

Southern Africa REPORT

Vol. 15 No. 2

2nd Quarter 2000

Class Snuggle vs. Class Struggle

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Zimbabwe,
Lesotho,
Namibia,
Congo



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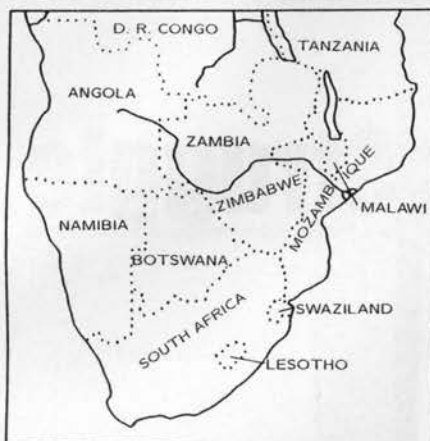
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Southern Africa REPORT

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1993 - protest against joblessness.

Capitulation?

It's unusual for *SAR* (indeed, for any magazine) to lead, as we do below, with an exchange of views about an article published in a previous issue. And yet the questions raised are just too important to be allowed to languish in our back pages or merely to be consigned to some "Letters to the Editor" column. At stake, we feel, are fundamental matters about how we can best characterize the nature of the transition in contemporary South Africa and how

best we can cope politically with the fall-out from that transition.

Of course, this is not an unfamiliar theme in the pages of *SAR*, as faithful readers will know. But seldom has the issue been raised so starkly and unequivocally as Glenn Adler and Eddie Webster do here. Indeed, we value the forthrightness with which they put forward their case for "class compromise." It helps us to clarify our

own positions to have things spelled out quite so clearly, even though we remain deeply unconvinced by their arguments (their "class compromise" looks, under prevailing circumstances, much more like a call for "class capitulation" on the part of the working class). Indeed, with such analyses passing for common currency in South Africa, we are even more concerned about South Africa's future prospects than we might otherwise be.

It is not the task of this editorial to enter deeply into these issues, however. Fortunately, two of our number – Carolyn Bassett and Marlea Clarke, whose original article (“Alliance woes: COSATU pays the price,” *SAR* [Vol. 15 No. 1, December, 1999]) prompted Adler and Webster’s riposte – are available to make their own reply in these pages. We think they do so convincingly and in a way that may advance the debate.

We can, however, flag a couple of particularly crucial points here. For Adler and Webster, the key relationship in contemporary South Africa is that between economic growth on the one hand and democracy on the other. Their article is designed to illuminate the difficult trade-offs between these two goods.

Unfortunately, there are two things wrong with this central formulation. What if, as seems to be the case, mere capitulation to the dictates of the global economy cannot produce meaningful and transformative growth in South Africa in any likely or foreseeable future? What should trade unions and other organizations that seek to focus the concerns and energies of the popular classes (churches, women’s groups, civic associations, rural action groups and the like) do then? Our view: the possible realization of “growth” along current policy lines should not be written, as self-evident, into the assumptions of debates over these issues.

Secondly, at a point when business and government seem to be making the most of running behind a starkly neo-liberal, pro-business agenda, Adler and Webster counsel the working class not to rock the boat with untoward claims and demands. Why? For fear of jeopardizing democracy! But isn’t this, in essence, a “blame the victim” approach, one usually (and best) confined to the Olympian posturings of the doyens

of American-style political science and their progeny.

Adler and Webster are fond of likening the current situation to the political impasse of the early 1990s when constrained “negotiations” opened up new possibilities. Yet this is a dubious analogy. For one thing, as Bassett and Clarke make explicit in their reply, the present moment is not so much an impasse as a defeat for the popular classes. In point of fact, aren’t things less like the early 1990s and more like earlier moments during the anti-apartheid phase when regime intransigence seemed to offer, momentarily, no further space for manoeuvre and advance? The response then – as, arguably, it should be now – was not capitulation but renewed mobilization and re-imagined resistance: the refusal to take no for an answer.

Obviously, there is a crucial difference: the ANC, as last year’s electoral results made clear, is legitimate and hegemonic in a way that the apartheid regime never could hope to be. Hence the dreaded spectre of the “political wilderness,” much evoked by Adler and Webster, to which COSATU must not consign itself by any too precipitate action. But isn’t this merely to accept the tyranny of the status quo, to adopt a certain cock-eyed “realism” as self-fulfilling prophesy, and to unlearn the lessons of long years of struggle in South Africa. What if the trade unions were instead to think profane thoughts and imagine a reinvigoration of radical politics and an outreach to those broader constituencies of Africans left behind by the self-styled “African Renaissance” of the rising black middle class?

Such a step forward could, of course, take place within the Alliance or outside it: this is for South Africans in struggle to determine. But it is difficult not to think that this epitomizes precisely the kind of stark choices that will be offered the popular forces in South Africa in coming years. In our

view, concerned intellectuals should be preparing the ground, both inside South Africa and abroad, for a deeper understanding of such emerging imperatives within the country’s on-going drive for liberation, not further obfuscating the issues.

* * *

Beyond this debate, the present issue owns much to the industriousness of Tom Lodge. His own travels across the region in recent months to investigate processes of democratization have taken him to, amongst other places, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Namibia. It is difficult to take too much solace from the masterful accounts of developments in each of these countries that he has produced for us. Thus the Congo continues, on Kabila’s egregious watch, to be picked apart by regional jackals while SWAPO in Namibia is found to be reverting to its old tricks of launching scurrilous *ad hominem* attacks on opponents and wrapping itself in the flag to crush the fledgling Congress of Democrats at the polls.

Can the seeds of an active civil society that Lodge detects in the Congo begin to bear positive fruit despite the odds? Can CoD politicians of the quality of Ben Ulenga and Ignatius Shixwameni mount, both inside parliament and beyond, the kind of sustained critique of SWAPO’s policies that will eventually make them even more credible tribunes in the eyes of ordinary Namibians? Time alone will tell.

Meanwhile, farmworkers are stirring politically in Zimbabwe, confirms Blair Rutherford in this issue; gross corruption is being exposed around the infamous Lesotho dam project, reports Lori Pottinger; and the fight to redefine the nature of the apartheid debt and to resist its overbearing claims continues in South Africa, writes David Hemson. Class struggle or class snuggle in southern Africa? Still too close to call.

SAR

South Africa Class Compromise . . .



Ansell Horn - Impact Visuals

BY GLENN ADLER AND
EDDIE WEBSTER

*Glenn Adler and Eddie Webster are members of the Sociology of Work Unit at Wits University where they also teach in the Sociology Department. A related version of their argument here also appears in *Politics and Society*, v. 27, no. 3 (1999).*

As the editorial in the previous issue of *SAR* (Vol. 15 No. 1 [December, 1999]) suggested, current developments in South African politics appear to bolster arguments by those warning against the twin dangers of "corporatist entanglements" and labour's subordination within the Tripartite Alliance.

At first glance this is a tough position to refute.

Indeed, in an article in that same issue, Carolyn Bassett and Marlea Clarke ("Alliance woes: COSATU pays the price") persuasively argue that the ANC government has recently treated labour more like an enemy than an ally. In this year's public service wage dispute, for example, government used tactics many conservative private sector employers would hesitate to employ. Moreover, since the elections the government has reaffirmed the neoliberal GEAR strategy as the ideological lodestar for all policy initiatives, notwithstanding commitments to the contrary made in the October 1998 Jobs Summit. In short

the government is flexing its muscles: as would any government riding the wave of a two-thirds majority, and with an economic upturn (of sorts) to boot.

However, the issue is not so much the specific questions of whether the unions should end the alliance or eschew "entanglements." More important is a broad point that frames such choices: it is, we would assert, the near-impossibility of envisioning any progressive option outside the alliance and outside of precisely such "corporatist entanglements" as are evoked by such critics.

The political wilderness

It is difficult, first of all, to imagine that life would be easier for COSATU in the political wilder-

ness or that it could exit the alliance without suffering a debilitating internal split. And unless one can sketch a credible alternative to the alliance, calls for its dissolution amount to little more than posturing. Clarke and Basset noticeably – and sensibly – stop well short of advocating such a break.

Nor are their criticisms of COSATU's handling of the recent strikes evidence that the unions should forego "entanglements" in macroeconomic and development policy making and implementation. Of course, Bassett and Clarke rightly argue that unions should broaden their agenda to include public service restructuring, training and skills development, and workplace reorganization. But it is difficult to understand how these goals could be attained save through some form of sustained multi-level involvement with capital and the state, whatever name one attaches to such participation.

Moreover, whatever position one adopts with respect to the tripartite alliance, the temptation of linking the twin dangers mentioned above should be avoided, as this risks missing the main point.

South Africa is in the midst of two difficult transformations: the deepening of a democratic order and the reconstruction of the economy. These two processes are potentially contradictory and their interaction may simultaneously undermine both democracy and growth. At the same time, it is difficult to see how one can be achieved at the expense of the other.

In a recent critical review of the latest business-side neo-liberal conjuring, van Zyl Slabbert asked "where are the historical examples of democratic stability and vigorous market-driven growth in countries with a high degree of socio-economic inequality?" (*Business Day*, 6 October 1999) This, he suggests, is "the political dilemma confronting the ANC." Indeed, he might have added that this is the central dilemma for

all in the policy arena: business, trade unions, political parties, community organizations. No one of these actors – including government – has been able to win overall consent for their development ideas, nor have they been able to impose their maximum agendas on others. If government has achieved a degree of quiescence, hegemony remains elusive.

This situation presents labour, and COSATU in particular, with a difficult strategic choice. It can accept government's terms – thus marginalizing itself while risking internal divisions when opposition to GEAR intensifies among its rank and file. A second option is that it simply opposes GEAR, and risks open confrontation with government and business, leading to a degenerating economic stalemate. Neither of these options overcomes Slabbert's dilemma: they will not produce consent for GEAR, nor will they succeed in imposing an alternative; moreover the conflicts generated will likely be destructive of democracy.

In short, either path leads to a destructive stalemate which is in no one's interest. This suggests the need for a third option: opposing GEAR with the aim of reaching a negotiated compromise, thus opening up the possibility of a non-zero sum solution in which the social costs of adjustment are not borne by one party alone. We call this a class compromise.

We need to be clear about the possible options. The idea that South Africa could pursue an oppressive path – "the Chilean option" – is rejected even by many conservatives. Nor is a "revolutionary rupture" likely. Either strategy would be met with considerable resistance and would jeopardize both growth and democracy.

Nor is a conventional high-wage high-productivity social democratic exchange between capital and labour possible in our circumstances. And we cannot return

to the statist developmentalist path pursued through the 1970s by many third world countries.

Any compromise must be suited to South African conditions: a fragile democracy in a low-growth, labour-surplus, highly unequal economy. It must address simultaneously problems of growth and redistribution, but in a fashion that does not sacrifice democracy: it cannot be imposed from above. Whether or not COSATU remains inside the tripartite alliance does not alter this problem.

In this article we argue that a compromise is, both desirable and possible, though we are mindful of the many obstacles in its path.

Class compromise

What would such a compromise look like and under what conditions would it be possible?

Essentially it consists of three elements: "regulated flexibility" in which labour and business negotiate variation in employment standards; social citizenship yielding basic income security; and increased corporate taxes to finance social security.

Labour's pursuit of high wages and high job security may in certain circumstances be self-defeating. Inflexibility may encourage employers to choose labour-saving technology, to subcontract work, or to employ undocumented workers. These possibilities will lead to shell agreements: high standards on paper which apply to fewer and fewer workers in reality. On the other hand, variation may lead to a downward levelling of working and living conditions, with little increase in employment. Wage stability and variation would be more likely to have the desired effects when they are combined with social citizenship and are determined through bargaining.

Social citizenship includes: the right to income security; other forms of welfare such as education, health,

and shelter; a right to share to the full in the social heritage; and the right to live in a safe environment. This simultaneously addresses many of the conditions necessary for improving productivity alongside a modest redistributive mechanism for the poor and unemployed and some compensation for those workers who have made wage and labour standards concessions. For the latter, it allows cuts in nominal wages without unduly sacrificing workers' real standard of living.

Variation depends upon a second compromise: that workers gain increased influence over investment decisions and productivity gains to ensure that surpluses generated by growth do not accrue to business alone. This could be done at the workplace and industry levels through forms of co-determination, while at societal level it could be achieved through agreements over macroeconomic policy that encourage growth and redistribution.

The integration of labour market variation and welfare allows a degree of "regulated flexibility" in the labour market - greater job and wage differentiation - in return for a minimum standard of benefits, thereby ameliorating the impact on workers of variation. Variation gives incentives to individual capitals - particularly in small, labour-intensive firms - to invest and create jobs, while the social wage provides workers at the lower end of the labour market and the unemployed with a degree of income security. Moreover, labour will be more accommodating of flexibility where workers' concessions can be offset by a system of public benefits. These benefits are extremely important in a labour-surplus economy where job creation will be slow, while the consequences of adjustment are felt immediately.

"Regulated flexibility" also means that the specific terms of the concessions should be determined in negotiations through the current in-

dustrial relations institutions. These enable workers and employers to reach agreements appropriate to a specific context and to negotiate improvements as conditions improve, thereby helping to ensure that concessions do not become permanent.

If regulated flexibility provides capital with incentives to participate in the compromise, this incentive is not open-ended. Business not only gives up a measure of control over profit and investment to workers, but also concedes power to the state. It must accept being brought fully into the state's tax regime where taxation of the increased profits helps fund the redistributive and productivist welfare policies.

The interlocking concessions and gains of the class compromise are oriented towards the stability of profit over the longer term as opposed to high rates of return in the short-term. Such a compromise would not involve one accord, but a series of agreements struck at different levels and involving an array of organizations. The range of institutions that have emerged in South Africa suit this pattern of compromise: framework agreements at NEDLAC, industry-based bargaining councils and accords, workplace agreements between business and unions, and local and regional development pacts forged in fora that include interests beyond business and labour.

In this compromise workers gain jobs, social security and a voice in decision-making. Business gains a more productive workforce and flexibility conducive to job creation, while committing itself to longer-term productive investment. The state achieves economic growth, increased tax revenues, and stability.

Compromise should not be seen simply as a way of disciplining workers, but as a conflictual process, the results of which may produce all parties' loyalty to democracy. In this sense the interlocking concessions and gains are a way of re-

solving the dilemma between growth and democracy.

Possible?

But if a compromise is desirable, is it possible?

Finding the answer lies in examining the conditions that produced South Africa's political miracle. First, the parties have to reach stalemate. Second, the stalemate has to lead to a situation where the costs of not compromising outweigh the perceived gains of standing fast. Third, the parties must have access to - or create - institutional arrangements that allow bargained agreements. Fourth, organizations must represent their constituencies effectively and be able to mobilize and restrain their followers. Fifth, individuals must be willing to risk making strategic choices that may break with their organization's prior commitments. Finally, international conditions must be conducive to a settlement.

The first condition - a policy stalemate - has emerged. Government refuses to negotiate revisions to GEAR. In the face of the policy's inability to generate growth or employment, their best offer remains more of the same, combined with growing impatience with trade unions. The employers' "triumph" lies in the apparent omnipotence of globalization and its supposed capacity to discipline labour. They remain committed to an even purer version of GEAR and labour market flexibility. Labour pursues many of these compromises in practice, but its rhetoric and official policies block its capacity to make wage and labour market concessions strategically. This has had profound consequences for the movement: internally it has hindered strategic thinking, while publicly it makes the unions' positions less credible to supporters and bargaining partners alike. It often concedes the flexibility business seeks without gaining much in return.

A year ago the Jobs Summit achieved an unexpectedly high de-



Julio Etchart - Impact Visuals

gree of convergence. Notwithstanding differences about specific reforms, the parties implicitly accepted that increased investment and economic growth on their own would not generate employment unless yoked to a comprehensive job creation program, public works, and a social security system. Moreover the summit declared that macroeconomic policy must enjoy "broad

support" in society such that no group can perceive "that they carry the full burden of the costs and enjoy none of the benefits of this reform." The Summit presupposed an activist state and a strong emphasis on reaching agreement through bargaining, and came close to the terms of our proposed class compromise. But the Summit's agreements have since unravelled.

The second condition for a compromise has not been met: the parties do not perceive that the benefits of compromising outweigh the costs of standing fast. The government interpreted its recent electoral victory as vindication for GEAR and as a mandate to "go it alone." Business heartily endorses this position: "We've never had it so good," the *Financial Mail* trumpeted in a review of GEAR. For labour, there is no evidence that strike settlements were better than those achieved via negotiations, despite a significant rise in strike activity in 1998.

If increased industrial action did not yield benefits for most strikers, it certainly discouraged employers from investing or expanding employment. Such conflict may contribute to a circle of economic decline, yet it is unlikely that conflict has been sufficient to discipline all parties into a class compromise. The danger is that the many institutions through which agreements can be reached – the third condition for a compromise – may wither if the parties do not accept the merits of bargaining.

Nor do the fourth and fifth conditions exist. It is unclear whether the parties can summon their constituencies to support a compromise, or that leaders will make bold departures and tough strategic choices. Labour may lack the capacity to make effective use of the institutions it helped create.

It is not necessarily the weakest link, however. Business associations are not encompassing, and cannot effectively discipline their members. The state may lack the resources and capacity to play the ambitious role outlined above. And the greatest problems exist in the community sector, with its plurality of competing interests, and relatively undeveloped organizations.

Surprisingly, the sixth condition is beginning to be realized. Economists are increasingly calling for some regulation over the perverse

forms of financial instability generated by globalization.

* * *

All this is not to say that a class compromise is impossible. True, South Africa's political compromise was a rare achievement, and whether it can be repeated in the economy remains to be seen. Moreover, continued stalemate and a descent into violence are quite possible. Paradoxically, however, these facts also provide the strongest incentives

for South Africa to achieve what many people believe – as they did in the 1980s – a seemingly impossible task.

We therefore repeat: to argue that COSATU should withdraw from the tripartite alliance risks missing the point. It may be true that its involvement encumbers its ability to act independently in certain circumstances. Yet no one has demonstrated how it could operate effectively in the

political wilderness, especially when the overwhelming majority of its membership wishes to remain in the alliance – even if the ANC fails to deliver.

The key question concerns the tension between deepening democracy and promoting economic reconstruction. If our suggestion of a class compromise is undesirable or fanciful, critics will have to show what real alternatives can best resolve this tension. **SAR**

... Class Struggle

BY CAROLYN BASSETT & MARLEA CLARKE

Carolyn Bassett is completing a doctoral dissertation on COSATU and the economic transition. Marlea Clarke is completing a doctoral dissertation on the trend toward casualization in the South African service sector.

How can COSATU “operate effectively in the political wilderness” that would be its lot if it left the Alliance? Adler and Webster request that all critics of the status quo in South Africa address this dilemma.

Yet what we hoped readers took away from our article in the previous issue of *SAR* was that

such a question itself has been rendered irrelevant now that the ANC has demonstrated that it will not seek such a compromise with COSATU. If what Adler and Webster mean by ‘political wilderness’ is the marginalization of organized labour in macro-economic policy making and implementation,



Henner Frankenfeld – PictureNET Africa

then COSATU is already in 'the political wilderness.' Thus, its continuation in the Alliance under the present terms hampers its ability to shape the conditions under which the South African working class lives.

As Bassett had also noted in a previous issue of *SAR* [Vol. 14 No. 3, May 1999], COSATU's efforts in 1996 and 1997 to reconstitute the Alliance on terms that would give labour more influence over the government's program have come to naught. The real question, as we see it, is how can the COSATU leadership continue to advance the interests and needs of its members in national negotiations without leaving the Alliance? And if this is not possible, how can COSATU leave the Alliance without engendering a split within the federation?

It is precisely this dilemma for organized labour that we believe Adler and Webster miss when they suggest once again that labour's political program should be specifically designed to promote class compromise despite clear indications that such a project is not working out in favour of organized labour or the working class. It is the same dilemma that we believe the COSATU leadership has been avoiding despite all the problems that such participation has entailed, a few of which we outlined in the previous issue of *SAR*.

Negotiated class compromise

Adler and Webster's argument, in a nutshell, is that a negotiated class compromise is a desirable and feasible mechanism to advance growth, redistribution and democratization in South Africa. They make two main claims. One is that in any policy negotiations that involve the state (or the state and business), not to mention collective bargaining with employers, organized labour must explicitly and deliberately seek a class compromise. To do otherwise risks securing gains for some

unionized workers at a cost to economic growth and job creation for the majority. The second claim they make is that organized labour, and specifically COSATU, can best pursue class compromise by remaining within the Alliance. The only alternative, the authors twice assert, is the aforementioned 'political wilderness.'

On the first point, Adler and Webster put forward a vision of economic restructuring that is premised on 'regulated flexibility' and social citizenship. As a 'trade-off,' COSATU would no longer seek improvements in real wages and stronger regulations to protect job security. It is worth examining their case in some detail.

The extent to which Adler and Webster have accepted and incorporated neo-liberal criticisms of trade union demands as illegitimate and privileging 'special interests' is quickly evident.

But since when can the wages of even the most strongly organized black workers really be considered 'high'? Glenn Adler's careful empirical analysis summarized in a 1996 article co-authored with Gerald O'Sullivan (in Jeremy Baskin, *Against the Current*), concluded that "the entire argument that unionists' benefits come at the expense of the non-unionised collapses into little more than a heap of self-serving propositions. ... Redistribution from unionised workers to the great mass of non-unionised workers – whether employed, unemployed or in the informal sector – will merely rearrange a limited supply of resources among the under-privileged."

Since 1994, wage increases for the working class have barely held pace with the inflation rate and in too many cases fell below. There is no national minimum wage in South Africa and bargaining councils in the various economic sectors set wages for most workers. Yet only about 13 percent of formal sector work-

ers, excluding agriculture, are covered by the country's 76 bargaining councils. Most workers, therefore, are not covered by union agreements and are protected only by the most basic labour legislation. About 37 percent of formal sector workers earn less than the poverty line. Many clothing workers still earn between 52 Rand (\$13.00) and 77 Rand (\$19.00) per week. And despite claims by business that a more flexible labour market and lower wages will foster international competitiveness, labour costs in many South African sectors are lower than those in other countries. Labour costs in the clothing, spinning and weaving industries, for example, are lower than in Turkey, Mexico, South Korea or Taiwan. High material costs, outdated machinery and management's lack of innovation – not high labour costs – are what make these sectors relatively uncompetitive.

Indeed, it is a matter of considerable debate whether 'high wages' and 'high job security' are the cause of the high level of unemployment in South Africa. A 1996 study of wages, productivity, flexibility and unemployment undertaken by the ILO concluded that there was no clear causal link and in fact little correlation between labour costs and labour shedding.

'Regulated flexibility'

Adler and Webster propose that the trade-off for labour's acquiescence in a 'regulated flexibility' regime should be gaining influence over investment decisions and productivity strategies to ensure that some of the benefits of growth would also accrue to workers. They make this suggestion as if five years of legislative change to put such a framework into place had not already occurred. Yet although labour laws introduced during the ANC's first term of office explicitly aimed to permit consultation, these laws have limited the terms of that consultation so strictly that the real purpose seems to have been to promote

labour flexibility, pure and simple. The 1997 Basic Conditions of Employment Act, for example, provides for the downward variation of many standards. Continuing the trend towards granting small businesses exemptions from legislation, the Minister of Labour recently announced that certain provisions of the Act will not apply to them.

So workers and unions have already been pushed to accept increased flexibility. But what of the *quid pro quo*? Adler and Webster fail to draw our attention to any instances where workers gained more influence over investment decisions or productivity gains, perhaps precisely because they are so hard to find. Contrary to what Adler and Webster hope will happen, benefits like increased worker participation haven't been realized. Instead, workers have mainly experienced the negative effects of increased labour flexibility. Management has successfully pushed unions to sign agreements outlining processes of flexibility. Indeed, it is increasingly common for South African employers to use 'flexi-workers': casual labour, contract labour, subcontracting to smaller firms, home workers, labour brokers and temporary agencies. Many industries now frequently draw on 'independent contractors,' and may even re-trench workers and hire them back as 'independent contractors.' As such, these workers are not employees as defined in the Labour Relations Act, and consequently, they are not protected by labour legislation and do not fall under bargaining council agreements. It is therefore very difficult to see how pursuing more 'regulated flexibility' would reverse current employment trends.

As for macro-economic policy, the government's refusal to negotiate or revise GEAR is only part of the story (albeit an important part). Large areas of macro-economic policy are removed by statute from policy negotiations. For example, the constitution guarantees the

autonomy of the Central Bank. COSATU's repeated demands (and those of some government ministers and business leaders) that the central bank's policy of keeping interest rates highly positive (at least 6 percent above the rate of inflation) have gone nowhere. Such policy is not negotiated at all at the Monetary and Fiscal Policy Chamber of the tripartite (business-labour-government) National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), even though monetary policy is part of the Chamber's mandate. Fiscal policy, likewise, is the purview of the National Council of Provinces and again beyond the scope of the NEDLAC Chamber even though it also falls within the Chamber's mandate. Unless the government explicitly seeks the input of organized labour there is virtually no way to influence such policy. Yet the Minister of Finance is so hostile to policy negotiations that no consultation occurs. A new Minister of Finance might be more open to seeking the counsel of labour, but nonetheless we would be talking about advice that the government would be free to accept or disregard as it chose. And the ANC government as a whole has already shown with the GEAR debate how it will treat labour's input on macroeconomic policy questions.

In short, the South African government has refused to accord any real power to labour over investment or productivity decisions. Despite new legislation that codifies and sometimes expands worker participation, unions continue to have limited voice in their workplaces. Issues that usually dominate management-worker meetings are petty issues (like where workers can go for smoke breaks) unrelated to productivity or workplace restructuring. And when unions are presented with restructuring plans and invited to respond they are ill equipped to do so. Unions often lack the capacity and specific knowledge of what to ask for even when they have access to company information. When the

books are 'open,' unions often are overwhelmed and don't know how to make sense of it all quickly enough to develop a counter-proposal to management's restructuring plan. While we do not reject the idea of worker participation, the experience to date suggests that the 'right' to participate is meaningless in many workplaces and for many unions. In some cases, 'participation' means little more than being consulted about the general terms of their members' retrenchment packages. A gain for the union movement? We hardly think so.

As a trade-off for accepting the dubious 'regulated flexibility,' Adler and Webster propose what they call 'social citizenship,' by which they mean a social wage. And yet the prospect that sufficient resources will be allocated to provide a social wage by a government that has prioritized cutting government spending is rather bleak. The tendency, as several *SAR* articles have noted, instead has been to provide basic goods such as water and electricity on the basis of "full cost recovery" – user fees – that accrue to for-profit enterprises that are sub-contracted to deliver services to townships. So township dwellers are charged more for their electricity than people living in middle class homes in established (during the apartheid era) areas since the fees for those who receive new hook-ups must cover the installation costs as well as the usage costs. Moreover, they are expected to pay in advance, an indignity that the middle class is not required to suffer.

Adler and Webster suggest that there is a third element to their vision – increased corporate taxes. Perhaps because increasing corporate taxes needs little explanation they don't discuss it at all in the body of their article. And yet as with 'regulated flexibility' and 'social citizenship,' proposals to increase corporate taxes enter a political context in which business has already established its case with the

government that its taxes are too high. This further suggests that the working class must greet any call for a 'social wage' with great scepticism.

Although Adler and Webster raise some important points when they analyze the prospects for a negotiated class compromise over economic policy, their analogy to the South African "political miracle" seems particularly inappropriate. There is no real stalemate. Rather, there is a growing consensus about macro-economic policy, with government and business extremely successful in pursuing their policy agendas. Labour is increasingly marginalized. At the time of writing, the Minister of Labour had just announced that a "team of legal experts" would review labour legislation and draft amendments to it. The key challenge for labour will be to ensure that new policies don't alter the fundamental architecture of the Bill of Rights. With the current labour regime under so much pressure, it is likely that the union movement will focus on defending existing legislation rather than fighting for more rights. In no way do these challenges or struggles suggest that a stalemate has been reached.

In this context, we believe, it is labour's strength through mobilization and the clarity of its goals – not its willingness to forego mobilization and to propose the terms of the compromise – that will permit the best terms for organized workers. And the willingness "to risk making strategic choices that may break with their organization's prior commitments" that Adler and Webster suggest is necessary for successful political negotiations is an explicit request to circumvent worker democracy in order to cut a deal. Finally, Adler and Webster fail entirely to address the question of what COSATU is to do if neither the government nor business is the slightest bit interested in a compromise.

Adler and Webster may feel that they have proposed a workable ap-

proach. Their compromise implies that workers must accept lower wages and worse working conditions but these concessions might be mitigated by social citizenship – especially if there was a real and meaningful right to income security. But proposing such a compromise now as if organized workers could rely upon business and the government to uphold their parts of the bargain means ignoring the political developments of the past five years. To ask COSATU to ignore these developments also threatens to make labour vulnerable to demands for further concessions.

Compromise or capitulation?

In the past, when labour has moderated its demands to facilitate a compromise, it has quickly found that business' approach was maximalist and intransigent and that the government would renege on deals and side with business. The most notable instance was when workers agreed to accept tariff cuts in exchange for what they thought was a commitment by the state to support industrial restructuring that would aim to preserve jobs – an agreement that the government refused to carry through.

What Adler and Webster are proposing, in short, is nothing new. They have been making the same arguments time and again for many years. Such an approach already has guided the behaviour of COSATU since at least early 1993 – to the detriment of workers, as it seems increasingly clear. The only thing that is new is that Adler and Webster have further scaled back what they feel labour can legitimately demand!

In this context, Adler and Webster's second assertion that COSATU must remain in the Alliance to pursue its political agenda is particularly unsettling because it limits the federation's political options so much. To claim that the only historical possibilities that COSATU can contemplate are a

marginalized and paralyzing role within the Alliance or 'political wilderness' surely misrepresents its options. Even if a new 'worker's party' or affiliation with an independent SACP is not in the cards, withdrawal from the Alliance does not automatically imply political marginalization nor even, necessarily, an end to political collaboration with the ANC, especially with sympathetic Parliament members. And it certainly does not mean withdrawal from NEDLAC or other negotiation bodies – or a diminished role.

Allowing the ANC to believe that COSATU will never leave because the federation could not face 'the political wilderness,' also gives the government an important bargaining chip, serving in turn as a source of political vulnerability for COSATU.

So surely Adler and Webster need to reconsider their position on the Alliance. The evidence that we have presented here and in the previous article suggests that it is COSATU's very membership in the Alliance that is hampering a clear assessment of the political and strategic options that organized labour faces. A weak and compromised COSATU does not serve its membership. And since the ANC is demonstrably not interested in using the Alliance or tripartite structures to put forward a 'progressive' alternative that is shaped by labour's stated needs and goals then analytically it would seem that breaking the Alliance makes a good deal of sense.

Of course, there are real difficulties with contemplating leaving the Alliance. Adler and Webster are correct that breaking with the Alliance could quite possibly split COSATU itself. But it seems to us that this would have been more likely in the period before the 1999 election than right now. Surely COSATU is not so weak that it could not survive such a discussion at this opportune moment.

S A R

“Democracy May Yet Happen”

Tom Lodge in the Congo

BY TOM LODGE

Tom Lodge is Research Director at the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa and Professor of Political Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand. He visited Kinshasa in October.

A cease-fire does not constitute a peace. The Lusaka Accord, signed by many of the adversaries in the Congo between July and August, was a significant achievement as it represented a serious effort to address the security issues of the conflict as well as the political tensions that lie at the heart of the Congo's crisis. However, as recent events suggest, much can still go wrong.

From civil war to stalemate

The Accord brought about a cessation in an eleven-month civil war that had its origins in the military operation which brought Laurent Kabila to power in 1997. Kabila is a veteran of the anti-Mobutu opposition with a political pedigree dating back to his involvement in guerilla movements during the mid-1960s. Despite this, his accession in 1997 was mainly a consequence of his adoption as a figurehead by Uganda and Rwanda in their effort to bring down the Mobutu administration through an invasion that consequently also ended Zaire-backed insurgencies across their borders. Kabila's force was drawn from Rwandan soldiers.

In August 1998 an anti-Kabila revolt/mutiny was supported by Uganda and Rwanda. It began after Kabila ordered all Rwandan soldiers to leave the country on August 2, accusing them of plotting a coup. The Rwandans were becoming increasingly annoyed by Kabila's

reluctance, or his inability, to act decisively against the *Interahamwe* militia, an anti-Tutsi Rwandan force which had been partly responsible for the Rwandan genocide in 1994.

After a fairly rapid progression in which the rebels captured key centres in the eastern provinces, Kabila's ability to enlist the military aid of foreign allies caused the fight-



Laurent Kabila

Adil Bradlow - PictureNET Africa

ing to develop into a stalemate. This opened the way for the endorsement of the Zambian/South African-sponsored Accord by the six governments involved. The Congolese rebels signed later after an internal conflict within the main rebel group, the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD).

Two factions of the RCD now exist, one based in Kisangani, backed by Uganda, and led by an elderly history professor, Wamba dia Wamba, and the other ensconced in Goma and presided over by the more assertive Emile Illungu, who enjoys Rwandan support. Wamba dia Wamba is apparently concerned about the motivations informing Rwandan influence, as he believes that the RCD risks becoming reduced to an agency underpinning Rwandan/Banyamulenge security rather than a force for Congolese

liberation. The Goma-based faction is bigger, though reports in October indicate an upsurge in discontent within it in reaction to high-handed behaviour by Illungu and his mishandling of financial matters. In RCD areas, Ugandan and Rwandan commanders often play a leading governing role. For example, Uganda's Brigadier James Kazini has decreed new provincial boundaries and has set up investment trusts. Local people are displeased because of the RCD administration's habit of not paying its bills, as well as its inability to sell locally-grown produce in Kinshasa. Goma-RCD soldiers are unpaid for long periods and hence depend on whatever they can extract from civilians.

Another rebel signatory to the Accord is the *Mouvement pour la libération du Congo* (MLC), led by a former Zairean army officer, Jean

Peirre Bemba, the son of one of Kabila's cabinet ministers. The MLC operates in Equateur province and this year it captured Gbadolite, Mobutu's home town, twice. It musters about 10,000 soldiers and reports suggest it organized local elections and attempted to install some kind of civilian administration in the areas under its control. A third insurgent grouping, more ephemeral than the RCD factions or the MLC, is the *Union des nationalistes républicains pour la libération* (UNAREL) formed by members of Mobutu's former presidential guard. On March 2, it captured Bolobo, a city 400 kilometres upstream from Kinshasa. It is based in Congo-Brazzaville, and it has not signed the Lusaka Accord.

The difficulties of peacekeeping

The Accord's security provisions include the establishment of a Joint



Zimbabwe soldiers, in August 1998, supporting Kabila's government forces against rebels.

T.J. Lemon - PictureNET Africa

Military Commission, a sixteen-person body composed of two delegates from each belligerent. This body was meant to supervise peacekeeping operations until the arrival of UN forces, yet the UN is unlikely to support a full-scale peacekeeping force. At the moment, the UN presence is limited to a mission of 18 officers though there are plans to expand this group to ninety unarmed observers who will be based at the field headquarters of the different military forces. The OAU has sponsored a comparable mission. For more extensive operations, it seems quite likely that the combatants may be required to transform themselves into a peacekeeping body. This would itself be difficult as the main task for peacekeepers would extend well beyond conventional peacekeeping operations. They would be expected to disarm the *Interahamwe* militia, and dispatch any *génocidaires* amongst them to the Arusha war crimes tribunal. Rounding up the *Interahamwe* represents a massive project as estimates of their numbers range from 15,000 to 45,000, and many are well armed. If they are not suppressed, the Rwandan security anxieties that fuelled this latest round of Congolese warfare will intensify.

To date, Kabila's ascendancy has largely remained dependent on his foreign allies, in particular, the Zimbabweans, who offered the largest and best equipped of the local armies available, with 10,000 soldiers present. According to an October 5, 1999 article in *Business Day*, Zimbabwe spent US\$166 million in the first half of 1999 alone. But Zimbabwe cannot maintain its present expenditure on this force much longer. If its members are to remain, then someone else will have to pay. If they go, then a major source of security for the Kabila administration will have departed. At the moment, most of the key strategic points in Kinshasa and Katanga are guarded by Zimbabweans, but they are not popular among the lo-

cal citizens, not least because of the public belief that the Congolese government pays for their presence and that in Kinshasa, they receive free board and lodging at expensive hotels. As Zimbabwe's commitment to Kabila's cause looks increasingly uncertain, the Kinshasa government has made the effort to reinvigorate the Congolese Armed Forces.

The establishment of a Joint Military Commission, the deployment of a peacekeeping force, and the disarming of militias were each intended to have been accomplished within four months of the Accord's initial signing in July. However, the United Nations was only able to dispatch a twelve-person preparatory team to rebel-held cities in early November after arriving in Kinshasa on October 20th; the Commission has barely functioned even though both South Africa and the European Union made contributions to its budget; the UN Security Council rejected Kofi Annan's recommendation that it should sponsor a force of 500 military observers. Five months after the signing of the Accord, its main military objectives seem as far away as ever.

Renewed fighting

After a fortnight of the different sides trading accusations of cease-fire violations, full-scale fighting resumed in mid-November in Equateur between the DRC army and the MLC, followed by a flare-up in hostilities between government soldiers and Angola's UNITA in the province adjacent to Kinshasa, Bas-Congo. In the eastern regions, Zimbabwean and Namibian soldiers once again went to war with the RCD rebels. Complicating matters further, Mai-Mai militias, one of the groupings excluded from the Accord have intermittently clashed with RCD and Ugandan soldiers in Kasai since mid-November. There are a number of other guerilla groups and militias, Congolese and foreign, which cannot be accommodated within the Accord without upsetting one of the main

signatories and that must, therefore, be forcibly disarmed. Heavy rainfall at the beginning of December, as well as the flooding of the Congo river may bring this phase of conflict to a temporary halt, though it seems unlikely that it would ren-



James Stejskal - PictureNET Africa

der the Congolese adversaries more amenable to reconciliation. The renewal in fighting was accompanied by martial broadcasting from Kinshasa in which Kabila promised his supporters victory and described his opponents as "Rwandan dogs... adventurers." Bill-boards have been erected along the main roads around

Kinshasa reminding its citizens that "Peace has a price; you have to earn it" and that "The price of dignity is the vanquishing of the oppressor." The fighting was also preceded by a major series of DRC arms procurements including six Antonov aircraft as well as Scud missiles. 70,000 new recruits are undergoing training.

Political challenge ahead

Supposing, though, that the military objectives of the Accord were achieved before the end of the rainy season encourages a resumption of warfare, many of the deeper political sources of tension would still remain. Oddly enough, the concerns of the main body of Congolese rebels, the RCD, may be relatively easy to address. The RCD is largely drawn from Congolese Tutsis, the Banyamulenge, descendants of migrants from Rwanda, whose Congolese citizenship was withdrawn in 1981. Restoring their civic status may not be welcomed in the congested areas they occupy or amongst Kinshasa political leaders, but such a measure is considered conceivable by Congolese analysts, even though the 1992 National Conference refused restoration of citizenship to this group. The two other rebel groups, the *Mouvement pour la libération du Congo* (MLC) and the *Union des nationalistes républicains* (UNAREL) are both more ephemeral than the RCD and they too could be accommodated through amnesty provisions, especially for former Mobutistes. None of these groups have the political stature to become major forces in any democratic contest; hence attempting to incorporate them within a new political framework will not require major concessions from the governing authorities. The more profound political challenges lie outside the issues which provoked the anti-Kabila rebellion.

The Accord refers to a National Dialogue that is to begin within 45 days of the signing of the Accord and to close 45 days later

with agreement on a new political dispensation. Long since this deadline, the Dialogue has yet to begin, though the signatories initially agreed that the same group that played such a key role in Mozambique's transition, the Church grouping *Santo Egidio*, should play the role of facilitator. In addition, none of the Congo's 400 or so political parties has obtained legal registration, mainly because the conditions imposed by the Kabila administration are far too demanding. Kabila's Decree 194, issued in January 1999, makes party registration conditional on a \$10,000 deposit, evidence of organization in every province, leadership locally resident for at least a year, and no foreign affiliations. Laurent Kabila has called for a "National Debate" to precede the Dialogue but opposition groups rejected this proposal, viewing it as an effort by the government to set the constitutional agenda and to restrict participation in the Dialogue.

Of the political parties there are only a few to which local commentators attribute any significance, including Etienne Tshisekedi's *Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social* (UDPS), supposedly the largest and best organized Congolese political party. Its main support is in Kasai province. Tshisekedi was a prime minister in 1992 during the period when Mobutu was reluctantly making concessions to the democratic opposition. He was imprisoned for a year or so by Kabila and released in July 1998, on the eve of a currency reform. His public standing now is uncertain. There is also Andre Bo-Boliko's *Parti social chrétien*, and the *Parti Lumumbiste unifié*, led by yet another 1960's old-timer, Antoine Gizenga, apparently the strongest opposition group in Kinshasa itself. None of the political parties can claim an organized following. Their leadership has little experience of open-structured forms of mobilization, and by necessity has had to function in a clandestine

way. Judgements about the respective support of each party must remain speculative.

Meanwhile to fill the political vacuum, the government organized about 400 or so *Comités de pouvoir populaire* (CPPS). These local bodies, clustered chiefly around Kinshasa and Lumumbashi, perform a number of administrative duties, including the suppression of black market trade. Kabila's spokesmen clearly view them as serving a political representative function, and in the centre of Kinshasa their members are easy to spot with their T-shirts emblazoned with the legend: "Mzee Kabila, voici votre base." Kabila's critics view the CPPs as building blocks for a renascent one-party state. The language used by Kabila's admirers suggests that they may have a point. Raphael Ghenda, Kabila's spokesman, described the establishment of the CPPs as the work of "the creator, the thinker, the initiator, the master craftsman, and the chief architect." However, even some of Kabila's supporters are sceptical about the extent to which the CPPs embody committed public support for the president. A writer in a generally pro-government newspaper noted that while the CPPs were a good idea at their inception, the rush to join them was a prime example of "l'opportunisme du Congolaise." For each of the Committees in the communes of Kinshasa, the administration has budgeted Cf80,000 (US\$20,000). This money is officially intended to be spent on public works projects, but no plans for these exist either in central government or in municipalities. Even so the funds have been handed over to the CPPs whose members spend it as they please. There are now plans to establish armed local defense militias that will act under the authority of the Committees.

Stability?

In fairness to the government, the areas under its control have succeeded in establishing a measure of economic stability, and even

the illegal trading operations use the reformed local currency. In Kinshasa there is plenty of food available in the open-air market, most of it supplied from the capital's traditional economic hinterland in the Congo basin, a region in which the authorities have concentrated development expenditure. How many can afford to buy it is another question, since, according to local charities, many of Kinshasa's citizens eat a proper meal only every other day. Privatization of certain services such as airlines and cellular telephones have made life a little easier for the middle class, though the official cost of petrol remains a public grievance.

For the first year or so, the administration acquired a measure of popularity in Kinshasa due primarily to its efforts to combat corruption, slow down the rate of inflation successfully, and repair infrastructure and restore services. The expenditure on the war caused a swift deterioration in the quality of administration, especially away from the main cities. In any case, effectively the country is now divided between four separate administrations. Yet, even in the areas under Kabila's authority communication can be very difficult. For example, road travel to Kasai can take several days. Inflation has also accelerated: in September 1999, for example, the price of a cup of rice in Kinshasa's market increased from Cf2.70 to Cf4.00, a tin of powdered milk cost one third more, and the cost of firewood doubled. Inflation is projected to reach 300 per cent by the end of the year, in comparison to the low level of 7.3 per cent achieved in the first six months of 1997. 100,000 formal jobs have been lost since the war according to the *Confédération générale du travail du Congo*, and more livelihoods are threatened as a consequence of Kabila's recent ban on "triangular trade" (petty hawking by civilians).

It is just as important not to underestimate the capability of the Congolese state as it is not to overestimate its strengths. Much of the administrative deterioration is quite recent. In 1984, the government was capable of conducting a well-managed national census, though it may also be indicative that statistical analysis of this particular achievement was continuing as late as 1993. At a more mundane level routine civic order is still maintained by the yellow jacketed traffic policemen who stand on podiums at every intersection in the major cities.

Democracy?

Kabila's government does indeed have an authoritarian predisposition. While tiny newspapers do print plenty of critical commentary there are almost weekly arrests of journalists. On November 7, 1999, Polycarpe Okwoy, the editor of *Solidarité*, was detained by armed men who arrived at his office after his newspaper printed a story that the finance minister had been imprisoned. However, official bullying may be more the result of entrenched reflexes amongst officials (including the 27 separate police forces inherited from Mobutu) than any systematic intention to impose dictatorship. Fifty years ago this was one of the most authoritarian colonial territories in Africa; even today at sunrise and sunset people still stand to attention as the flag is raised and lowered, just as they did then, though perhaps with different emotions. Laurent Kabila's government is publicly committed to the principles of dialogue inherent in the Accord with their implicit messages of tolerance and power-sharing. Yet, such commitments are in uneasy juxtaposition with the charismatic cult which has developed around Kabila's persona. Large, expensively printed posters bearing his portrait adorn the main streets. Even uniformed civil servants wear his face on lapel badges.

But democracy may yet happen. It is important to remember that just before Kabila's accession the politicians had reached consensus on a draft constitution. And though the political opposition lacks structure (without a trade union base it was very easy for Kabila to suppress dissenters) the Congo still retains an extraordinarily impressive human rights movement. It draws much of its vitality from the churches, the one force of civil society that Mobutu was unable to destroy, and which often paralleled the state's functions in its provision of welfare services. A *Ligue des électeurs* was created in April 1990. From its humble back-yard offices in Kinshasa, the League has managed to reach 17 million people through voter education programs administered by 18,000 voluntary *formateurs*. It draws together a national network of 584 local community organizations. These include a Catholic student movement with branches in all tertiary institutions, an illustration of the importance of the religious base in this associational life. Comparable organizations in the field of electoral training and monitoring include *La Ligue nationale pour les élections libres et transparentes*, the *Organisation des femmes chrétiennes pour la démocratie et le développement*, and the *Ligue Congolaise des électeurs*. An alliance of these and other organizations led to a demonstration of 80,000 through central Kinshasa on August 2, the anniversary of the rebellion, to mark the opening of a "Campaign for durable peace in the DRC." In the harsh material conditions which confront any effort to organize associational life in this fragmented country this kind of activity is extremely impressive. Whether the political leadership has the will to make democracy happen remains debatable, but if they choose to, they will find within the citizenry plenty of democrats to help them.

S A R

Scandal in Lesotho Caught Wet-Handed

BY LORI POTTINGER

Lori Pottinger is the Southern Africa campaigns director for International Rivers Network in Berkeley, California. More information on this project and IRN's other Southern Africa campaigns is available at: www.irn.org.

In July, it was revealed in a respected South African newspaper that a dozen major international dam-building companies involved in the World Bank funded Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) in Southern Africa had lavishly bribed at least one top official on the project, allegedly giving nearly US\$2 million in bribes over ten years. The list of corrupt companies reads like a who's who of the dam-building industry (see box for full listing of companies and bribes paid).

At press time, the World Bank had indicated that its anti-corruption guidelines may not apply in this case, saying that the firms involved would not face any rebuke from the Bank unless funds it specifically lent for the project were involved in the bribery. International NGOs have pressed the Bank to take a stronger stance.

"We call on the World Bank to debar these companies until this case is resolved," said Patrick McCully, campaigns director for the Berkeley-based International Rivers Network. And in a December letter to the Swiss Executive Director at the Bank, Swiss NGO Berne Declaration wrote, "We believe that the dam-building companies charged with corruption should be suspended from receiving World Bank contracts while they are under investigation. If the verdict confirms the allegations, the companies

should be debarred from the project and any other World Bank funded projects as described in the World Bank procurement guidelines." The group also asked for an independent investigation into the Bank's role in the project, as did an Italian NGO in a letter to Bank President James Wolfensohn.



Maphusa Sole, now on trial for taking bribes, at the 1992 opening of the LHWP's first tunnel.

Lesotho NGOs working on the project are also calling for more accountability from the Bank. "It is the World Bank whose guidelines were used during bidding by the big companies. Now it surfaces that the bid process itself was riddled with bribery and corruption," the NGOs wrote in an October 12 editorial in the Lesotho newspaper *The Survivor*. "Punishing corrupt multinational companies involved in the Lesotho Highlands Water Project and closely monitoring the

implementation of the project's social fund would reassure us that the World Bank's aim to alleviate poverty has meaning for us in Lesotho."

In late December, it was revealed that in addition to the corrupt official, the corporations are also being charged in Lesotho courts for bribing the official. Representatives from some of the companies appeared in court on December 7. The corruption trial is expected to begin in May and run approximately five months.

The LHWP corruption story first appeared in the South African newspaper *Business Day*, as the Lesotho government's court case against the corrupt official, Masupha Sole, drew near. The charge sheet states that Sole "did unlawfully, intentionally and corruptly accept bribe moneys, over the period February 1988 to December 1998, from Lesotho Highlands Water Project contractors." Sole, appointed CEO of the LHWP in 1986, was suspended in December 1994 and dismissed from his position in 1995. One source told *Business Day* that contractors paid bribes directly into Swiss and French bank accounts in Sole's name.

Although the companies are being prosecuted for their role in the scandal, the South African water minister in charge of the project, Ronnie Kasrils, has said that the companies will keep their contracts. The South African group Public Services International Research Unit, along with the South African Municipal Workers Union, issued a statement at the October International Anti-Corruption Conference held in Durban, calling for South Africa to prosecute all multinational bribe givers, and impose 5-year bans on

all convicted groups and their subsidiaries and their partners.

Project background

The LHWP is Africa's largest infrastructure project, involving five dams (one of which is built and another underway), miles of tunnels through the Lesotho mountains, and a small hydropower component. The project delivers Lesotho's water to South Africa's biggest urban area, which includes Johannesburg and Pretoria. (See *SAR*, Vol. 13 No. 4 (August 1998), for a previous article on this project.)

The project's social impacts in Lesotho have been especially hard on the rural Highlands communities who have lost fields, grazing lands and access to water sources due to the project. Despite decade-old promises, their livelihoods have not been re-established and poor people have been pushed further to the edge in their struggle for survival.

Widespread corruption on the project is thought to be one reason that the social fund intended to help affected communities undertake development projects has accomplished virtually nothing. A September letter on the corruption scandal by Lesotho NGOs who represent dam-affected people highlighted problems plaguing the project's social programs. "The fund has been and continues to be

a tool of opportunistic politicians," write Motseoa Senyane of Transformation Resource Centre and Thabang Kholumo of the Highlands Church Solidarity and Action Centre. "Although the committee designated to select projects to be supported by the social fund has not met even once yet, money from the fund has been used to support ill-conceived projects built by workers hired according to political party affiliation. In Lesotho, we see the same stretch of road repaired; torn up the next week; repaired again the following week; and then torn up once more at the end of the month." The letter goes on, "Punishing the corrupt multinationals involved with the LHWP and closely monitoring the implementation of the project's social fund would reassure us of the World Bank's concern."

Firms deny involvement

A number of the companies involved have denied their involvement in the bribery, despite the strong corroboration of the case's basic facts from the Swiss government. According to reports in the Swiss newspaper *SonntagsZeitung*, an investigation by the district attorney in Zurich, Switzerland found that 12 firms had paid money directly to the Zurich and Geneva bank accounts of the accused official, or to bank accounts of third parties. The

firms' names had been blacked out in the Swiss court documents, but it seems likely they correspond to the 12 firms listed in the *Business Day* accounts.

The Swiss-Swedish firm ABB has been the most outspoken in its support of the ongoing investigation. The company's CEO Göran Lindahl told a Brazilian magazine in August, "This type of thing cannot be tolerated. Without getting into details, in the Lesotho scandal we have known about problems involving the company since 1987. We decided on our own to cooperate with the prosecutors in Switzerland and in Lesotho. This resulted in the firing of the official responsible." Lindahl is also a commissioner on the independent body the World Commission on Dams, which is currently evaluating the development effectiveness of dams worldwide.

Other companies are being more steadfast in denying their guilt. The Canadian firm Acres International was quoted as follows in *Engineering News-Record* (8-23-99 issue): "We vehemently deny the accusation," says Robert Witherell, senior vice president of Acres International Ltd., Niagara Falls, Ontario. "Nobody in Acres had any knowledge of any payments to Sole." A nearly completed internal probe has turned up no evidence of bribery, he says.

Bribing Companies

The following list of companies and the reported bribe amounts paid was published in the July 29, 1999, edition of *Business Day* (South Africa). All figures in US dollars.

- ABB (Swedish/Swiss) - \$40,410
- Acres International (Canadian) - \$185,000
- Impregilo (Italian) - \$250,000
- Spie Batignolles (French) - \$119,393
- Sogreah (French) - \$13,578
- Dumez International (French) - \$82,422
- Lahmeyer Consulting Engineers (German) - \$8,674
- ED Züblin (German) - \$444,466
- Diwi Consulting (Germany) - \$2,439
- LHPC Chantiers (international consortium) - \$63,959
- Highlands Water Venture (international consortium, including Impregilo, the German firm Hochtief, the French firm Bouygues, the UK firms Keir International and Stirling International, and South African firms Concor and Group Five) - \$733,404;
- Lesotho Highlands Project Contractors (international consortium which includes Balfour Beatty, Spie Batignolles, LTA, Züblin) - \$57,269.

The Canadian government has been asked to cooperate in the investigation by the South African and Lesotho governments, but an August 20 article in Canada's *The National Post* revealed that there was no action being taken at that time. Author Patricia Adams wrote: "When I asked Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade officer Richard Chappell how the Canadian government was treating this case, he stated that it is 'not treating this issue at all.' When I asked if Canada would give Lesotho "mutual legal assistance" in collecting evidence for this case, as legislation provides, the Department of Justice's senior counsel in the international assistance group, Kimberly Prost, had 'no comment.' When I asked the Canadian International Development Agency, which paid more than \$100,000 to Acres International for its work on the Lesotho dam project, what it would do should wrongdoing be established - CIDA has a formal anti-corruption policy - it said it would consult the appropriate Canadian authorities, presumably the same Departments of Foreign Affairs and Justice that are sitting on their hands."

The companies implicated in this scandal are no strangers to allegations of corruption. For example, Spie Batignolles and Sogreah were involved in Kenya's Turkwell Gorge Dam which, because of bribes reportedly paid to Kenya's president and energy minister, cost more than twice what the European Commission said it should have. Impregilo, Dumez and Lahmeyer were involved in Latin America's Yacyretá Dam, which Argentina's President Carlos Menem called a "monument to corruption." Lahmeyer and Impregilo also had contracts on Guatemala's Chixoy Hydroelectric Project, which lost between \$350 and \$500 million dollars to corruption. And ABB and Dumez worked on Itaipú Dam (Brazil/Paraguay), which has been described as "possibly the largest fraud in the history of capitalism."

All of the companies implicated in this scandal are from countries that have signed the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's convention on corruption and bribery, which obliges signatories to adopt national legislation which makes it a crime to bribe foreign public officials. Thus far, none of the governments have pressed charges in this case.

World Bank's role

The World Bank has lent more than \$150 million for the project. As

According to confidential project documents, the Bank was also responsible for "effective project management, human resource development and sound financial management," in addition to providing for design and construction supervision, the transfer of engineering and other technical skills to local staff, and oversight of social and environmental impacts.

The World Bank has proclaimed that fighting corruption is essential to its mission of reducing poverty



Katse Dam under construction

the project's problems have accumulated over the years, Bank officials have taken to pointing out that its investment represents just five percent of overall project costs. But if the Bank's financial contribution to the Lesotho project is relatively small, its role in organizing the financing for the project was instrumental in getting it off the ground. The Bank financed the design of the project, and set up an offshore trust in the UK to help other donors circumvent international sanctions against South Africa's then-apartheid regime. The loan was nominally for Lesotho, a country far too poor to qualify for large loans.

and promoting environmental sustainability. But the corruption on this project will test the Bank's resolve in fighting corrupt practices.

The Bank's procurement guidelines state it will "declare a firm ineligible, either indefinitely or for a stated period of time, to be awarded a Bank-financed contract" if the firm is found to have "engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for, or in executing, a Bank-financed contract." A Bank "sanctions committee" decides on these matters, and maintains a list of ineligible firms. The listing, found on the Bank's web site, includes nine relatively small companies.

LHDA

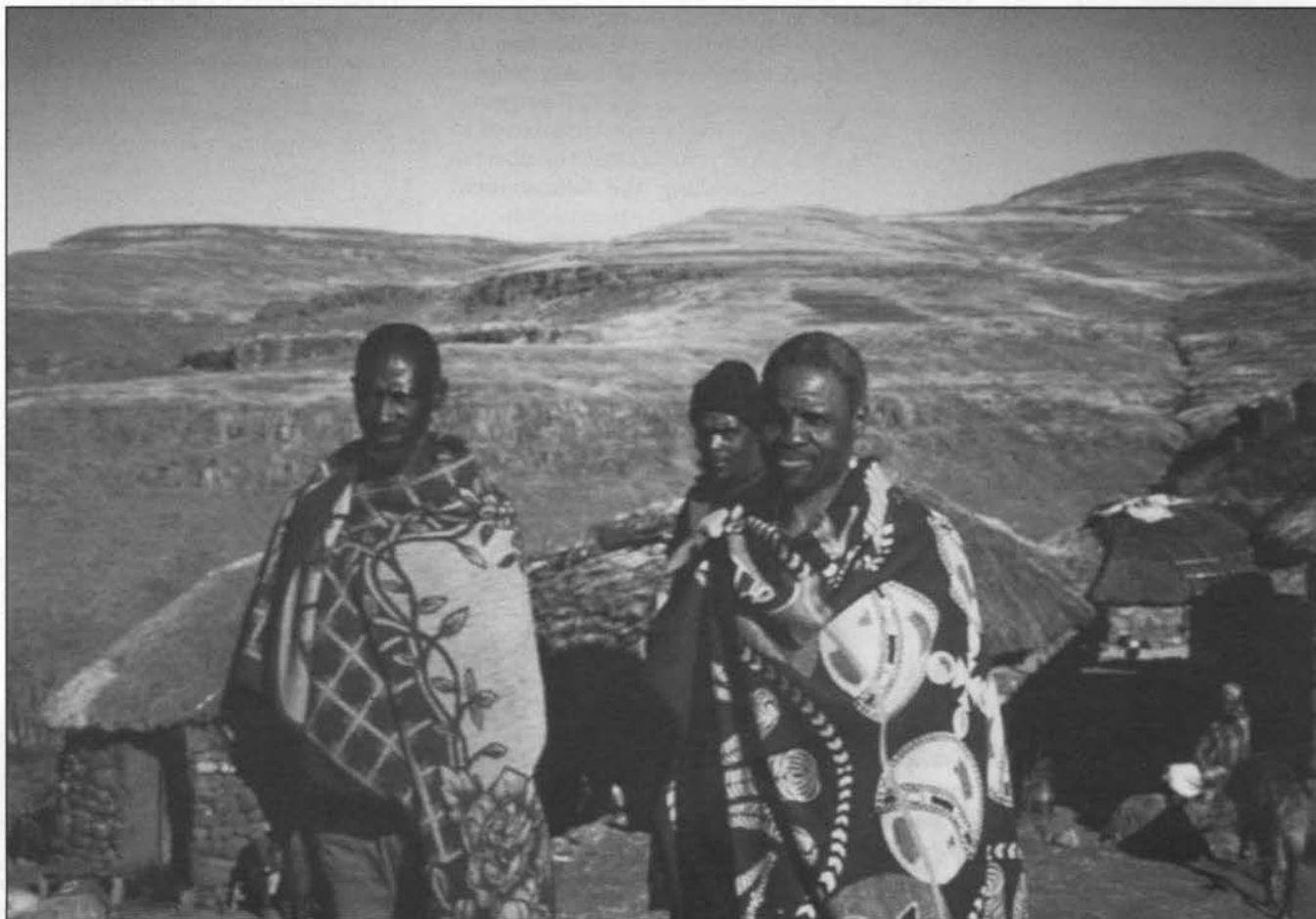
lesotho

First indications are that the Bank believes its rules may not apply to this high-profile case, because the alleged bribes are not directly tied to bank loans on the project. In a letter to an Italian NGO on the case,

of its connection to a Bank-financed contract." The bank will certainly lose credibility in its war on corruption if it pursues this narrow view of its obligations.

Moreover, those who monitor

companies found to have bribed the Lesotho official, it could have huge ramifications on a number of river development schemes. For example, Hochtief, Impregilo and Dumez are involved in the Bank-funded Ertan Dam in China. Acres International,



These villagers lost grazing lands to the Lesotho water project.

Callisto Madavo, Vice President for Africa at the Bank, writes, "the Bank must continue to act in conformity with its own governing rules and guidelines. Due process must be afforded to companies and individuals accused of corruption. ... For these reasons, the Bank can only extend the debarment of contractors to those that were financed by the Bank. We do not have jurisdiction to investigate and declare ineligible every corporation suspected of corruption regardless

corrupt practices believe the Bank needs to take a particularly strong stance on this case. Jeremy Pope, executive director of Transparency International, the Berlin-based NGO that monitors corruption, told the *Washington Post*: "It's a project the World Bank was involved in, and logic says - if you're bribing, you're bribing; and if you're unfit to be bidding for business, you're unfit."

If the Bank were to debar

Impregilo, Hochtief, Ed Zublin, Spie Batignolles and Dumez all have contracts on Xiaolangdi Dam in China, the Bank's largest loan to China to date. Impregilo is also working on China's Shanxi Yellow River Diversion Project, which will divert water from the already troubled Yellow River to the mining centre of Datong; the Lower Kihansi in Tanzania; and Ghazi Barotha in Pakistan. Both Acres and Lahmeyer are involved in the Bank-funded Nam Theun II project

LHDA

in Laos. Acres is also building the Owens Falls Extension Project on the Upper Nile in Uganda, and is producing a study of hydropower and other energy options in Uganda with IFC funding. Many of these companies also are working on non-dam power projects with World Bank funding.

The World Bank's fiscal oversight responsibilities on this project should have placed it in a position to uncover this corruption itself. The Lesotho official charged was fired in 1995, and yet bribes allegedly passed from the dam companies to his account as late as 1998. According to internal correspondence between the government of Lesotho and the World Bank, the Bank was aware of serious management problems at least since 1994. A December 2, 1994 letter to the Government of Lesotho from the Bank's Southern Africa Department acknowledges that a management audit of the project had taken place

and that two officials, including the one who now stands accused of bribery, were suspended from their duties.

Ironically, as this mismanagement crisis began to unfold, the World Bank voiced its support for the suspended managers in this same 1994 letter, and said that the suspensions "could seriously jeopardize the progress of the project." The Bank's letter even threatened to take legal action against the government for making the management changes without its permission.

What the Bank knew, and when it knew, has ramifications for the untimely approval of the project's second dam, Mohale, now under construction. It was known at the time of approval that this dam's water is not needed for many years - as much as 17 years by some South African water conservation experts - and yet the Bank insisted on moving forward with its loan package in September

1998. One of the Bank's reasons for moving forward prematurely with the project was that contractors were already in place from the first dam, meaning there would be no costs to "mobilize" the contractors for the second dam. Many of these contractors are now alleged to have been bribing on the project for years, information the Bank claims it did not have when the Mohale loans were approved. In fact, the Bank stated in a letter to IRN that it only learned of the bribery in July 1999. But leaked documents out of Switzerland reveal that the Lesotho government requested the Swiss Supreme Court's assistance on the bribery allegations in August 1997. The Bank is either a highly incompetent fiscal overseer of the project, or it is not being truthful regarding its earliest knowledge of the bribery. In either case, a full independent investigation into its role is the only way to get to the truth of the matter.

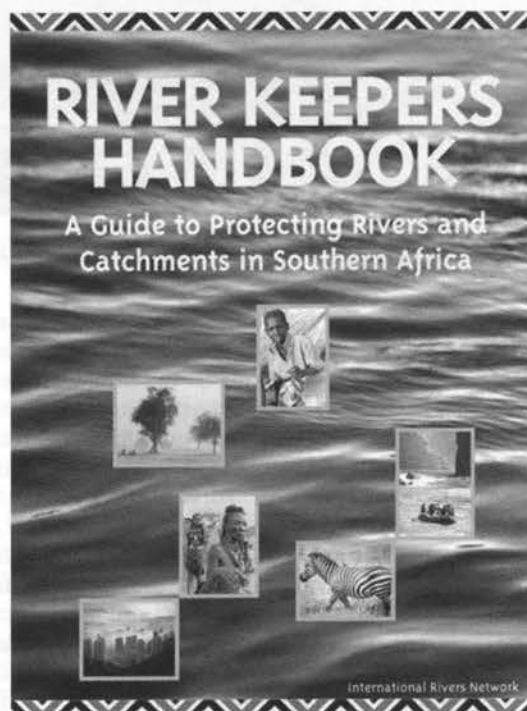
S A R

New Booklet on Protecting Watersheds in Southern Africa

"Southern Africa is, by and large, a dry place. Water is one of the region's most precious resources, and yet the region's life-giving sources of water - the catchments that funnel water to rivers, wetlands and lakes - are increasingly under threat. To avoid irreparable harm to these essential natural systems will require a regional 'catchment protectors' movement, a critical mass of people who make the protection of water resources their top priority. Such a movement will require citizens who understand the complex workings of their catchments, and their own place within these systems."

The new "River Keepers Handbook: A Guide to Protecting Rivers and Catchments in Southern Africa" will help Southern Africans understand the complex workings of their watersheds, and their own place within these systems. The 52-page report, by International Rivers Network, is full of information that will help activists, communities, educators and individuals become informed river advocates, able to ask the right questions about river-development schemes and press for better alternatives.

The report is available for US\$15 from IRN (email von@irn.org, or order it off the web: www.irn.org), or in South Africa (for R60) from Environmental Monitoring Group, P.O. Box 18977, Wynberg, South Africa 7824; Email: liane@kingsley.co.za; Ph: +2721.761.0549; Fax: +2721.762 2238.



Zimbabwean Farm Workers



Blair Rutherford

The Struggle for Utopia

BY BLAIR RUTHERFORD

Blair Rutherford teaches in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Regina, Canada.

"Care-care, I don't care! Care-care, I don't care!..." The refrain of the song associated with urban student activists was sung vigorously by more than 40 farm workers dancing in a field. They then named their managers and some of the local ZANU PF leaders in the Mashonaland East provincial party structure. A leader from the very same ZANU PF provincial structure

was walking away from the farm workers to his new Mercedes Benz. The car was parked in front of a temporary camp, situated just off the Harare-Mutare highway next to the dirt road leading to Utopia farm, which had housed most of the singing workers.

The workers that live in the camp were among the more than 400 who were involved in a labour dispute with the owner of Utopia farm, Freshex. Freshex is a division of the publicly traded Interfresh, one of Zimbabwe's oldest and largest horticultural concerns.

Paradoxically, a local ZANU PF structure had just been established in that very field by the retreating provincial Party member, along with the ward councillor, in preparation for the Party Congress two months hence. The date was October 31, 1999.

It has become common to see leaders of the ruling Party openly challenged by those they seek to represent. Such challenges have been more common in urban areas, at resettlement schemes or on commercial farms that have been subjected to "land invasions."

They are rare on commercial farms not involved in such invasions, partly because politicians seldom attend to the concerns of farm workers and partly because farm workers themselves have been too afraid to go against any politicians, particularly those with the "Party."

On the eve of the 2000 Parliamentary elections, however, there is a deepening economic crisis and growing challenges to the political machinery that has governed the country since independence. Many Zimbabweans, farm workers included, are in search of new answers. But despite the growing social unrest and anxiety it is not yet clear what the answers will be.

The struggle to be classified as a "worker," with its attendant set of legal rights and moral traits, has become as central to the Zimbabwean political economy today as the struggle to democratize "Zimbabwe" via a new constitution and the struggle to improve living standards. Whereas the latter two issues have been discussed and partly defined by the national and international media, however, the former has not been explicitly analyzed. Yet as Brian Raftopoulos, a social historian with the Institute of Development Studies, recently observed at a Harare workshop, "the worker" has become as important to the politics of 1990s Zimbabwe as it was to the 1950s Southern Rhodesia. The farm workers involved in the struggle at Utopia offer a good illustration of why this is so.

"Shinga vashandi, shinga!"
("Be brave workers, be brave!")

On October 29, 1998, the Freshex managers fired almost the entire Utopia work force, more than 800 workers, alleging that the workers had engaged in an illegal strike. More than a year later, fewer than half have removed themselves from the case by signing a form in exchange for some money and perhaps the chance to work on a 3-month contract. The rest are remaining with the executive of

their workers' committee, who have appealed the decision in various fora and ultimately to the Labour Tribunal, where it currently sits.

On July 26, 1999, the messenger of court enforced an order to evict 138 workers involved in the dispute and those living with them from the Utopia farm compound. Their belongings were thrown in a truck and dumped in front of the District Administrator's Office in Goromonzi. A few days later, many of these workers, mainly women, with a few young men and some small children made a camp on the state land between the farm and the highway. Sympathetic farm workers who were also fighting this case but living elsewhere joined them. The farm workers enclosed about a tenth of a hectare with a grass fence and erected temporary pole and grass structures to provide some shelter from the elements. There they endure this phase of what they call their "war" with Interfresh.

The longevity and resilience of Utopia farm workers is quite remarkable. The strength of their conviction comes, in part, from the actions taken by their workers' committee, and in part, from the support they have received from various outside groups. This outside support, however, is far from unambiguous.

The ward councillor has been one of the most consistent supporters of the Utopia struggle. This is because in 1998, for the first time, farm workers were allowed to vote in the Rural District Council elections. Previously, only land- or leaseholders had voted in these wards. As a result, white commercial farmers almost always held these seats. In 1998, however, many of the candidates for the commercial farming wards had direct ties to the Party and sought the votes of farm workers to win the seats.

Although few of the newly elected commercial ward councillors are attentive to farm workers'

concerns, the vice-chairman of the Utopia workers' committee, who had been active in the Party at that time, mobilized voters for the victorious ZANU PF councillor who had been competing against a Party rival. In exchange, the councillor has strongly supported the Utopia workers, arranging meetings with senior provincial politicians and national ministers and backing their demand to stay on the state land until the case is resolved. His actions have brought him into conflict with those in ZANU PF who have taken management's side and those who have wanted to remove the "squatters."

The Utopia farm workers also have sought assistance from other political organizations, partly because ZANU PF support has been divided but perhaps a result of their own growing positive appraisal of themselves as "workers." The International Socialists of Zimbabwe (ISO) and the newly formed political party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), closely connected with the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, have been contacted. Their own trade union, GAPWUZ (General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe), has facilitated these contacts, soliciting Munyaradzi Gwisai of the Zimbabwe Labour Centre (also a leading member of ISO) to represent them at the Tribunal. GAPWUZ is, of course, a member of ZCTU.

ISO helped the Utopia workers to organize demonstrations in Harare, pressured GAPWUZ to increase the assistance they receive and lobbied NGOs on their behalf for humanitarian assistance. MDC, in contrast, has been much more reluctant to get involved in their struggle. Although it provided the Utopia workers and others in the area transportation to attend its September 11th launch in Harare, MDC has not actively campaigned on their behalf, much less sought membership among the farm workers despite requests from the workers' committee.

Part of the reason is the MDC's own growing pains. The party has to compete with ZCTU demands for many of its personnel and policy advisors and is concerned about ZANU PF infiltration and destabilisation. Some MDC activists also are dismissive of GAPWUZ, which many within the ZCTU have long viewed as a disorganized and weak union.

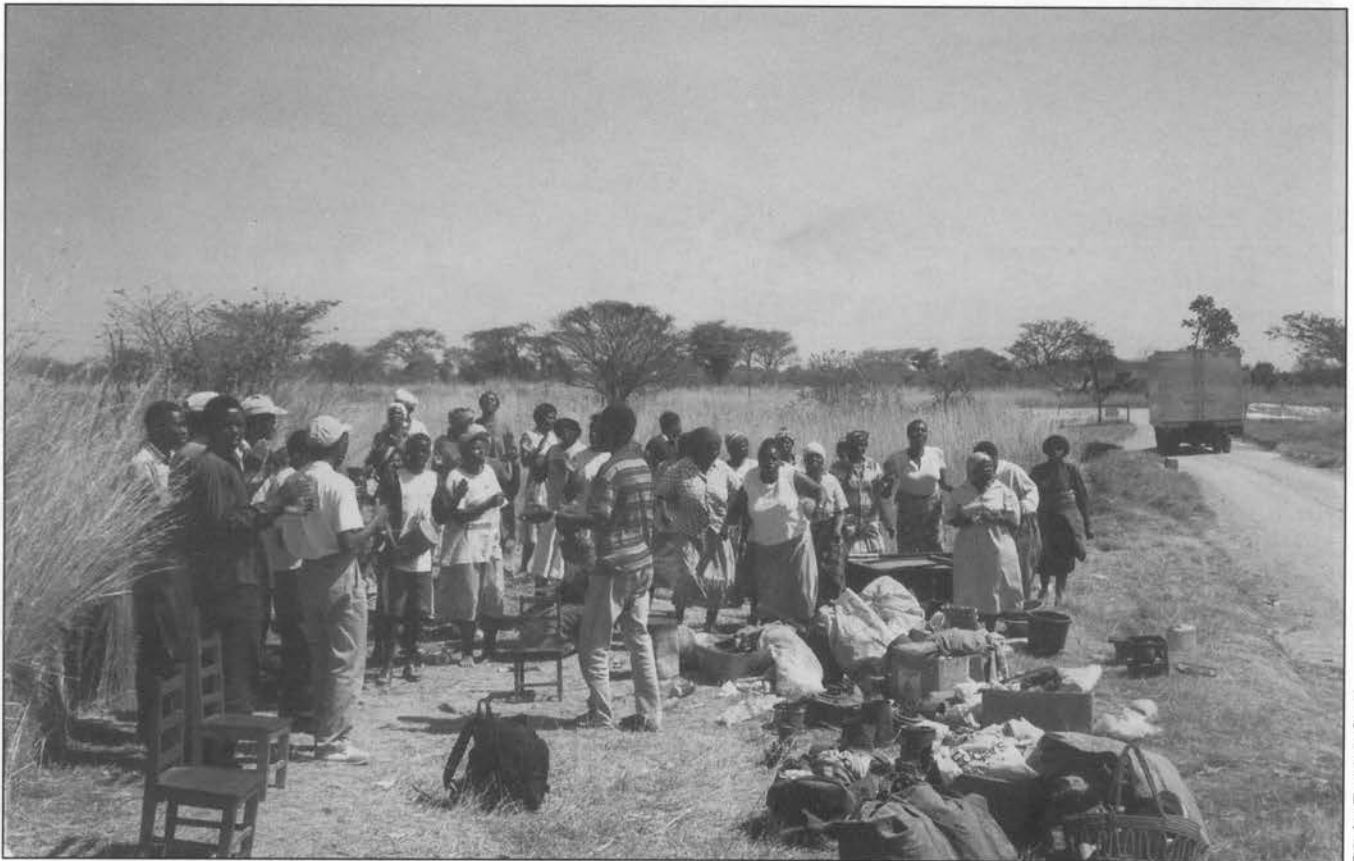
Nonetheless, MDC, and particularly the ZCTU, has been the main reason why "worker" has become such a politicized identity in Zimbabwe today. Tsvangirai and the ZCTU have led national stay-aways, protests, and strikes over the last several years. They have capitalized on the growing discontent over the steady erosion of living standards, the low wages paid to those few who still work in the formal sector, the deterioration in government social services, which are no longer free, and the mounting evidence of cor-

ruption and personal gain among the leaders of the government and the ruling Party.

Yet the dissatisfaction of the Utopia farm workers has yet to translate into clear support for the other political parties now gaining strength in the urban areas. Moreover, it is not clear that it will. The Utopia workers, like many other farm workers and other Zimbabweans, were clearly cynical and antagonistic towards ZANU PF. Yet they still fear going against "the Party" and many respected the ZANU PF councillor who had campaigned on their behalf. The Utopia workers' support for the MDC, therefore, is perhaps rhetorical. So far, the MDC has seldom been present at the camp or on commercial farms more generally. Moreover, conversations I have had with activists in different political parties operating in Mashonaland East re-

vealed that it was only those with ZANU PF who had clear policy programs directed towards farm workers. And their organizational capacity, bolstered immensely by state funds, is vastly superior to that of the other parties. The establishment of a Party cell amongst the Utopia workers bears witness to this capacity.

Sympathy for the MDC may be widespread but there also seems to be a hesitancy to commit, given the experience of many with "politicians," whether from the ruling Party or from previous erstwhile opposition parties ("Care-care, I don't care..."). Instead, the leaders of the fired Utopia workers define their role as "workers" involved in a wider social project of liberation, struggling for the recognition of their rights and working together to take the "war" to the courts to see what is decided.



Blair Rutherford

Rally of farm workers and political activists in support of the Utopia workers

zimbabwe

The Utopia leadership defines "workers" as both a moral and a legal category. In their discussions with Utopia workers, they mention being oppressed by supervisors and ripped off by management. They highlight the importance for workers to be united; a unity that will come from their oppression. When I asked where their strength comes from, a woman said, "with the pain that I have been putting into the farm it

makes me have the strength to be here." The vice-chairman used more internationally familiar language at an August rally: "let us raise each other as farm workers. We can easily be defeated, comrades. We do not have many things to lose apart from the irons that bind us!"

At the same time, the leadership of the workers' committee has defined "workers" very much as a legal

category. They have collected documents, minutes of disciplinary committee hearings, memos from management, statutory instruments, and especially, the code of conduct for the agricultural industry. They easily refer to the exact dates when particular events happened. Their main argument is that they are "workers," people who have legally defined rights. It is mainly on this basis that they have mobilized workers.



Blair Rutherford

Temporary camp housing ex-Utopia workers and families who were kicked off the farm compound

Most of the workers involved in the dispute also identify themselves as workers. They are less conversant with the labour laws than their leaders but speak often about the importance of standing up for their *chikonzero*, their "rights." One woman explained that "it is like when a wife who has been chased away by her husband for having an affair with another man. She knows that she is wrong and will pack her things and return to her family. But if a wife is chased away because her husband wants another woman, she instead goes to her *tete* (aunt) who will go and talk to her husband. The court (labour tribunal) is like a *tete* and it will tell us whether to pack our things or to remain here (at Utopia)."

It is neither self-evident, however, nor easy to sustain that the Utopia farm workers are "workers." The social and institutional arrangements on many farms militate against farm workers assuming, and especially acting, on such an identity. Many farms do not have operative and autonomous workers' committees and most farm workers have difficulty getting sustained support from an over-stretched and under-resourced GAPWUZ.

In the last five years, development and human rights NGOs have shown a greater interest in farm workers' issues, particularly in improving living conditions. Their interest contrasts with the almost total neglect by the state and civil society groups up to that point (see Rutherford, "The Forgotten Fifth: Farm Workers in Zimbabwe," *Southern Africa Report*, Vol. 9 No. 4, March 1994). At the same time, many commercial farmers and their organizations have expanded their interest in providing more social welfare initiatives to workers. All these initiatives have helped to concretize for many farm workers discourses on rights and workers.

Sometimes, however, both farmers and workers have interpreted

these rights as a desire to increase the authority and prestige of management by augmenting the welfare initiatives (such as subsidized or free maize-meal, no-interest loans, improved housing and sanitation facilities) taken by many commercial farmers to mitigate the economic crisis (and low wages). Such views see farm workers to aspiring to an even greater reliance on commercial farmers "looking after" them: looking "forward," in effect, to a "return" to colonial days when rations were given and the token wages that some older farm workers nostalgically remember bought much more than their wages do today. The aim of "development," in other words, is sometimes understood as trying to resuscitate colonial arrangements rather than leading to more autonomous farm worker activities and organizations.

Indeed, many workers on the farms surrounding Utopia have told those involved in the struggle that they are crazy for not taking management's offer. Some have even claimed that if they see the Utopia vice-chairman on their farm they will beat him up, though no one has actually carried out that threat. The actions of the Utopia workers involved in the dispute are so out-of-the-ordinary that they threaten the identities and security of many other farm workers. And yet, others living and working in the surrounding farms are showing solidarity with their struggle, providing food and clean water and finding odd jobs to perform here and there.

Forward to . . . ?

The farm workers involved in the Utopia dispute exhibit the political ambiguities of the times. For many of those involved in the Utopia case, "politics" does not refer to electoral politics. Rather, the intent is to use "politics" to forward their interests as workers, to clear their name as individuals and to be compensated for what they see as a wrong committed by the company. A

member of the workers' committee explained at an August rally: "we are not land hungry. We are here for our rights as workers only. Politicians came here. We tend to say yes to what they want us to do (for if you say 'no' it's a problem). But we know who we are. If the Tribunal says 'no' to us on October 27th, we will accept that. We actually want that decision around sometime yesterday. The rains are coming. But we have no political interest. We don't need to be heard by everyone. We are just asking for small democracy. It's being denied to us. The right to represent and talk about our working conditions. This is being denied to us."

On October 27th, the lawyer representing Interfresh acknowledged to the Labour Tribunal that management did not follow the law when dismissing the workers. He and Munyaradzi Gwisai then tried to negotiate an out-of-court settlement, but that failed. The case was re-submitted to the Tribunal in December.

The rains have come and the workers living in the camp are coping. All want the case to be solved quickly. Their struggle shows that farm workers are more and more involved in wider circuits of politics and development, but sometimes with different aims. Some are trying to return to Utopia as legally recognized workers. Others want to re-invigorate the colonial lineaments of the farmers' personal responsibilities. Whatever proves to be the case, the majority of farm workers, like other Zimbabweans, wish to reach there around "sometime yesterday."

Postscript: On December 26th, the camp of the Utopia workers burnt down from unknown causes. Although the loss of many of their clothes and their property dismayed many of them, it appears that they are determined to wait until their case is heard at the tribunal. The tribunal has been re-scheduled for February 22nd.

S A R

Heavy Handed Democracy

SWAPO's Victory in Namibia

BY TOM LODGE

Tom Lodge is Professor of Politics at the University of the Witwatersrand and also works at the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA). He was present in Namibia during the elections as an observer in the Caprivi region.

In the results of Namibia's parliamentary and presidential elections (November 30-December 1, 1999), the main surprise was in the size of SWAPO's majority, up from 72 per cent in 1994 to 76 per cent, confounding predictions that its following would be severely dented as a consequence of the appearance earlier in the year of a new opposition party led by SWAPO veterans, the Congress of Democrats.

The absolute size of SWAPO's share of the vote increased too, from 361,800 to 408,174, an increase approximately equivalent to the additional numbers of people voting. Turnout was less, however, down from 76 per cent to 61 per cent - although the total number of eligible voters indicated by the voters roll is considered by experts to be misleadingly high: the 878,869 names on the list if they were all valid would represent an unlikely 99 per cent of Namibians over the age of 18.

As in 1994, more than 60 per cent of SWAPO's support came from the four northern regions, Ohangwene, Omusati, Oshana, Oshikoto, confirming its continued hegemony within the Ovambo community; here total opposition support was confined to modest single figure percentages. SWAPO also emerged as the victor in the Caprivi region, hitherto dominated by the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance which suffered from

the association of its former leadership with August's abortive secessionist rebellion. SWAPO majorities elsewhere pointed to the strength of its support in the main cities, including, of course, the capital, Windhoek.

suburban neighbourhoods that previously favoured the DTA.

The same picture prevailed elsewhere; for example the CoD captured the Windhoek West constituency, a lower middle class residential area accommodating junior



SWAPO meeting on 28 November

Both the statistics and the geographical distribution of the votes indicated that the new party, the CoD, had collected most of its adherents from the former leading opposition party, the DTA. Overall, the CoD obtained nearly 10 per cent of the vote, just edging ahead of the DTA's 9.4 per cent; in 1994 the DTA had won 20.4 per cent of the ballot. In Caprivi, SWAPO's support was concentrated in the far east as well as the poorer districts of the administrative centre, Katima Mulilo, as in 1994. Meanwhile the CoD's 6,386 votes were concentrated in the more

civil servants and clerical workers, but SWAPO won more than two thirds of the votes in Windhoek's working class townships. As with the DTA in 1994, small inland towns in the South of the country tended to favour the new party. In the Ovambo regions, in which the CoD concentrated much of its campaigning effort, its share of the vote did not exceed 5 per cent. Of the remaining five parties on the ballot papers, the United Democratic Front retained its parliamentary representation, its 15,685 votes (3 per cent), concentrated as before

Tom Lodge

in the North-West and suggesting a predominantly ethnic Damara support base. The white exclusivist Monitor Action Group also kept a seat, a beneficiary of the highest remainder method of allocating fractional shares of the vote. The presidential election results were very comparable to the distribution of parliamentary votes, allowing for the differences resulting from only four as opposed to eight options on the ballot paper. Sam Nujoma received an overwhelming endorsement from 416,218 Namibians for his third term of office.

Complaints by opposition parties that their agents were often refused admission to voting stations in Northern regions fuelled accusations of foul play and the CoD leader Ben Ulenga expressed dissatisfaction about the very high proportion (25-30 per cent) of tendered votes (votes cast outside the voter's constituency) in the Ovambo regions. However, several hundred observers, both local and foreign, ensured that proceedings were checked in over half the polling stations; they were often critical of shortcomings in administration which pointed to

The more serious reservations about the Namibian election refer to the quality of campaigning. Local newspapers reported twenty-two instances of serious intimidation of opposition parties by SWAPO supporters during October and November. The reports were well detailed and several have resulted in court proceedings. They included the disruption of rallies, assaults on opposition party officials and supporters, and the stoning of vehicles. Schoolchildren were conspicuous offenders in many of these incidents, sometimes quite openly incited by local SWAPO officials. All but two of these reports concerned events in the northern regions; if they were accurate then SWAPO's heartland would have represented an extremely difficult electioneering environment for opposition parties, especially the CoD, allegedly the main target of these attacks. The Electoral Commission published a Code of Conduct which all parties signed but the task of enforcing the Code's provisions was left to the police.



Tom Lodge

Queue outside polling station in Linyanti. Village elders on left monitor the proceedings. EU observer talks to a regional CoD organizer on right.

Free and fair?

How accurate a reflection are these results of the electorate's political preferences? SWAPO's opponents made no really serious objections to the way the poll was administered. It is true that the decision not to equip polling stations with copies of the voters roll deprived officials of the most certain method of ensuring against invalid voting. Supposedly indelible ink used for marking voters hands which could easily be washed off and a clumsy system of affidavits for voters without identity documentation may have supplied ample opportunities for multiple voting.

poor training (evident among party agents as well as officials) but discovered no reasons to question the integrity of the Electoral Commission. The voting statistics do not suggest significant incidences of over-voting; as noted above, turnout was proportionately lower and the absolute increase in voting was reasonable given the likely expansion of the electorate in four years and the efforts expended during August and September in registering new voters. Security measures to guard against ballot box tampering were well designed and observers' reports suggest that they were implemented comprehensively.

Demagogy, SWAPO-style

It is arguable that the behaviour of SWAPO supporters was a reflection of popular sentiment and that the harassment of opposition parties in SWAPO's strongholds did not significantly affect voter behaviour. Such an argument is weakened by the evidence that senior SWAPO leaders encouraged this behaviour. There were also reports of threats of schoolchildren and teachers being threatened they would lose bursaries or jobs if they supported the new party; this again suggests that intimidation was not limited to spontaneous sorts of thuggery by over-enthusiastic rank and file party members. In any case, they would have taken their cue from speeches by SWAPO leaders. As early as April 18th, Sam Nujoma warned his supporters against "dark forces masquerading under different guises - in the name of democracy and freedom."

Similarly, on May 4th, at Elim in the Omusati region, Home Affairs minister Jerry Ekandjo denounced the CoD as a group of "traitors and spies" who wanted to bring back "the government of the white people." On August 19th, Deputy Minister Jeremia Nambinga told a rally in Ohangwena about a clandestine military training programme he said the CoD was running at Onatuwe. On October 30th, Higher Education Minister Nahas Angula produced a document at an Oshakati rally which, he said, contained a confession signed by the Congress of Democrats' leader, Ben Ulenga, from the time when he was captured as a SWAPO guerrilla in 1976. If authentic, the document would suggest that Ulenga gave his interrogators very comprehensive details about SWAPO's military organization. This was the second accusation directed at Ulenga in two months: in September, SWAPO's newspaper, *Namibia Today*, suggested that the CoD leader had stolen money when he was the secretary-general of the mineworkers' union. It was subsequently confirmed that Ulenga had received a loan from the union and that this money had been repaid.

Meanwhile, Ignatius Shixwameni, until his resignation from SWAPO in early October Deputy-Minister of Information, became a second focus of *ad-hominem* invective at SWAPO rallies. Shixwameni, former leader of the Namibian National Students' Organization during the 1980s, announced his departure from the ruling party with a condemnation of its "near political cannibalism" - a reference to his clash with the President at a Central Committee meeting earlier in the year. SWAPO, he said, had lost its vision and its leadership had become animated principally by their schemes for self-enrichment. He himself remained a communist, he said. Two weeks later Shixwameni joined the CoD, exposing himself to the full ire of his former

colleagues. Prime Minister Geingob told a meeting in Tsumeb that the CoD should now be known as the Congress of Deserters. Shixwameni was himself guilty of corruption, Geingob said, referring to the lists of assets which Shixwameni had published detailing the gifts he himself had received in office. Seeking, apparently, merely to trivialize and defuse Shixwameni's broader intention of placing the question of SWAPO leaders' own corrupt practices on the table (see Paul Kalenga, "The Congress of Democrats," *SAR*, Vol. 15, No. 1) Geingob guffawed instead that Shixwameni evidently thought alcohol was an asset for he had included two bottles of vodka on his list!

Shixwameni's successor in the Ministry was announced on October 17th. In a canny move the President announced the appointment of Namibian National Farmers' Union leader Gabes Shihepo. Shihepo had recently headed a well attended demonstration to State House to complain about the treatment of farmworkers and the slow progress of land reform. Bringing critics on board in this fashion probably represented more effective electioneering practice than rhetorical assaults on their honour.

Policies and patriotism

For many voters, however, the most persuasive aspect of SWAPO electioneering would not have been the personalized rhetoric directed at its opponents, but rather the power that a SWAPO organized event could embody. President Nujoma, for example, habitually used his official Falcon jet to travel to regional centres before being transported from one rally to another by army helicopters. SWAPO's use of official transport (for which it paid at discounted rates) was a conspicuous feature of its electioneering. Confronted with such plausible evidence of the party's capacity to summon the state's resources, voters may well

have found it easier to believe such commitments as Nujoma's promise in Omaruru on November that the government would create 50,000 jobs.

Indeed, job creation was one of the most important commitments in SWAPO's manifesto. SWAPO's Plan of Action for Peace, Progress and Prosperity chiefly emphasized the party's achievements in office rather than its plans for the future, however. Its closely printed pages supplied a wealth of statistical information about the activities of the various branches of government. The few policy undertakings referred to in the manifesto include firmer anti-corruption measures, the acceleration of land reform, improvements in police discipline, the reduction of the budget deficit, and job creation through agricultural projects. Under the next administration, HIV-AIDs would become a notifiable disease and 85 per cent of the rural population would obtain access to clean water, the manifesto maintained.

In fairness to SWAPO, the bad-tempered tone of the campaign was almost inevitable, given the emergence of the CoD as an opposition party with a difference in that its formation was prompted by the resignation of a heavyweight SWAPO leader. Ben Ulenga's renunciation of his SWAPO membership in August 1998 was in protest against Nujoma's third term as well as the rising incidence of corruption within government and party; it was not surprising therefore that leadership integrity became the main issue around which CoD built its campaign or that SWAPO responded in kind. At the CoD's campaign launch in Oshakati, Ulenga told the 500 strong audience about politicians who had built comfortable lifestyles for themselves while the country's economy degenerated and government services disappeared. Apart from condemnations of the government's performance, the CoD man-

ifesto called for a reduction in the numbers as well as the privileges enjoyed by public office bearers, a reduction of the defense budget in favour of training more policemen, bureaucratic rationalizations in education to supply the savings to fund free "basic" teaching, and more far-reaching land redistribution. The government's plans for a supplementary budget also afforded ad-

its ranks, then questions should be asked about the "undertakings (which) were given to (secretary-general) Lukas Pohamba and the president of the country during their secret meeting with the security forces in 1966 when they briefly returned to the country." Moreover, who betrayed the brave comrades of Ongulumbashe? Who was responsible for "making Unita what it is to-

in exile as "sole legitimate representatives" of Namibia's people.

At the same time, SWAPO itself is no monolith and the 10 years of liberal democracy may have helped to some degree to strengthen its own internal democratic practices. An incident at its electoral convention was suggestive. According to SWAPO norms, the President nominates the first 30 of the 72 candidates on SWAPO's National Assembly list. When Nujoma's list was read out it was evident that five ministers had been omitted: Hidepo Hamutenya (trade), Nangolo Mbumba (Finance), Nahas Angula (Higher Education), Ben Amathila (Information), and Helmut Angula (Agriculture). After the omitted ministers had threatened to withdraw from the convention, the President felt compelled to make a special plea to delegates to include them in the other 42 nominations. The convention complied with the President's injunction, but indicated its disapproval of the nomination proceedings by successfully objecting to the party leadership's assumption that the Presidential nominees would fill the first thirty positions. It took the delegates most of the weekend to accommodate the main party and government notables within the top 50. Richard Kapelwa Kabanjani, Minister of Youth and Sport, was one casualty in this process as was the deputy-minister of energy, Klaus Dierks. Another indication of the convention's independence was that one of the ministers left off Nujoma's list, Amathila, obtained the most votes. For democracy watchers, it was one of the better moments in Namibia's third election.

S A R

Omission: *We failed to point out, in the Ian Spears Angola article on p.7 of SAR Vol. 15 No. 1, that Ian Spears has published a longer article on the same subject in the Fall 1999 issue of International Journal.*



Tom Lodge

Inside a polling station in East Caprivi. The poll is in an old disused school.

ditional mileage for CoD speechwriters: the new National Assembly would consider a budget that would earmark N\$173 million of its N\$360 million total for the military and provide nothing for expenditure on medicines despite the depletion of stocks in state pharmacies.

Nonetheless, the furore surrounding the Ulenga "confession" distracted media attention from such sober issues. Ulenga was swift to retaliate. The document was a forgery, he maintained, as was demonstrably evident from the phraseology it used. This was a view which seemed to be shared by most commentators. In any case, Ulenga continued, if SWAPO was going to raise the issue of traitors within

day" (a reference to SWAPO's early collaboration with Unita)?

Very swiftly, electioneering ceased to concern itself with policy and instead focussed on issues of patriotism and legitimacy; in northern Namibia particularly, the political fears and social tensions engendered by a brutal liberation war still cast a long shadow. "SWAPO is my mother, SWAPO is my father, We will never forget SWAPO," the party's Young Pioneers chanted at the opening of the organization's electoral convention on October 22nd. Some of SWAPO's older leaders, it seems, have yet to move away from their historical assumption of the status conferred on them

In Debt to Apartheid

BY DAVID HEMSON

David Hemson works in the social policy program at the University of Durban-Westville.

The international debate about the nature of the Third World, the reverse flow of finance capital from the Third World to the First, and the demands for its cancellation all bear on arguments about South Africa's development. Although South Africa with its developed money markets and industry is far from a typical Third World country, the experience of its decolonisation has some important parallels. Most of the debt, which so devastatingly drains the resources for poverty alleviation in South Africa, is locally held by the government itself and finance institutions. However, the room to manoeuvre, the constraints of policy, are set internationally in the relationship with international finance institutions and with the current neo-liberal assumptions and prescriptions.

In the last phases of the CODESA negotiations, it was clear that there were important concessions made by the ANC in relation to the old ruling strata, not least, a guarantee of the jobs of existing civil servants. Tied to this was the over generous pensioning off of the blood-soaked generals and civil servants. The nature of the various 'sunset clauses' has never been fully exposed and possibly includes a wide range of secret agreements, central to the negotiated settlement.

It is precisely this contradiction between resources and poverty, between a surplus of money which sloshes around the stock exchange incessantly seeking a profitable home and the moneyless world of the rural poor, between over-capacity and cruel under-utilisation which is most sharply marked in South Africa.

Internationally the Third World debt issue has been forced into open public debate by the Jubilee 2000 campaign which aims to bring about the cancellation of Third World debt with the beginning of the millennium. In a recent BBC phone-in program campaigners and a World Bank representative carried out a debate which showed the World Bank now taking a position, in principle, in favour of relieving the debt burden of the poor. It was mentioned that the growth in Third World debt has doubled since 1985 to \$209 billion and that these debts had been repaid many times over with interest.

The solutions to this problem are, however, polarised. Jubilee 2000 feels that the banks have been paid and that the issue of debts should be closed. More radical voices argue that there should be a repatriation of the servicing of loans and capital amounts for loans which were secured during the colonial period, as in the case of southern Africa.

The measures devised by the World Bank, however, serve to illustrate the tendency of the international finance institutions to operate as the international guarantors of odious, risky, and even fraudulent loans to the benefit of banks in the First World. Critics of the World Bank argue that the radical restructuring of economies takes place more with an eye to securing the financial viability of those banks which made the loans than the economic future of those countries 'assisted'.

The solution devised by the international financial institutions is to sell off the gold holdings of the IMF which has had the effect of precipitating the deepest fall in the gold price to the disadvantage of South Africa and many of the most highly indebted countries.

In short, the World Bank and IMF are not prepared to grasp the nettle of Third World debt and act decisively to break the stranglehold of debt over development.

The nature of apartheid debt

Although the South African state is said by representatives of the Department of Finance not to have a serious debt problem in terms of the proportion of debt to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), nobody can believe that the second largest item in the budget is not a serious matter. GEAR, which is the present 'non-negotiable' policy of government, is based on the reduction of the budget deficit, i.e. increasing debt. The interest on government debt amounts to 22.2% of the last budget, just short of Education with 22.4%. That such a colossal proportion of the budget should go not to social expenditure or necessary infrastructure but to institutions and individuals already overburdened with money is a matter for the deepest concern.

This concern is amplified when it is realised that most of the huge public debt of R343 billion was incurred before the present government came to power. According to Professor Ben Turok, Chair of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Finance, one third of the debt was incurred before 1990, one third between 1990-94, and one third in the period 1994-96. The enormous increase in debt from 1989 onwards was marked by political factors, the extraordinary costs of the military and police – much of which was aimed at destabilising the mass democratic movement – and the costs of securing the civil service and guaranteeing its pensions. The latter required extraordinary expenses in the development of the state pension system to make it possible to retire many civil servants.

As Turok has argued: "These people want security and you can't take it away; these are powerful people." Although this was not an explicit part of the constitution, it was an aspect of the Sunset clause handout: an insurance policy for civil servants. Generals of the apartheid army retired with millions (one with R2 million). The state had to borrow extensively to pay them off.

In the period 1991-92 the state's contribution increased from R4.4 to 11.6 billion to provide pension insurance for civil servants. The pension fund assets grew exponentially from R31 billion in 1989 to R136 billion in 1996 - a dramatic super contribution by the state. This debt was incurred by issuing bonds to Public Investment Commissioners (PIC) to invest in the state's pension fund. The total debt has now risen to more than 60% of GDP - which is up from 40% in 1990.

Unfortunately nothing is firm in discussion of the debt statistics. In most countries financial accounts of the debt which the government owes itself (as in the case of the liability of the South African state to its employees) is not included in the national account. In South Africa, this large amount is distorting a crucial financial indicator. If the PIC element in national accounts were removed, the proportion of GDP taken by debt would be reduced from 60% to 36%.

However the statistics are drawn up, servicing the debt is a central fiscal concern. The entire proceeds from personal tax amount to just over R46 billion, yet R48 billion is allocated to pay interest on the debt.

This is an alarming proportion and appears to the ordinary citizen as a colossal waste of resources. The punishing level of interest rates has made servicing the debt much more expensive over time and a recurring drain on public finance. Under apartheid, the state exercised strict capital controls and, specifically, required institutions to

hold government debt; banks were thus ready buyers for bonds even if interest rates were low. There was a tacit agreement between the government and banks that they should buy government bonds. In the 1980s the government began to eliminate these requirements and started to increase the interest paid on debt. If these regulations were still in place the existing debt could be cleared quickly, but neo-liberal policies insist on restraining the capacity of government to tap into private resources.

The PIC, which oversees the pension funds, does not dictate how money is used. Rather, these funds are directed by trustees who, it seems, are now moving these monies into the Johannesburg Stock Exchange to support black empowerment groups on the stock exchange.

These pension funds and their deployment are crucial to the economy, but are enormously difficult to cost accurately. Because of the uncertainties of the transition, the old political parties supporting the old civil service and the civil service unions have insisted on the pre-funded system which was set in motion in 1989. In this system, both the government and employee make contributions and a deferred benefit is provided for any civil servant after reaching retirement. The lump sum is exempt from tax and the contributions from the state are now down from 18 to 15% of salary paid and employees contribution 7.5%. Given its pre-funded nature, there is a guarantee that the pension fund will have enough to pay the retiree a pre-determined amount. At the moment, the pension is 71% funded and civil servants are anxious that it should stay there and that any changes in the system should be available to fund salary increases.

The alternative to the pre-funded scheme is the "Pay as You Go" scheme, which would bring the pension system back

to the previous system whereby the state would fund pensions out of revenue. This is the method many governments adopt internationally, but it is resisted by civil servants who remain uncertain and lack political confidence in the government. Pension expenditure would not be from assets but on the basis of an "unfunded promise."

Those who support the pre-funded system argue that a change in the pension schemes simply cannot be sold politically. Yet the Constitution only provides for a 'fair pension' and not a definite proportion of salary or amount. The pension item is no small matter as some retiring civil servants are only 50 years old and have secured a pension for life.

GEAR is based on the strategy of reducing the budget deficit. Again if official statistics were to reflect the liability of the state as in other countries (i.e. by excluding the pension commitment) the deficit would already be down to a phenomenal 2%! This is considerably smaller than many OECD countries and shows the extent of the monetarist preoccupation of government policy.

Finally there is the question of the foreign debt. Again there is an argument about figures. The Ministry of Finance argues that the foreign component is 'only' 5% or R15 billion of the total debt and not worth the problem of renegotiating. Yet these figures do not include the apartheid foreign debts of the parastatals (such as Transet, Escom, etc) and other institutions which the government has guaranteed and which are now the responsibility of the Reserve Bank. The point is that this debt was knowingly entered into by banks who were well aware of the international anti-apartheid campaigns and the immorality and illegitimacy of the apartheid regime.

In many ways this is the simplest issue from a political and moral perspective. Most of the external loans were secured in spite of the

noisy campaigns of anti-apartheid movements who researched and agitated against any loans to the apartheid regime. The nature of apartheid, the use of parastatals to preserve white privilege and to act as an arm of the state against the resistance, was crystal clear. The risk they were incurring was also beyond doubt, and there is little argument that that risk should be realised.

Ending the debt burden

At the moment, all policy is being built around the idea that there should be 'value for money'. No wasted expenditure is being tolerated. But there is colossal waste built into international markets, and phenomenal losses reducing countries to ruin as speculative funds flooding through financial markets seek profit. It is these speculative binges which have wasted tremendous resources. At the Conference on Apartheid Debt, it was reported that the Reserve Bank, in the course of unsuccessfully defending the rand, had spent more in a few days than the entire amount ever expended on the RDP. With interest payments at present levels, South Africa is undoubtedly entering a debt trap, i.e. the state borrowing just to service debt. This is such a huge waste. The odious debt, which was incurred in defending an indefensible system, should be ended.

What is argued here is that there is a critical problem with government debt, that interest repayments are on the point of becoming the largest item of budgetary expenditure, and that this debt is directly related to the apartheid period. The Ministry of Finance officials argue that there is not a debt problem and that there is not much that can be done about it anyway.

South Africa undoubtedly has a serious debt problem, which is slowing transformation. There is a sharp conflict between necessary social expenditure and the burden of debt repayment. It is argued

that morally this debt can be repudiated, but opponents of Jubilee 2000's position argue that this would bring destabilisation and the most horrendous retribution by the international banking system. It would be counterproductive if this were so, but it is necessary to raise the matter in the international forums in the IMF and elsewhere, to work together with campaigning groups in the North and to mobilise civil society here. International campaigns against the appropriation of assets of victims of the Holocaust have been successful, and there is no doubt sympathy for the battle to bring an end to paying interest on apartheid debt.

Campaigning groups in Europe are working together with activists on the debt question to secure debt cancellation and the refund of interest paid. This is viewed as the most appropriate strategy to unite campaigns in southern Africa and internationally. The strategy is to reclaim the capital and interest for a Social Fund for the development of southern Africa. The present government has taken the lead, in a sense, by cancelling the Namibian and now the Mozambican debt. This

has set the example internationally of what should be done in relation to debts incurred during the period of destabilisation and war within the region.

The focus is now on how the Ministry of Finance and the government as a whole will take a stand on the transactions under apartheid which secured the oppression of the majority and the privilege of the minority. Activists argue that if South Africa took a stand on the apartheid debt it would clarify the political and moral imperatives around business transactions.

The question of the debt held nationally is obviously more complex, but not impossible to raise and bring to a successful conclusion. Unlike bank loans, those who bought government bonds in the apartheid period have probably sold them to other holders of bonds. But it should be argued that those who benefited from the loans undertaken by the apartheid government should have to pay them back. Professor Michael Samson argues in relation to the national debt that there should be debt, monetary and taxation policies in place to make sure that the debt is ultimately paid back through a taxation policy directed at those who benefited the most.

The position on international debt is clear: these were instruments entered into for the preservation and extension of the apartheid apparatus in war with the people. These loans were secured against the will of the people and with the vociferous opposition of anti-apartheid movements. These loans should be repudiated.

The challenge is for the government to respond to the campaigns against apartheid debt, to take action to break the burden of debt and prioritise spending on the areas where it is desperately needed. The alternative is to see our development program nullified by the market.

S A R

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Zunade Dharsey -- 1960-1999

BY DAVID MCDONALD

David McDonald is engaged in southern Africa research at Queens University, Kingston, Canada.

If it had not been for Zunade Dharsey I would not have gone to Cape Town. I would not have met many of the people who were to become close friends and colleagues over the years. And I would not have learned to value so much the places where Zunade grew up and where his kids still live and grow.

Private thoughts, but in speaking so personally I know I reflect the feelings of many others who found in Zunade not only an outstanding example of the thousands of South Africans, more and less well-known, who gave so much of themselves to the struggle to transform their country, but also an outstanding example of that important group of South Africans who, while residing here, helped make South Africa and the struggle of its people so alive and meaningful for many Canadians.

Zunade had an organic connection to his own place that gave him both a keen sense of the political complexities that make up the Western Cape as well as a love of its physical beauty. It was, in fact, this love of both the social and the physical that led to his untimely death on December 26, 1999. Enjoying the beach with friends, Zunade rushed into the sea to help one of them who was caught in a coastal under-tow. He was then himself pulled under and drowned. In the words of one Cape Town newspaper, "He died as he lived: helping others."

Born in Johannesburg in 1960, Zunade moved with his family to Cape Town in 1969. In 1978, while training as a teacher, he was arrested for "political activities" and detained at the infamous Victor Verster Prison for nine months without being charged. He

continued his studies in prison, despite several spells of solitary confinement, went on to teach in various schools in the Cape Flats for 11 years, and remained politically active in the anti-apartheid struggle. In the uprisings of 1986, he was



again arrested and imprisoned by the apartheid state on trumped-up charges of robbery and assault (charges that were later thrown out by the Magistrate).

Zunade completed a degree in education at the University of the Western Cape and taught at the university for several years before leaving for Canada to study for a Masters degree in education at OISE at the University of Toronto in the early 1990s. While in Canada, Zunade continued his political activism. He was a member of the Steering Committee of the South Africa Canada Education Connection and was frequently called upon to speak to students, teachers and other groups about South Africa. He never refused, and was always well received. In 1994, he co-produced a teacher resource package on South Africa's first democratic election which was widely used at the time and is still available as a curricular resource. Zunade was also involved in organizing conferences

and other events on a wide range of topics and put his heart and soul into whatever he did.

After completing his M.Ed, Zunade returned to Cape Town to become a Circuit Manager in Mitchell's Plain for the Western Cape Department of Education (the equivalent of a School Superintendent in North America). Dealing with an entrenched, apartheid-era bureaucracy and a National Party provincial government did not make things easy, but Zunade set about his task with his usual vigour and managed to revitalize and stabilize one of the most violence-racked school districts in the country.

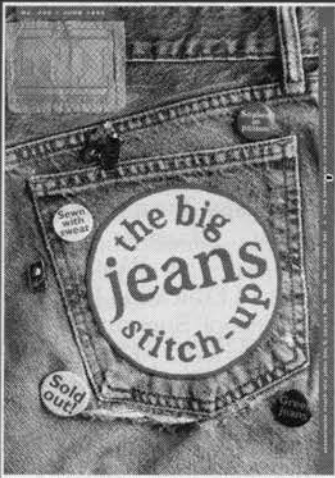
From there, Zunade went on to become the Manager of the Centres of Excellence Programme at the parastatal, Telkom SA, responsible for developing and maintaining post-graduate research and development centres in the field of telecommunications at twenty-six higher education institutions in South Africa. But his real love was with grassroots activism, and Zunade returned to Cape Town in October of last year to become director of the Amy Biehl Foundation - a large, non-profit organization committed to education, capacity building and poverty alleviation in communities.

Zunade was a man so full of life it is hard to imagine it being taken away from him. His energy and drive were contagious and his wide range of knowledge and interests meant that he had no lack of places to focus these efforts. However, it was his enormous generosity that I will remember him for most. A generosity of spirit that allowed him to give and love and share in a way that I, for one, can only hope to attempt to emulate.

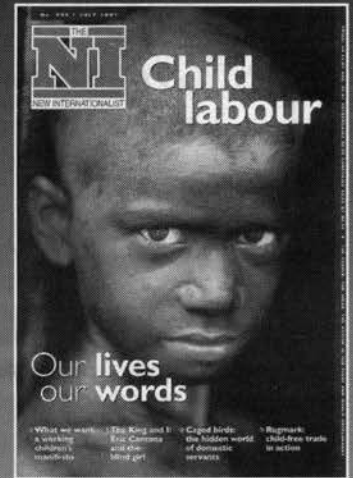
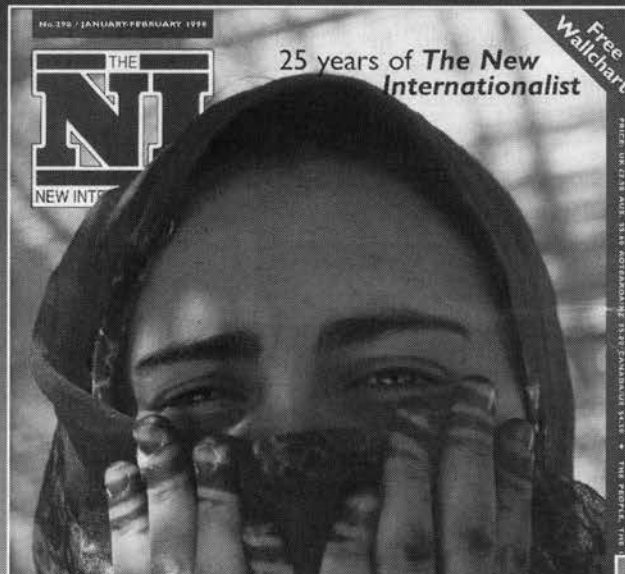
He will be terribly missed by many, many people in Canada and South Africa.

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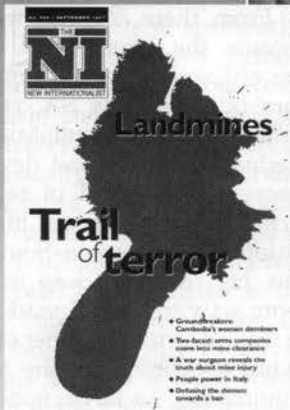


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