variety of alternatives and
- c) stimulate the building of alliances across organizations of civil society around key issues and campaigns.

Participants came to the conference to share ideas and learn from each other's experiences and knowledge. In recognition that the participants were not given organizational mandates on established positions, the Conference Planning Committee agreed that the conference should arrive at a declaration of "principled positions" which participants will take back to their organizations and communities to broaden discussion, debate and support for activities and campaigns.

Conference facilitation was largely coordinated by the Campaign Against Neoliberalism in South Africa (CANSA), an alliance of individuals formed to protest the October 1996 visit of the International Monetary Fund's managing director. Conference funders included Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Africa Groups of Sweden and Interfund; many organizations contributed sponsorship of delegates from their own resources; the Rural Development Sector Network, South African Municipal Workers Union and Ecumenical Service for Socio-economic Transformation provided extra funding; the Women's National Coalition National, Progressive Primary Health Care Network, Joint Enrichment Project and Paper, Printing and Allied Workers Union provided crucial logistical support; and volunteers made other significant contributions.

Main Conference observations: Why is globalization vital to South Africa?

"Globalization" - untrammelled free-market trade, investment and finance at the international scale - has been presented to us by elites from the industrialized countries, the international financial institutions, transnational corporations and their allies (including assimilated elites of South Africa and other developing countries) as a new development to which "there is no alternative."

The supposed inevitability of the process masks the highly political nature of global developments. It disguises the particular economic approach, namely "neo-liberalism" (the free-market philosophy of structural adjustment). And it mystifies the underlying aim of pro-globalization forces: to establish a

newly-liberalized world order in which the aspirations of progressive governments, workers and communities (particularly women, the elderly, youth, children and disabled people) are subordinated to the needs of profit and greed.

The Conference analyzed and criticized the host of conservative economic policies that are weakening progressive governments' ability to address social ills, and are wreaking havoc on workers and communities internationally, and that in South Africa are embodied both in the "Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR)" macroeconomic strategy, and in various specific policies (especially housing, municipal infrastructure, land, and education).

The Conference considered the recent budget and rejected it on grounds that:

- a) no progress has been made in addressing the huge apartheid-era debt burden (which takes 20% of state spending);
- b) vast, unjustifiable amounts still are spent on defense and on policing (which addresses the effects not the causes of crime); and
- c) not enough has been done to restructure social spending and to reduce hidden forms of benefits to the rich in the budget.

The Conference concluded that what is really at stake is the problem of unbalanced political power between contending social forces. Business and financial interests - amplified through the World Bank, IMF, World Trade Organization, US government, European Union and the like, with collaboration from Third World elites - exert an overwhelming influence. Their preferred economic policies are, we are witnessing, ineffective on their own terms and are socially unjust. Worse, they have convinced a large section of our society that there is no alternative to orthodox economic policies and globalization.

The Conference confirmed our rejection of these policies and the attempt to impose helplessness on our society. A variety of alternatives have been presented since 1993 by organizations such as the Macroeconomic Research Group (Making Democracy Work), the Mass Democratic Movement (the Reconstruction and Development Programme), Cosatu (Social Equity and Job Creation), the Community Constituency of Nedlac (Return to the RDP) and the like. Conference confirms that "there must be an alternative"!

The negative impact of globalization on South Africa has been manifested, through the fiscal squeeze and through market-oriented policies that have stifled economic growth and redistribution, in job losses, crisis in education, closure of hospitals, widening loopholes in the social security net, water cut-offs, the worsening housing shortage, and persistent malnutrition and poverty, in a context of deepening inequality in what is already the second most unequal country in the world.

The Conference agreed on the need to confront these social ills, but also to address the root cause, which Conference concluded lies in large part in economic policies designed in

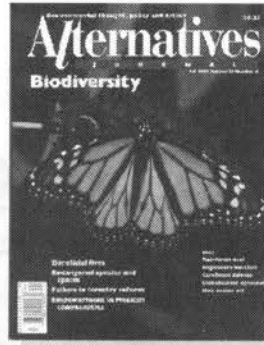
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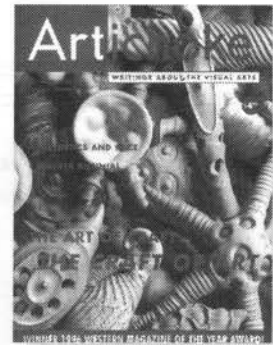
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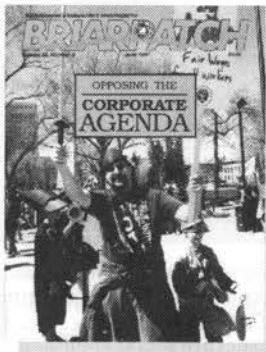
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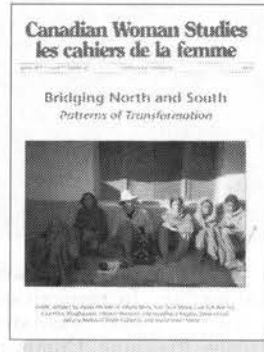
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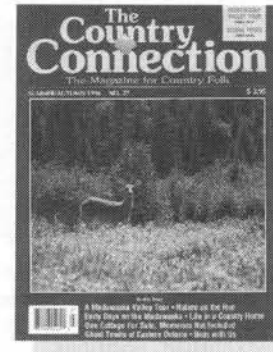
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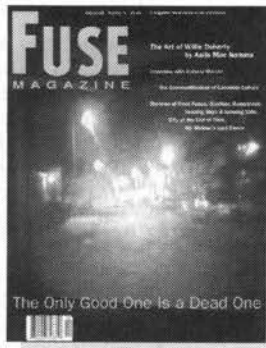
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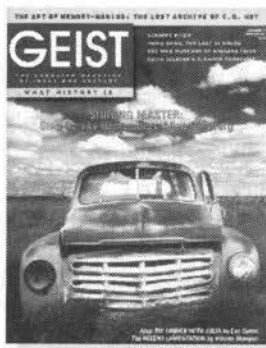
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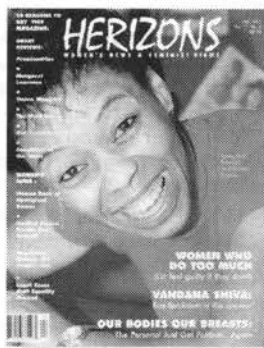
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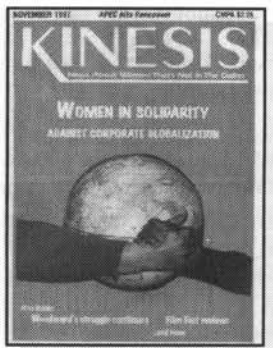
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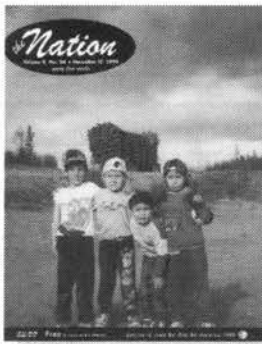
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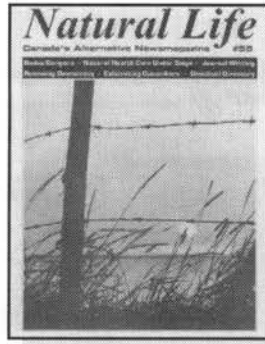
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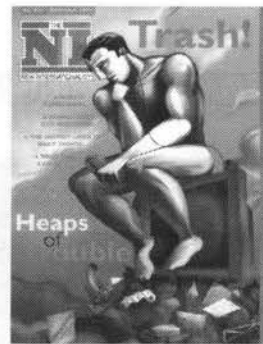
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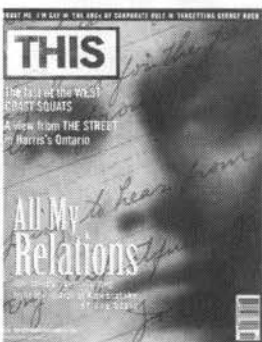
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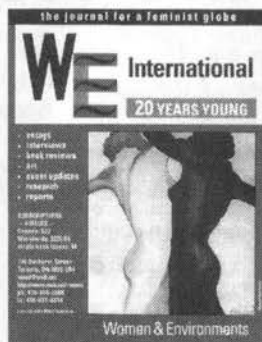
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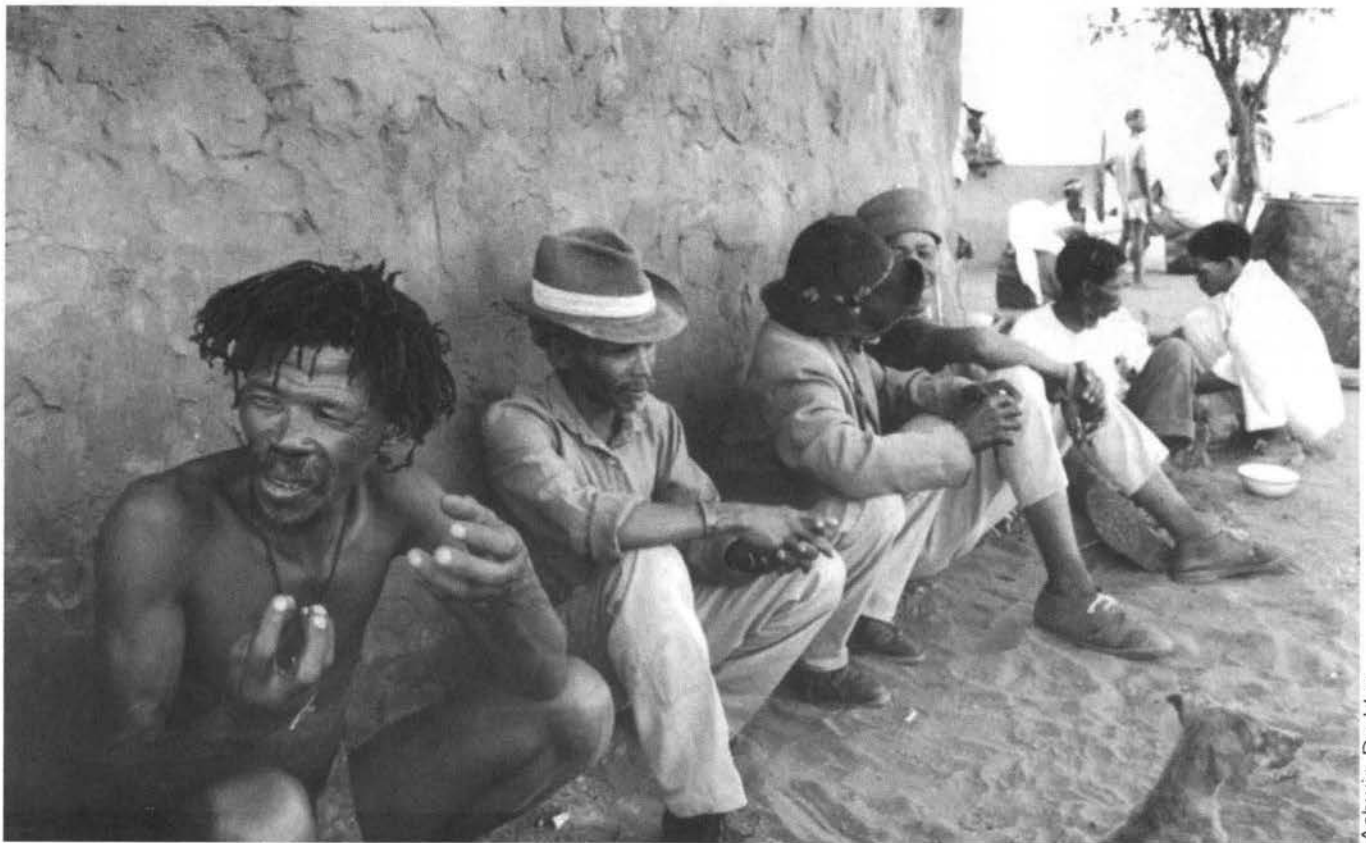
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Ashwin Budden

Jacob Malgas (left) and old =Khomani hunters at the squatter settlement of Welkom

Still Invisible San & Khoe in the New S.A.

BY NIGEL CRAWHALL

Nigel Crawhall is a sociolinguist working with the South African San Institute. He is a co-operant in CUSO's global program on cultural survival. This article is adapted from a chapter of *The National Question: South Africa Between Unity and Diversity*, a forthcoming IDASA book.

"Ah eh! We found the Kalahari clean. For years and years the Bushman have lived off the land ... thousands of years ... We did not buy the Kalahari. God gave it to us.

He did not loan it to us. He gave it to us. Forever. I do not speak in anger, because I am not angry. But I want the freedom that we once had."

Last Voice of an Ancient Tongue, Ulwazi Educational Radio, 1997)

Elsie Vaalbooi speaks in a hoarse 96-year-old voice while a winter wind whips around the small Vaalbooi house in Rietfontein on the edge of the Kalahari. She is one of the last fluent speakers of the N/u language, South Africa's oldest surviving language, part of

the nearly extinct Southern San language family. She is a survivor. Born into a hunter-gatherer culture, she has watched her community move from the autonomy granted by the boundless red desert, to being hemmed in and displaced by international borders, farms, and eventually the fences of the Kalahari Gemsbok National Park. She witnessed a violent ethnocide that scattered her people and crushed their identity.

When Elsie was "discovered" in February 1997, her presence was a profound shock to many in South Africa. Academics, Parks Board officials and the government of

South Africa all claimed that there were no San people left in South Africa, and certainly none who could speak the ancient languages. In this new democracy, Elsie, her descendants, and many other Khoe and San people are committed to making themselves heard, and claiming back the land and natural resources that were forcibly removed from them under colonialism and apartheid.

This quiet but fervent uprising of San and Khoe people marks a challenge to the politicians and bureaucrats of the new South Africa. The presence of an indigenous population, which is consciously making links to a global movement for recognition of indigenous and aboriginal peoples rights, forces the new state to consider some fundamental issues: Who is indigenous? What is a "coloured" identity? And what is the responsibility of the state with regard to deconstructing apartheid identities? Though the African National Congress (ANC) has brought new ideas about democracy, dignity and equality to South Africa, much of the ideological framework for culture and identity has remained trapped in apartheid definitions. The challenge for the new regime will be whether it can allow a grassroots cultural revolution to take place, without trying to control and limit it. Is the new government prepared to open up the issues of race, ethnicity and identity?

Historical roots of San and Khoe

San culture emerged from homo sapien occupation of Southern Africa between 25,000 and 15,000 years ago. In South Africa, the original population consisted of hunter-gatherers who spoke related Southern San languages. It is generally accepted that the pastoralist Khoekhoe came into South Africa from Botswana and Namibia much later, approximately 2,000 years ago. They spoke languages from the Central Khoesan family, grammatically very different from the San.

Bantu-speaking pastoralists moved into the region approximately 800 years ago. European settlers arrived after 1652, followed by South East Asians and South Asians, many of whom came as slaves, prisoners or indentured labourers for the colonial regime.

Between 1652 and the start of the 19th century a type of holocaust drastically reduced the number of Khoe and San people. This holocaust, conducted by Europeans and their proxies, ranged from murders to full scale wars, and the introduction of virulent European diseases, particularly small pox. If we use language as a barometer of sustainable culture and economy, the San and Khoe populations were reduced from over 200,000 people in the 17th century, to slightly more than five thousand in the 1990s.

Khoe-San communities today

There are currently three Khoe-San languages spoken on a daily basis in South Africa. These are Nama (Khoekhoegowap, spoken by about six thousand people), !Xû (spoken by three thousand people) and Khwe (Kxodam, spoken by one thousand people). [The non-alphabetic symbols represent clicks in the words]. The !Xû and Khwe people are recent immigrants from Angola and Namibia. They were forcibly removed from their ancestral lands and recruited into the South African Defence Force during its war against SWAPO in Namibia. At the end of the war they were brought to South Africa. Though the communities live in extreme conditions of poverty, their cultures and identities remain strong. There are three other languages which are spoken by fewer than twenty people and are not used for daily communication: N/u (and its close relative !Kabee) spoken by =Khomani San elders including Elsie; Gri (Xiri) spoken around Kimberly, and Koranna (!Ora) spoken by at least one man at Riemvasmaak. These languages are considered to be extinct, as the

languages are no longer passed from generation to generation.

In South Africa, Nama culture and language are in a serious state of collapse. Though they were forced to edges of the country, Nama pastoralists clung to their traditional pastoralism in the remote mountains and arid areas of the Richtersveld and along the Orange River into Gordonia. However, the impact of the Church and school system under apartheid has caused a profound generation gap with few young people learning the ancestral language and traditions.

Language death

All of South Africa's surviving Khoe and San languages are at risk of imminent extinction. The advent of language death in these communities is an indicator of the general collapse of their economic and social systems. Khubus, the largest Nama settlement in South Africa, is the heart of a revival in Nama identity and pride. However, traditional midwife Anna Moos recounts the trend amongst new mothers in Khubus not to speak any Nama to their infants. "They are afraid it will make them backwards," says Moos smiling sadly.

In 1996-97, the South African San Institute conducted consultations with rural Khoe and San communities to find out how they felt about the status of their languages and to inform them of their new rights in the constitution. Almost all participants expressed a profound anxiety about the death of their languages. Speaker after speaker told of the humiliation and violence that discouraged them from using their ancestral tongue in public. Most speakers cited the exclusion of their languages from schools as a central factor in stigmatising language learning.

Nama and San people know that the suppression of their identities and languages was required to assert the ideology of apartheid and justify the seizure of lands.

According to one Nama speaker, Sacharias Christiaan, the apartheid government forced Nama people to register as coloured so as to invalidate their status as aboriginal people. If the Khoe and San people ceased to exist, no claims could be made to original occupation of land. This was in sharp contrast to the Bantustan policy which had brought to the fore the legal concept of separate territoriality for different linguistic groups. By declaring Nama people to be of mixed race and Afrikaans-speaking, the government was able to suppress any argument for a Nama state, or Nama cultural and linguistic rights.

Recognising that the previous regime played an active role in suppressing their identities, San and Khoe groups are keen to see what the new government is going to do. There is a cautious optimism, primarily as a result of the inclusion of a single clause in the constitution that acknowledges the presence of San and Khoe people.

Language in the constitution

Under the new Constitution the following language rights are guaranteed:

- Recognising the historically diminished use and status of the *indigenous languages* of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages [emphasis added]
- A Pan South African Language Board established by national legislation must promote and create conditions for the development and use of the Khoi, Nama and San languages

This clause marks the first time that aboriginal South Africans have been acknowledged constitutionally. It is this clause, and the possibilities held out by democracy, that have triggered the mobilisation of San and Khoe people.

Though this clause is extraordinary, it is not the only ground breaking element of the Constitu-

tion. South Africa now has eleven official languages. These languages together represent over ninety percent of the total population of the country. This is a radical departure from the old regime that had only English and Afrikaans as official languages. It is even a radical departure from international precedent. Only a few countries have more than two official languages. Prior to 1994, Switzerland had the most with four. For many South Africans, the recognition of eleven official languages symbolises the move to an inclusive state, and away from exclusionary policies of the past. The language clauses are a statement about the Africanisation and democratisation of South Africa. Article 6 of the constitution embodies the political culture in South Africa that embraces tolerance and diversity.

However, the details of how the clause came into being are instructive and tell a slightly different story. The ANC did not enter the Kempton Park constitutional negotiations with a plan for eleven official languages. The original plan was to push for no official languages, thus attempting to skirt an emotive issue. The move did not work. The National Party and its allies were adamant that Afrikaans was not to be demoted. The ANC response was to call for all "South African" languages to be made official.

The languages given this august status were the very same eleven languages that were already in administrative use by the Republic and the homeland states prior to negotiations. Apartheid was built on these languages (and state-sponsored identities). A number of South African languages were not given recognition or consideration in the final Constitution, including Northern Ndebele, Phuthi, Lobedu, Makhuwa and Thonga. They were excluded from the constitution because none of these languages was used by Bantustan administrations. Though the Verwoerdian regime had tried to argue that there were

autonomous nations with distinct linguistic identities in South Africa, the truth was never so neat. One of the official languages, Northern Sotho, was such a fabrication of apartheid that its speakers could not agree on whether it was one or many languages and what it should be called. The final Constitution recognised the language as SePedi, the dominant dialect of the old apartheid creation.

When it came to identifying non-official languages, the constitution writers again resorted to established constituencies under apartheid. The European and Asian languages that were identified were already recognised by the apartheid school system and were to some degree part of the fringe ethnic political constituencies under apartheid. None of the languages spoken by the one million aliens of African origin (migrants, immigrants and refugees) was mentioned, despite the superior numbers of speakers.

Language is not the only apartheid rubric that has survived the transition to democracy. The Central Statistics Service (CSS) continues to use the terms *African*, *white*, *coloured* and *Asian* to describe the racial-ethnic variation in the country. There are two problems with this. Firstly, the majority of three million so-called *coloured* South Africans are of direct Khoe and San descent, with over one hundred thousand still referring to themselves as Griqua, Nama, Bushman or Koranna. Though some South Africans may comfortably identify themselves as "*coloured*," the term has been rejected by others. For it is a myth that still holds some force that "*coloured*" people are of "*mixed race*," with settler origins. In fact, the majority of so-called "*coloured*" South Africans are at least as indigenous as so called "*Africans*."

The flip side of this mythology is that Bantu-language speaking South Africans may claim a special authenticity and indigenous sta-

identity

tus and assert that they are not of "mixed race." These assumptions are rooted firmly in colonial and apartheid policies. In the building of colonial and then apartheid hegemony, the settler regime promoted distinctions between South Africans whose languages, cultures and genetic material were in fact interwoven. The racial terminology, "Native", "Bantu" and later the nine ethno-linguistic African groups, carried forth the fiction that most South Africans are not of mixed race. whereas historical re-

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would it mean for the ANC government to acknowledge Khoe and San South Africans as original occupants of the land, not byproducts of colonialism as suggested by the term "coloured"? The ANC has built its identity around the concept that its followers are indigenous South Africans, resisting colonisation of a special variety perpetrated by descendants of European settlers. This discourse eclipses the historical reality that the Khoe and San people lived in Southern Africa for at least twenty-three thousand years before black, Bantu-speaking pastoralists migrated across the Limpopo river. It also risks obscuring the inter-relatedness of cultures and identities in South Africa.

However much South Africans may wish to put apartheid behind them, the reality is that apartheid ideology runs deep in the prejudices and assumptions which inform daily life, both in government and in civil society. Apartheid's myths of history starting with Jan van Riebeeck provide an ahistorical snapshot that promotes the idea of separate, autonomous, static

cultures. These beliefs resonate deeply, even when re-framed in Africanist terms. Nor is the issue of identity merely theoretical. It directly affects political voting patterns and even access to critical resources such as land.

Land and identity

The 1994 Restitution of Land Rights Act (as amended 1996) limits government responsibility for land restitution to that which was expropriated after the Native Land Act of 1913, and where displacement can be shown to be linked to racially biased laws. This means that land restitution primarily affects land expropriated from people classified as "Native" or later as "Bantu" or "African." This leaves most Khoe and San people without legal recourse for their losses despite the similarities of experience. Most of the land displacement, with the exception of the Nama people at Riemvasmaak and the =Khomani in Gordonia, took place during the 19th century with the creation of coloured reserves and the annexation of Khoe and San lands by the British crown for redistribution to white farmers.



Henner Frankenfeld - PictureNET Africa

In the few cases affecting Khoe and San groups after 1913, these communities may have to prove in court that their invisibility under apartheid legislation was a form of legal racial bias.

It is precisely the loss of access to land that has caused a sharp rupture with the traditional economy, and broken the link between millennia-old hunting and gathering practices, and the cultural and social institutions built around that economy. For most Southern African Khoe and San communities, this rupture strikes at the heart of the society and has triggered the process of language death, acculturation and social disintegration. Failure to deal with the apartheid legacy in cultural policy traps the democratically elected government in a catch-22. The Constitution binds the government to protecting and promoting the survival of Khoe and San languages. Without access to land, the Khoe and San cultures and people cannot survive. Land can only be accessed if the aboriginal title of the peoples is recognised. This is impossible in the current framework, where only those dispossessed by apartheid can expect restitution.

To reverse the trend toward language death requires making decisions about the allocation and control of resources. This means dealing with the political and economic power of the mining companies, the Parks Board and the farmers' unions. It also means challenging the apartheid political beliefs that see the Northern Cape as being divided into three racial constituencies: African, coloured and white. Ironically, unpacking the issue of identities and acknowledging an aboriginal past and present provides the new state with something that has been lacking up until now: a foundation. Apartheid tore South Africa to pieces. The recognition of San and Khoe origins helps tie all the other cultural and identity threads together. Afrikaans, the hated language of the



Ashwin Budden

N/u-speaking elders and Nama-speaking descendants recording animal names with the author

oppressor since Soweto '76, was spoken by Khoe pastoralists long before white settlers expropriated it. Khoe languages and identity provide a vital bridge between Xhosa and coloured identities which apartheid attempted to break. Even Sotho and Tswana identities are intimately tied to the original cultures and languages of the subcontinent. Restoration of Khoe and San identity potentially provides a convenient glue to repair inter-ethnic conflict promoted under apartheid, especially between so-called coloured and African constituencies, and even among Afrikaans-speakers. This exploration of the past may help fur-

ther define the meaning of nationalism and nation-building in post-apartheid South Africa.

As for Elsie Vaalbooi, she has committed herself to live long enough to have her story told and ensure that her descendants get what is rightfully theirs. In her more energetic moments she leans forward and points to her wrinkled brown face, exclaiming in Afrikaans: "Look at my face. Look at Mandela. He looks just like me." She smiles, knowing she is right, and being right seems to count for something these days.

Gay and Lesbian Rights Forcing Change in S.A.

BY MAZIBUKO JARA

Mazibuko K. Jara is Coordinator of the Equal Rights Project of the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality, South Africa. The article was written in his personal capacity.

12h15, 10 December 1996. Thousands of people gather at Sharpeville stadium to watch President Mandela assent to the final Constitution of South Africa. There are few banners displayed, a small section of the crowd is singing and the general mood is sober. The promise of equality, justice and social development entrenched in the Constitution is yet unrealized. Hunger, inequality, joblessness, homelessness and violence are rife.

About ten lesbians, gays and supporters hold up the banner of the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) inscribed with the slogan "Equality for All!" This small group came to celebrate the formal inclusion of sexual orientation as a ground for equality and non-discrimination in the final Constitution and to pay their respects to all those who died fighting for equality and justice. The NCGLE had achieved its first objective.

August, 1997. The NCGLE and the statutory South African Human Rights Commission bring a high court application for the decriminalization of same-sex conduct. A month later, the Minister of Justice, ANC member Dr. Dullah Omar, announces his opposition to the court application. In November 1997, this application is heard unopposed by the Johannesburg High Court.

December, 1997. The ANC takes a formal resolution at its 50th National Conference in support of

lesbian and gay rights including the equal right to marry.

January 1998. The ANC Minister of Safety and Security, Sidney Mufamadi opposes a court application challenging discriminatory provisions in the Police Medical Aid. The discriminatory provisions are set aside in February 1998. In March, the Police Medical Aid appeals the judgment.

Step 1 - advances; step 2 - reversal; step 3 - struggles; step 4 - maybe final victory! Every day, every week, every month: this is the beat of the story for lesbian and gay equality in South Africa.

Equal under the constitution

The NCGLE was the primary agent in securing an equality clause which includes sexual orientation in the final Constitution. The coalition was formed in December 1994, at a conference of 40 lesbian and gay activists from 32 South African organizations. The mandate, determined at the conference, was towards ensuring that the final Constitution retained sexual orientation as grounds for non-discrimination.

Sexual orientation had been included in the equality clause of the Interim Constitution. Its inclusion was, however, a result of a commitment to human rights and a constitutional order by the ANC, the coming-out and involvement in progressive lesbian and gay organizations of a significant number of black lesbian and gay anti-apartheid activists, and lobbying by the Equality Foundation, a trust to raise funds for lesbian and gay equality work in South Africa. The inclusion of sexual orientation in the clause had little to do with the broader strength or mobilization of the lesbian and gay community.

So the NCGLE was breaking new ground in leading the constitutional lobbying campaign. Prior to its formation no organization had experience organizing gays and lesbians on a national scale. In fact, most organizations had never worked together prior to 1994, and were marked by their racial, gender and political differences. Thus the constitutional lobby campaign represented an unprecedented opportunity for lesbian and gay organizations to unify, critical in the development of a vibrant movement. The campaign was also the first opportunity for the coalition to come into contact with the government, its structures and processes. Remarkably, parliamentarians and most political parties were open to listen to the NCGLE's message.

The NCGLE decided to make a limited intervention, directed solely at lobbying the Constitutional Assembly (CA). The main aim was to neutralize or isolate the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), which was taking a vocal, hard-line stance against the clause. Every political party, even the Freedom Front, was lobbied to ensure that they did not support the reactionary positions of the ACDP.

The coalition chose not to raise contentious political issues, feeling that these would undermine the political message which everyone understands: "Equality for All!" Issues such as marriage, adoption, or gays in the army could have divided the weak ranks and allies, and united the opposition, allowing conservatives in the ANC and the Government of National Unity to abandon their support for the Equality Clause. As it was, the coalition faced the threat of mass mobilization by the religious right,

a threat which became real when the ACDP mobilized 10,000 people to march on the CA against the "secular state" and for a "Christian Bill of Rights."

The NCGLE strategy was criticized by many individuals and organizations. The debates on whether to mobilize "mass" support and how to do this, whether or not to organize demonstrations and marches, still lingered months after the equality clause was secured. But a campaign of civil disobedience would have been inappropriate because the ANC was already programmatically committed to lesbian and gay equality. Thus the campaign focused on strengthening the understanding and acceptance by allies in the Constitutional Assembly of NCGLE arguments. The structure of the coalition, open to every gay and lesbian organization which agrees to its objectives, also shaped the campaign. NCGLE unites individuals who hold different political and social viewpoints, organizations with a predominantly black membership, those with only white members, with only women members, with a predominantly male membership, strong and weak organizations. Members of the coalition include poor unemployed township youth who remain marginalized and invisible, and affluent, visible and prominent individuals.

Through the constitutional lobbying campaign, the NCGLE gained access to the corridors of power, which can be utilized effectively again to change the lives of ordinary gays and lesbians in South Africa. In addition to the equality clause, the coalition has secured numerous legal advantages in that Ministers, Directors-General, Government departments, religious bodies, employers and some trade unions now recognize gay and lesbian equality as an important part of civil society. The existence of a national coalition for gay and lesbian rights has provided useful authority and authenticity for lobbying and representation purposes.

Strengthen and consolidate

Currently, the NCGLE is working to strengthen and consolidate its lobbying capacity and advocacy on behalf of gay and lesbian rights. The organization has established working relations with over 100 organizations nationally, government departments, and networks throughout Southern Africa, raised gay and lesbian equality issues in the workplace with 200 employers and 60 trade unions, and taken up hate crimes and violence against the gay and lesbian community from private citizens and members of the police. The goal is to continue to engage these sectors until sexual orientation ceases to be an index of differentiation.

A court application was launched on August 22, 1997, against the Sexual Offences Act and the Criminal Procedure Act, which criminalized same-sex conduct between two adult men. The court application was followed by mobilization of allies in NGOs, the ANC, and NCGLE affiliates. It provided the lesbian and gay community with the most sustained media coverage in 1997, coverage which was generally supportive. Throughout the campaign, key civil society organizations provided unwavering support. The matter was heard, unopposed, in November 1997.

Support from other organizations may prove valuable, for other legal battles loom. There are cases where same-sex couples have been denied the right to adopt children, or the right to claim custody of children. The Coalition is taking up two cases, to be heard before the end of 1998. Also underway is a campaign for the legal recognition of gay and lesbian marriages.

Struggles in the workplace

The Constitution and the Labour Relations Act guarantee lesbian and gay equality and non-discrimination in the workplace. This extends to employment benefits: if lesbian and gay employees want to register their lover in an employer-sponsored

medical aid plan, they should be able to do so. But in practice, the position of gay and lesbian people in the workplace has changed little, even with these two non-discriminatory acts in place. Many employers still refuse to register partners of lesbian and gay employees on their employment benefits.

One rarely finds a company policy which explicitly states that gay and lesbian employees are to be discriminated against. But the restrictive definitions society has given to concepts such as marriage, relationship, spouse, dependent and family form the basis for the exclusion. There are several employment discrimination cases against ESCOM (the publicly owned electricity corporation), the South African Policy Services, and the Standard Bank.

In the case successfully brought by Jolanda Langemaat against the Police Medical Aid, the judgment dismissed the argument that it will cost too much to admit same-sex partners into the medical aid scheme. Could the medical aid program have even tried to make the same argument if the group of people excluded by its rules were black? It seems as if very few employers understand the implications of the equality clause in the constitution as it relates to non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and marital status. Currently, the number of employers in South Africa who can be regarded to have progressive policies on sexual orientation do not even number ten, and most of these few are universities.

The Coalition has also published policy proposals for a code of good practice on sexual orientation and the workplace. These policy proposals have been submitted to the Department of Labour and trade unions for consideration. Trade unions have not been cooperative in promoting lesbian and gay equality in the workplace, however. They

will not publicly oppose equality for gay and lesbian workers because they do not want to be seen to oppose the Constitution. It is known, however, that several trade union leaders do not wish their unions to be "side-tracked." The arguments that homosexuality is un-African and workers will not understand lesbian and gay issues are raised as barriers to progressive union policies on lesbian and gay equality in the workplace.

One of the greatest threats to full, permanent citizenship rights for all lesbians and gays is the belief that homosexuality is un-African. The reality is that the majority of lesbians and gays in South Africa are poor. They remain marginalized from the social

and economic mainstream and exist separately from the emerging gay and lesbian equal rights movement which is, in turn, poorer without them.

Future NCGLE work, and that of locally based organizations, must build a movement which is as much a home for poor lesbians and gays as it is for those with access to employment and social services. As long as the perception persists that most homosexuals are wealthy white men, life will be all the more difficult for township lesbians and gays. Building a vibrant gay and lesbian movement will depend on developing an activist and leadership base which is representative in terms of race, gender and class.

What factors will secure equality and justice for all? Which

organizational forms can ensure we change the tune of our song to permanent equality and justice for all? Is permanent equality possible? What influence will homophobic Zimbabwe have on South Africa? These are just some of the questions the NCGLE and other progressive NGOs continue to grapple with in implementing our Constitution. Our responses to these challenges will determine the fate of human rights, equality and justice in South Africa. Without the support of the majority of African people for equal rights for lesbians and gays, no one, not even the powerful, can be confident that they will ever live in a society that is free from discrimination.

SAR

Conference Report

continued from page 23

Washington and implemented in Pretoria through the often unthinking actions of – and lack of consultation by – our own government.

The Conference recognized a variety of international initiatives and the growing global confidence of trade unions, community organizations and NGOs in tackling these issues, and expressed the need to strengthen links with these civil society organizations and initiatives.

Conference's strategic directions: The way forward

Decisions were taken by the Conference plenary as follows:

- 1) A Conference Report will immediately be generated (CANSAs will carry out this mandate); and
- 2) A Globalization Campaigns Committee (facilitated by CANSAs and reinforced by leaders of major participating organizations) will take forward and help coordinate several initiatives:
 - (a) The Campaign Committee will facilitate protest by a variety of organizations against the [then] upcoming visit by US President Bill Clinton on the following grounds:
 - his proposed Africa Trade Bill will recolonize our continent through structural adjustment conditionality;
 - his government's refusal to cancel the African and Third World debt subjugates innocent people to perpetual misery; and
 - his neo-liberal policies and his country's influence at the World Bank, IMF and WTO are explicitly against our interests;
 - (b) The Committee will support the activities and campaigns for public sector delivery of water for all led by the South African Municipal Workers Union and community civics. It will carry out the recommendations made by the Conference's commission against privatization, including:
 - support for our constitutional right to water;
 - opposition to World Bank infrastructure and water policies

that contradict this right and to the privatization of water; as well as

- opposition to the proposed expansion of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (and World Bank funding for the project);
- (c) the [then] upcoming Poverty Hearings – which are jointly coordinated by the SA NGO Coalition – will be supported with information from the Conference showing the links between globalization, GEAR and poverty;
- (d) there will be support for the demand for "Cancellation of the Apartheid Debt," initiated by the Alternative Information and Development Centre, the SA NGO Coalition and others;
- (e) the Committee will support activities around labour rights, trade and investment that are coordinated by trade unions, the International Labour Research and Information Group and other conference participants;
- (f) the Committee will assist in several specific efforts that challenge the World Bank (especially the activities of its South Africa office), Third World debt payments, the forthcoming Multilateral Agreement on Investment, and South Africa-based multinational corporations;
- (g) the Committee will strengthen links with civil society worldwide, and will assist in the emerging South Africa-Haiti information exchange; and
- (h) the Committee will coordinate our organizations' short-term responses to immediate crises and other issues that have emerged from the Conference.

The Globalization Campaigns Committee includes people from the trade union movement, the women's movement, the health sector, the progressive religious sector, the student movement, research and academic institutions, and the international solidarity movement.

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