

Southern Africa REPORT

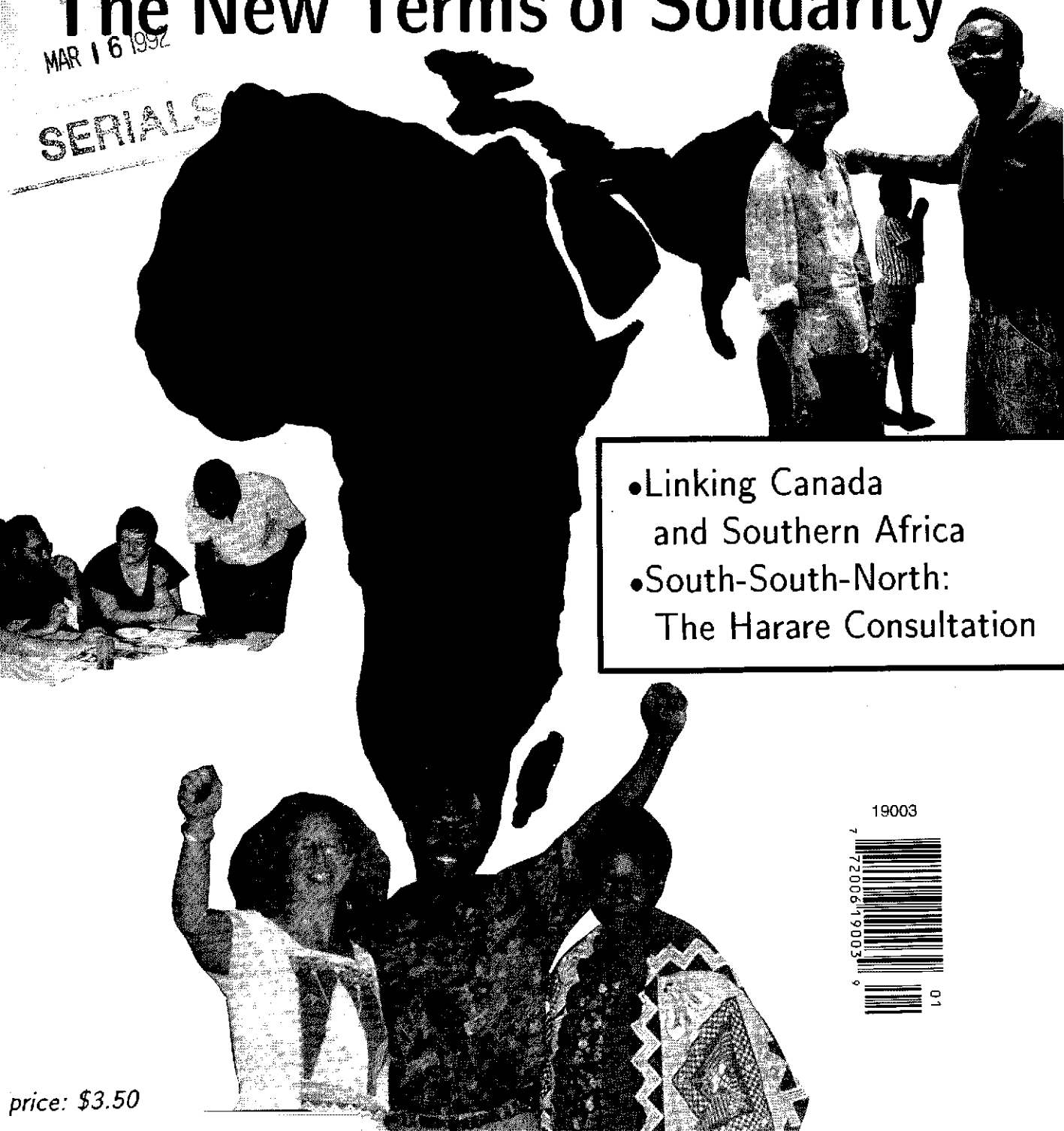
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March 1992

The New Terms of Solidarity

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- Linking Canada and Southern Africa
- South-South-North: The Harare Consultation

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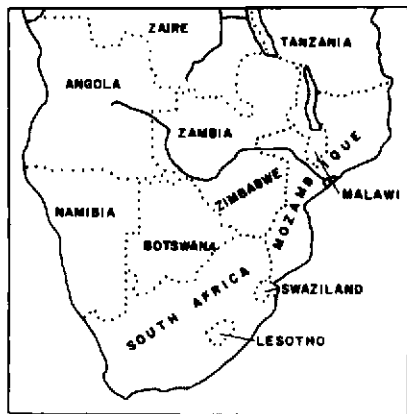


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Vol. 7 No. 4

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Southern Africa REPORT

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Alice de Wolff

Women's Action Group, Harare; action at 10th anniversary rally, Oct. 1991

The New Terms of Solidarity

The new terms of solidarity? It's a notion that has been finding its way into our pages a lot lately and we felt it was high time to examine it more carefully. After all, the anti-apartheid/southern Africa solidarity network has begun to come unstuck. Partly this reflects "success:" apartheid is on its last legs, isn't it? Partly confusion: what are we to make of these erstwhile "progressive Frontline states" now forced into bed with the IMF and other bad actors? What can it possibly mean to transform a South African socio-economic

structure that is at once so deeply inegalitarian and so profoundly enmeshed in the circuits of global capitalism? The old network – a broad liberal/left coalition based on a simple, if worthy, distaste for institutionalized racism – was never likely to move intact onto this new terrain of deeper challenges and tougher questions.

In this issue of *SAR* Jonathan Barker, a twenty year TCLSAC veteran, reflects on some of these tough questions, as they confront southern Africa support activists.

His is a very personal voice, yet others of us at *SAR* have found it expressed so ably some of our own preoccupations that we are pleased to share it with readers working through similar concerns. We'd also like to encourage such readers to voice their own thoughts on these matters and pass them on to us. We've always wanted *SAR* to be even more of an open forum than it has yet become, and a discussion of the challenges of the new phase of solidarity work seems a particularly good focus for pooling experience and comparing perspectives.



Women's Action Group, Durban Oct. 1991

Alice de Wolff

Of course, it's one thing to think new thoughts, another to act upon them. Barker does give some hints as to what a novel programme of action might begin to look like. But a second featured item in this issue pnts further flesh on these bones, introducing a concrete initiative that TCLSAC has recently become involved with: the South-South-North network. Again the articles themselves tell readers what they will want to know without the need for further hectoring here. Note only that the initiative described promises new kinds of links, both in southern Africa and closer to home, for increasing the resonance of our work.

Thus, in southern Africa itself, the network has begun to produce ties with groups throughout the region sharing similar concerns to our own, as they too act to research and agitate around issues central to the new epoch - like the impact of structural adjustment and the promise of new forms of democratization. Moreover, this is less solidarity of the old type, based centrally on our support for the

struggles of peoples and movements abroad, than it is solidarity based on a sharing of perspectives on common problems. What is "free trade," for example, if not a form of structural adjustment? And what are Canada's constitutional debates (at their best) if not debates about how to make our own institutions more responsive to our needs?

Obviously, we mustn't ignore the quite different positions on the global hierarchy occupied by Canada and southern Africa in seeking to expand upon these points. But, if developed with imagination, the new kinds of links to the region discussed in this issue could prove to be important. Moreover, they'll be that much more important if (as Alice de Wolff suggests might be the case in her article) such initiatives also sow the seeds for discovering fresh constituencies in Canada - unions, women's organizations, cooperatives and other groupings for whom the workings of the global economy and the challenges of popular empowerment are crucial concerns - who can begin to make southern African-related challenges

their own issue in real and novel ways. Perhaps by this route we could begin to piece together a new southern Africa-centred network in this country, one to help take up the torch from the anti-apartheid movement more traditionally defined.

* * *

Beyond these core articles, of course, the present issue assembles our usual mix of additional materials on diverse fronts: a critical look at some of the darker shadings of the "Botswana miracle" by our intrepid Botswana correspondent, the promised observations on possible modes of solidarity with Mozambique which Bridget O'Laughlin has developed out of her extended analysis of war in that country presented in our last issue, a piece on important struggles that are beginning to surface around education issues in South Africa. All this, plus a photo-essay and the return of an old favourite, the "Southern Africa Notebook." So don't weaken, gentle reader: there's more than enough happening on the southern African front to keep us all militantly busy for the foreseeable future.

Solidarity in a New Key

The Reflections of a Bespectacled Solidarity Supporter

BY JONATHAN BARKER

Jonathan Barker is a founding member of TCLSAC circa 1972

A couple of years ago I was reluctant to use the terms "North" and "South" to refer to the Industrial World and the Third World. North and South seemed to substitute neutral geography for a palpable resonance of exploitation. I wanted words that resounded with the smash and grab of unequal development and that sang of potential for a unifying and liberating route to an economy able to meet the basic needs of everyone. Today I am very pleased that TCLSAC is an enthusiastic participant in an emerging South-South-North Network with stoutly progressive groups in southern Africa. It is designed to help activist, popular organizations in Canada and southern Africa find ways of working together to promote democratic participation and development. Moreover, TCLSAC (Toronto Committee for the Liberation of Southern Africa) will soon decide whether to drop "Liberation" from its name in favour of a term that reflects the research and information work that is becoming our central focus.

The words are changing, but TCLSAC, unlike some representatives of the 1960s generation of activists, has not abandoned the ideals of its radical youth. Whatever name it adopts, it will still stand for liberation, but in new circumstances. TCLSAC's members, many wearing glasses to correct the myopia of middle age, can see ahead beyond the remaining crucial steps of struggle in South Africa to a time when

support for liberation movements against colonial and racist regimes is no longer a central task. What then does liberation mean? By what actions should we pursue it? In what kinds of alliances should activists for liberation join? This article intends to address these questions. Changing words reflect changing work which, in turn, reflects changing times. Liberation, yes, but in a radically new key. Much more than the words and work of TCLSAC are in question. The question is: What does solidarity now mean?

Existing capitalism is not working very well

Before raising the changes in ideology and politics that give context to these questions, I want to emphasize a simple material fact which also forms an essential part of the backdrop to the discussion of solidarity. Living conditions for one-fourth or more of the world's people, and for the majority in Africa, are getting worse. This massive fact must be taken as testimony to the continuing failure of the dominant policies and models of development. The effort to construct alternative policies and to build the politics that will underpin them needs to continue. Here is a core of continuity for solidarity groups: since the 1960s, we have worked for egalitarian policies and new popular political grounding. That work needs to continue. What then has changed?

The ideological context of discussion

Among solidarity groups, the East European Soviet model of development has never held any charm; indeed, we have taken heart from the

rise of popular politics in the former Soviet bloc. We have also found a basis for hope and room for action in openings to more democratic politics in the South. We applaud the democratic movements in the authoritarian national-security states of the southern cone of Latin America and in the one-party and no-party governments of Africa. Yet these complex historical transitions are not easy to interpret.

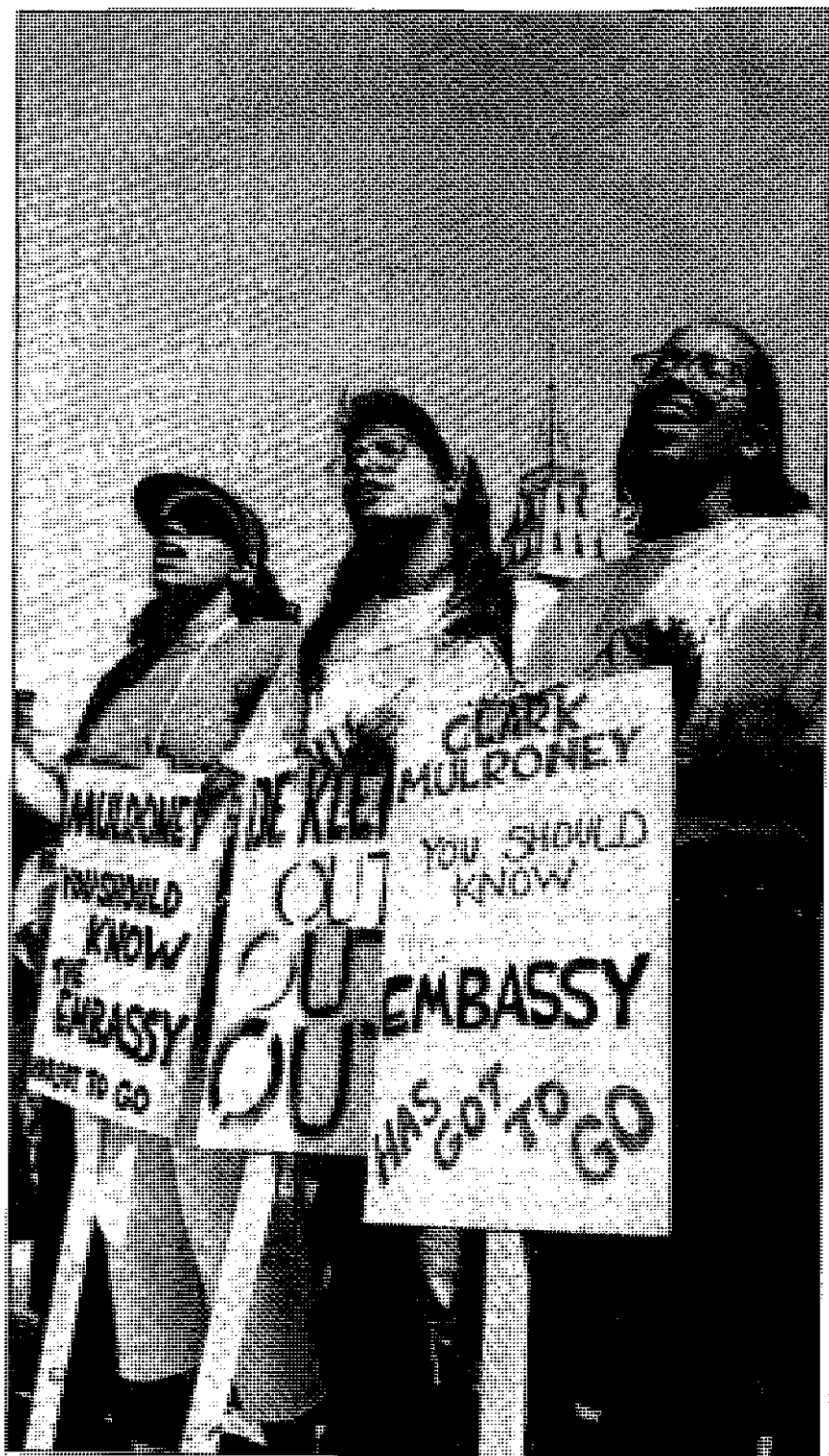
I cannot here join the substantive discussion about the nature of the post-Cold War world. Serious analysis of the historical currents pointing to strategic definition of the current moment is for writers in future issues of SAR. For this discussion a few basic points about Africa will have to suffice. For the moment the power of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the major capitalist industrial bilateral lenders over formal African economic policy is uncontested on the international scene. With no Soviet card to play and no Chinese or Cuban gambit available, African governments can complain and protest, but in the end they have to settle on IMF-approved economic policies. I say "formal" economic policy because by guile or weakness, or because the policies are inappropriate in the first place, governments often fail to implement the IMF's prescriptions.

A few voices do sound out against the dominant discourse of structural adjustment. The South-South Commission chaired by Julius Nyerere works to strengthen a note of resistance to market solutions. The Economic Commis-

sion for Africa and other meetings of African government representatives formulate arguments and statements favouring self-reliance within and among African countries against Northern domination. The United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme give expression to the powerful need for attention to the human cost of IMF monetarism. The progressive side in the main debate takes two lines of argument. Writers like Samir Amin and Julius Nyerere continue to hold that dependency of the South on the North produces underdevelopment and to call for greater autonomy of the South. Less radical are the publications of UNICEF which appeal to creditors in the North to add social welfare reforms to structural adjustment in order to give the policies a human face.

Two other critical lines of discussion scarcely enter the main debate, for the moment at least. One is the discussion, most lively in South Africa, about what socialism is and what socialists should now do. The other, seen in some environmental groups, is a radically populist, anti-government and decentralist dialogue that supports grass-roots activism and has as little use for state power structures as it does for structural adjustment. One might think that the effective demise of Soviet-style communism would open the way to a richer and more open dialogue about socialism and other alternatives to the crippling capitalism which now holds sway. Issues of ecology, scale of projects, local forms of oppression, style of leadership, role of political competition and much more would seem to be easier to place on the agenda. To ask why broadening the range of debate is so difficult immediately raises two material constraints in discussion.

First, the powerful media voices in North America and Europe continue to work overtime to build into public thinking a firm assumption that anything that can be called so-



Demonstration at South African Embassy, Ottawa, 1988

Dave Hartman

cialism, marxism or planned economy fails the test of pragmatic economic effectiveness. There may be some recoil from the worst excesses of the Thatcherite ethic of possessive individualism, but the basic idea lives on that it is good and right to accept the natural truth of greed. The distractions of red-baiting are replaced by the distractions of failure-baiting. In Canada, the recently-elected provincial NDP governments, whatever view one takes of their versions of social democratic policies, by their existence legitimate a larger discussion of alternatives to mainstream policies than would otherwise be the case. But it will take effort and acumen to deepen and broaden the issues as they deserve. The ideological obstacles are strong.

The second caution comes from the historical intolerance the centres of capitalist power have demonstrated toward radical nationalist initiatives. One cannot assume that the absence of the red menace will keep those who project power from Washington, Brussels or even Tokyo from finding intolerable the policies which depart in fundamental ways from the norms of IMF capitalism. Military attack against progressive initiatives are still not ruled out. On the terrain of ideology, however, the most likely tactics are those of vilification, malign neglect and ridicule. Bringing progressive ideas into the dominant discussion will trigger malicious tactics. At least we can be prepared for nastiness.

Among solidarity groups, the currents of feminism, environmentalism and decentralism are now established as parts of the stream of progressive politics. There remains great interest in critiques of capitalism and curiosity about what the tradition of socialist thought can contribute. These ideas do not integrate easily into an overall political understanding. Moreover, some aspects of the alternative critique are readily co-opted into a market framework that ignores the clout

of class and neglects the power of concentrated organizations. There is no neat synthesis, nor even a strong and messy orchestration of the recognized progressive concerns and ideas. The flowers bloom; can the schools contend in an intellectually and politically fruitful way? The passions that drive the thoughts come into the picture here.

Emotional dimension

One dimension of solidarity work that is not often made explicit is the dimension of emotions: the universe of feelings and sentiments which gets us moving and which lends meaning to our actions, depth to our social relations and colour to our visions of possible futures. What are the dominant passions that energize solidarity work? I am claiming no hard separation between emotions and analyses: what people feel about the injustices that they perceive in the world is connected to their knowledge of the facts of the political and economic situation. But I do claim that their feelings have an importance of their own, one that writing about solidarity work too often ignores.

At its most fulfilling, anti-imperialist support work in the 1970s and 1980s gave a powerful sense of uniting behind a frontline movement, one which was rooted in the people for whom it was fighting and which faced a ruthless, oppressive and racist adversary. Viet Nam's NLF resisting the French army's effort to re-impose colonial rule and then fighting for a social revolution against the Americans; FRELIMO fighting against Portuguese colonialism and then against South African destabilization and Western hostility; the ANC struggling against the apartheid regime and its NATO supporters; the Sandinistas standing against a Contra force recruited from the remnants of the Somoza police state and financed by the United States government all deserved and won wholehearted support. Support groups might dispute with one another and within their

memberships about whether support should extend to every decision and directive of the frontline movement being supported, but the feeling of deep commitment and identification with the frontline fighters was the dominant emotion, even of those who argued for "critical support."

I remember giving a talk at a high school in Toronto in 1980 about why the ANC chose to use violence. My aim was to spark thinking about violence as a political tactic in a situation of great oppression. I showed the film *Last Grave at Dimbaza* and then outlined the stand Nelson Mandela took at the trial which ended in his conviction, quoting from his trial statement in which he reviews the long history of non-violent action that was met by repressive state violence. To my surprise, the first question from a rather skinny young man was not about the wisdom or ethics of violence. Instead: "Where can I get a gun and how can I join up and use it against those racists?" It is hard to imagine getting that kind of first-off emotional response today from a talk to students about a popular movement in Africa or anywhere else in the world. The climate it is a-changing.

Those more deeply engaged in the struggles and in their support knew that other cases were emotionally less clear cut: ZANU or ZAPU in Zimbabwe; the three movements in Angola; not to mention other ambiguities from Biafra, to Eritrea, to Cambodia. Yet there was a sense that there was a line: remember the poster of the strong, determined woman leaning on a fence? "Class consciousness is knowing which side of the fence you are on; class analysis is knowing who is there with you."

In the struggles against colonialism, imperialism and apartheid hundreds of Canadian activists were moved to join the fighters on or near the front lines, to work as educators, technicians, publicists, administrators and organizers. On return to



Dave Hartman

Demonstration at South African Embassy, Ottawa, 1988

Canada, their attitudes were central to the emotional stance of the solidarity organizations they founded and joined. For the most part, theirs was not a mindless boosterism. Questionable actions by the governments they supported, such as the decision by FRELIMO in 1983 to introduce flogging as a punishment for relatively petty crimes like theft, strengthened the feeling for "critical" support instead of unconditional backing. Still the sense of being on the right side was strong, on the side of the people, and standing against a systematically destructive and often deliberately brutal enemy. And the leaders of the movements and governments we were supporting might not be perfect (neither were we and who could know perfection anyway?), but at least they were asking the right questions.

The transition to a new emotional realism has not been easy. Many of us carry with us weighty unanswered moral questions. Others have been driven from solidarity work, perhaps by feelings rooted in questions unasked. To take in the extent of the brutality unleashed by South Africa against the government and society of Mozambique is hard enough, but added to it is a feeling of helplessness and, for us in Canada,

distance. And then to see the violence lodge itself in the tensions and conflicts within Mozambique society and begin to feed off them is to witness the antithesis of all one fought for.

The questions push forth: was a rigid and stereotyped model of socialist agriculture to blame? Was leadership much more cut off from popular thinking than anyone suspected? Could we as support groups have done things differently and changed the outcome? What action was possible for frontline governments with limited means against such ruthless and powerful enemies? Could it be that Mozambique and Mozambicans would have gained more and suffered less had their government followed a neo-colonial path of dependence on South Africa? Although these are gritty, painful questions, the point here is not to address their substance. Instead I want to ask whether their gravity, especially for those who gave of themselves in the struggle for revolution in Mozambique, does not limit discussion about what solidarity work should now comprise. Do some of us who supported liberation movements find our confidence undermined, our energies diminished, in ways which inhibit a searching de-

bate on the future of development and the content of North-South relations?

The 1990s in southern Africa does not offer fertile ground for uncritical idealism. Apart from the brutality, along with the brutality, and after the brutality, the big powers in the world economy with interests in southern Africa have moved effectively to smother, co-opt and undermine government initiatives for progressive change. Once-revolutionary governments in Mozambique, Angola, and elsewhere – unable to buy absolutely essential imports or to pay core administrative salaries – are forced to borrow. Creditors can gain enormous leverage over policy. Governments shape themselves and their actions in many important realms to that leverage. The politics of governmental power becomes a question of compromise and personal aggrandizement. And some of the compromises and personal connections are with the very forces which backed, condoned or carried out the brutality in Angola, Mozambique and elsewhere.

Those who fail to achieve emotional realism are in danger of falling into the destructive merry-go-round in which a person moves emotionally from Rescuer to Victim to Persecutor. Beware the bitterness of radicals who, having failed in their mission to rescue, first blame those they claimed to be rescuing and then join with the powerful to maintain the domination. Certain 1960s student radicals in the United States, like Jerry Rubin and David Horowitz, come to mind. Perhaps Canadian activists had fewer pretensions of salvationist powers and therefore resisted the myth that they could rescue the benighted poor. The emotional realism of Canadian activists may be a strength on which new kinds of solidarity can build. Emotional realism escapes completely from the Rescue merry-go-round and generates many-sided ties of honest shar-

ing and honest differences of opinion, qualities which we will need in abundance.

The emotional grounding of a politics of compromise with forces that represent the power of injustice is very different from that of a politics of revolution on the march. How, within the compromises, do we see that actions and changes can still be in much better or worse directions? The work of analysis, of learning, of getting to know the real forces and the real people becomes of much more prominent and vital importance. To do that work takes emotional as well as intellectual realism. Not cynicism, but realism. Following and supporting the complex denouement of apartheid and white rule in South Africa is very different from following and supporting the forces of liberation in Portugal's African colonies. More different still from the politics of liberation in the 1970s is the politics of democratization in those countries whose governments are fully integrated by choice

or by force into the dynamics of structural adjustment.

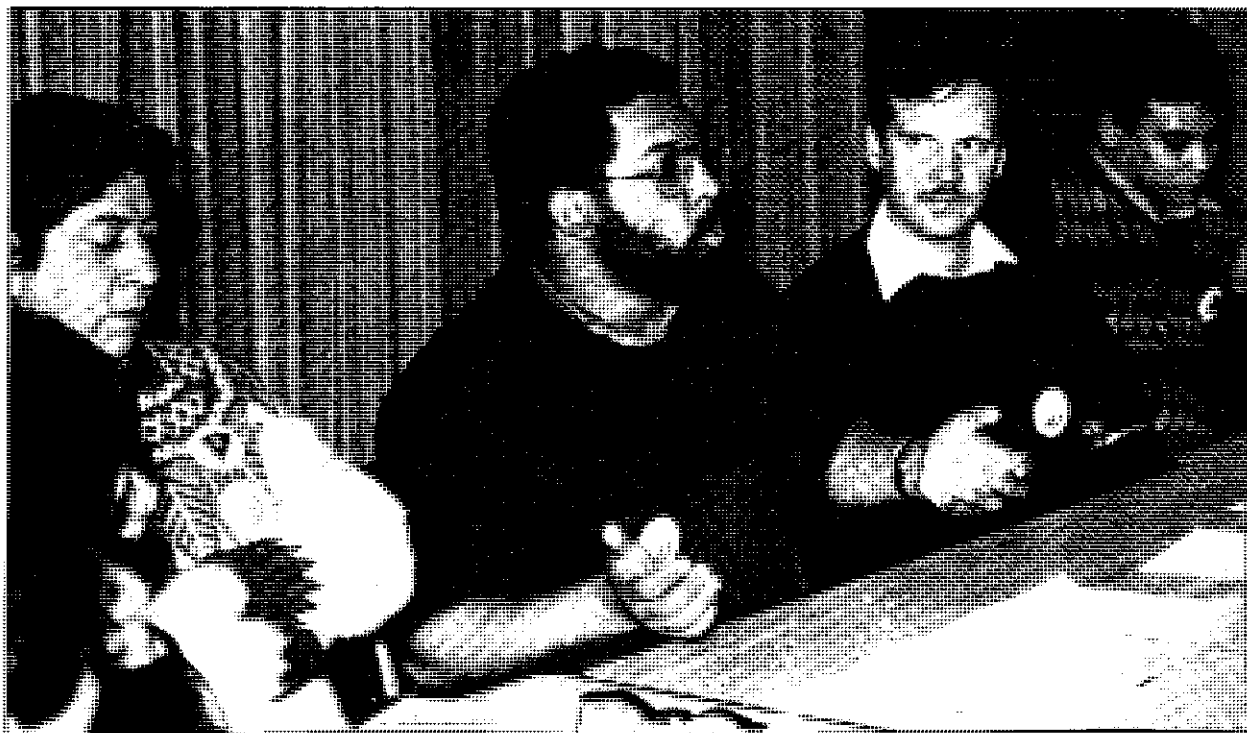
Political work

For those who have avoided cynicism and made the transition to realism (and some were emotional realists from the outset) and for those who join the solidarity movement today, the new context has many advantages. First and foremost, it places political work in the North and political work in the South on very similar footing. In both, effectiveness seems to require compromise, working for reforms in existing structures while searching for wholly new openings, thinking of the long haul, searching widely for allies and making analysis an integral part of solidarity work.

Second, contact with many kinds of people with a variety of social positions is essential. It is no longer a matter of identifying with one movement and its heroic leadership; now we have the deeper satisfaction of linking our knowledge and our

caring to dozens of groups and hundreds of persons whose struggles and qualities will seem uncannily akin to those of ourselves and our political colleagues at home. (Such was the experience of participants in the Harare workshop discussed elsewhere in this issue.) Finally, the greater emotional and political equality means that there is a potential for deeper two-way or many-way sharing of knowledge, skill and consideration, both within the North and across the North-South divide.

Along with the ideological context and the emotional grounding, the work of solidarity is also changing. A large part of the solidarity with liberation movements was supporting the movement: helping it to be better known in Canada by organizing tours and generating publicity, collecting material support, pressuring our government to withdraw support for oppression and to support liberation, and recruiting people with the skills and energy



Activists from S.A., Philippines & Mexico share experiences in coalition building, Toronto 1991

Dave Hartman

needed in particular tasks of social building in Africa. Some groups, TCLSAC among them, were also at pains to stress the connections between oppressions in Africa and oppressions in Canada.

Much effort had to go into establishing the premises of an argument for liberation and revolution in southern Africa. Writing and speaking had to communicate the reality of colonialism and apartheid, describe the sources of organization and ideas for change, and depict the path of revolutionary transformation. The bottom line was a rather clear-cut polarization with the Nixons, Vervoerds, CIAs and BOSSs on one side and the Machel, Mandelas, FRELIMOs and ANCs on the other. If, as Brecht said, imperialism had an address, so did liberation have a location, a movement and a leader.

At first the solidarity groups were small and few, and they were specialized by region, even by revolution. Solidarity activists with different geographical focuses cooperated in many ways and shared similar analyses. But groups also admitted to themselves that they were in a kind of competition for attention and energy. (Africa, farther away from Canada in culture and in travel time seemed to be harder to sell than Central America.) There was also cooperation between support groups and politically progressive voluntary development agencies like OXFAM and CUSO. Support groups could see themselves as valid intermediaries between revolutionary organizations in the third world and development service organizations in Canada, helping fit projects and co-operants to revolutionary tasks. Support groups worked well with the development education centres and organizations that sprang up in Canada. They were an important source of information, ideas and resource people for development education.

The context of support work has changed in fundamental ways. Compared to the 1970s and 1980s, the

process of domination of North over South is today less a matter of direct military and political intervention (although that is not absent) and more a process embedded in the routine organization of international political and economic relations. The work of laying the premises for discussion of oppression and liberation is expanding into a task of more wide-ranging research and synthesis about patterns of economic and political control. It takes more technical expertise and more skill at popular writing to address the way structural adjustment works than it did to expose Portugal's war against liberation.

The ligaments of domination are today spread more uniformly in North and South. Structural adjustment in Africa and Latin America bears a strong resemblance to a free trade agreement in Canada. At the same time popular activism by labour unions, women's groups, civil rights groups and many other kinds of associations is also increasing in South and North. Issues and actions relating to gender, environment and decentralization have much in common in both hemispheres. The work of analysis, establishing premises, clarifying ideas, creating networks, and establishing coalitions about liberation has a valid context in North and in South. Solidarity work is more clearly now a matter of collaboration rather than an act of assistance.

Although there will certainly be times for straightforward solidarity and good old pressure on government, particularly as the sticking points of the dismantling of apartheid become apparent, the trend is toward a need for more substantial and sustained collaborative research and information among research and education groups in North and South. The South-South-North Network described elsewhere in this issue is an example of a very promising beginning of collaboration. There is also more room for joint thinking and action on the part

of groups in Canada with different regional and even disciplinary (economic, political, educational) expertise. The work of such alliances can try to push the limits of accepted discourse by addressing issues of economic as well as political democracy, discussing the logic of social and economic and cultural domination, and analyzing forces for and against progressive change.

A sign of the potential for a politics that pushes again toward progressive transformation is the new emphasis on coalition building. In the case of southern Africa, the old anti-apartheid and anti-racism networks are dwindling. In their stead, groups are discovering ways to collaborate on issues of economic policy and democratic action. They are beginning to share ideas and information about the ways international lenders use debt to control economic strategies, about how to create and defend a legal structure friendly to popular democratic participation, and about ways of organizing and educating for effective political action without submerging the identities of participant groups.

The time is propitious for solidarity groups to move to strengthen their capacity for research and synthesis and to broaden their alliances with similar and complementary groups in South and North. TCLSAC has moved effectively to cooperate in the creation of the South-South-North Network whose founding meeting is depicted in nearby pages. Members of TCLSAC have also expressed interest in thinking through possible links with the Action Canada Network. There is no doubt that TCLSAC and other activist groups will find that the reconstruction of solidarity work is not easy. Many of us need to re-form emotional patterns, layers of knowledge, tactical reflexes and long-followed methods of political work. For those who can make the transition, there is a world of work to accomplish and a wealth of spirited people to accompany in the tasks.

Time for Small Victories: Discussing Solidarity in Harare

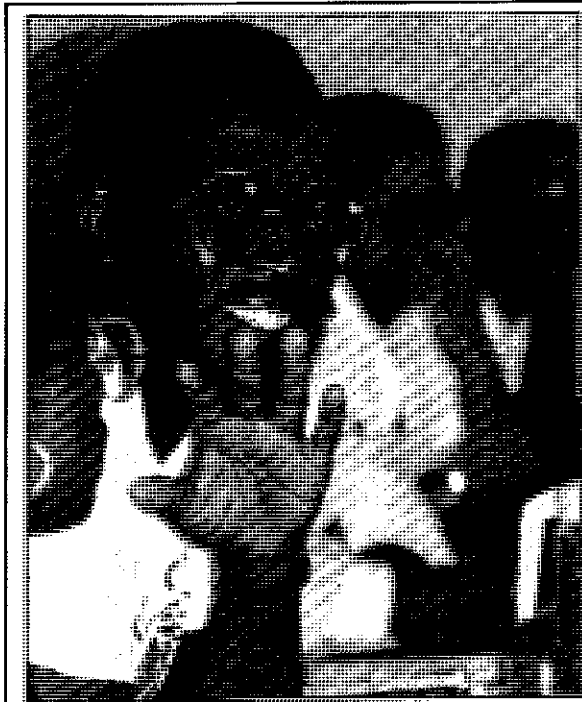
Establishing a politics and practice of solidarity with the new southern Africa has become an urgent task. National liberation movements have been a vital force in the social transformation of southern Africa over the last thirty years. Those in Europe and North America who began to work in solidarity with the peoples of these countries during the 1960s and 1970s quite rightly chose to organize their solidarity activities through close working links with the liberation movements. From simple nationalist organizations grouping to challenge colonial and white minority regimes, the liberation movements grew in strength and organizational complexity. While the situation differed from one country to another, it would be fair to say that the liberation movements grew to a point where they took on a mixture of attributes, functioning

simultaneously as political party, as popular army, as government/state in liberated areas, and as organizer and voice of civil society. This was particularly the case in countries like Mozambique and Angola where the repressive Portuguese colonial regimes had left so little space for either labour organizations or grassroots organizations.

With the 1980s, important shifts began to emerge in this logic. The propensity of the liberation movements in power was neither to conceptualize nor organize labour and social movements with any effective autonomy. The early promise of multiple institutions of "people's power" as an effective instrument for local participation and control from below dwindled away. As Graça Machel, former Minister of Education in Mozambique and now heading a Mozambican NGO committed

to the development of communities, put it, "Our big mistake was that we conceived of policies and programmes at the top and then went to mobilize people to carry out *our* plans."

Meanwhile, the trajectory of liberation shifted to the final quest, South Africa itself, where a distinctly different political culture prevailed. While the liberation movement worked to end apartheid from rear bases in neighbouring independent countries, a strong labour movement and a multi-faceted popular movement of women's groups, youth and students, churches and civic organizations took root inside South Africa, working for social transformation from the bottom up. With the legalization of the ANC, and its recognition as the major force with whom the apartheid regime must negotiate, the ANC has



Stan Mzobe — Planact, South Africa

"The South-South-North consultation opened our eyes to the issues we must put on the agenda. It has become very clear how the struggles of our comrades in Africa, Latin America and Canada are linked, as Structural Adjustment seems to be imposed on us in all these places. Whether it is the World Bank, IMF and GATT or even in Canada, where the legitimately elected government still has big economic and trading problems. It is clear we must stay in contact to make progress against our common enemies."

had to learn to work with strong labour and social movement forces. All of them continue to make a strong claim for democratic practice and for full autonomy from political parties. They hold a long-term view of their respective constituencies – women, workers, urban residents, the gay community – speaking with their own voice and accessing the political system on their own terms.

The strength of the labour and social movements in South Africa and the broader debates around civil society have captured the attention and the support of southern Africa solidarity activists. At the same time, a totally new situation has emerged in the neighbouring front line states. The shock treatment of IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programmes has resulted in both bottom up and top down pressures for more autonomous social movements. The squeeze on the popular sectors by macro-economic decision-makers interested only in a positive balance of payments and

increased exports has tended to toughen up labour, church and student organizations. Meanwhile the pressure from the donor community for political pluralism has resulted not only in multiple political parties but a multiplicity of new community groups and NGOs.

All of these trends pose searching questions about practices of solidarity appropriate for the 1990s. The old logic of support channelled through liberation movements has given way to working relations with a new range of organizations in a complex and changing civil society. In the search for a new practice of solidarity, TCSLAC consulted at the end of October with activists from organizations involved in documentation and research, publications and popular education. Participants included¹: Marie Shaba of the Tanzania Media Women's As-

¹ Three other groups sent regrets and hoped to participate in future events. They are Economic Trends Research Group, CACE and COPE.

sociation, Idalina Valente from Action for Rural Development and Environment in Angola, Althea McQueen from ILRIG, a labour research group in South Africa, Stan Mzobe from PLANACT, a service group working on housing issues and support for the civic movement in South Africa, Sethu Sibanda from the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, Brian Raftopolous from the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Zimbabwe, Francis Munyuki of the Popular Education Collective (formerly TADG) in Zimbabwe, Rumbidzai Nhundu from the Women's Action Group in Zimbabwe, Jose Guambe from the Structural Adjustment Working Group in Maputo, Gabriel Banda, a Zambian activist and Dot Keet, a South African activist who did the Portuguese translation. Funding support came from Partnership Africa-Canada (PAC) and IDRC; Firoze Manji from IDRC participated actively in the conference.

The broad vision was to build up a South-South-North Network

"What are the alternatives? The left has been good at analyzing the problems but not providing practical alternatives. We need to get to the root of the ills of society to give lasting solutions to the problems we face. If we don't do this we will simply give symptomatic treatment and the problems will resurface."

Alice de Wolff



Francis Munyuki – Popular Education Collective (formerly TADG), Zimbabwe

on Participatory Democracy and Sustainable Development through which active working links between social movements, both South-South and North-South could be established. The idea was to define together within this broad mandate the more immediate themes from year to year that we could effectively work on together. In working papers circulating prior to the consultation, such themes as debt and structural adjustment, NGO/state and NGO/popular movement relations, gender and environment were all identified as urgent areas for action.

The discussions in Harare were broadened by the presence of Atila Roque from the Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analyses and John Kofi Baffoe, a Ghanaian working on issues of structural adjustment. On the Canadian side, Margie Bruun-Meyer from TCLSAC and Lorraine Michael from ECEJ, the Ecumenical Coalition on Economic Justice, participated. Canadian social movements were

represented by Alice de Wolff, from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

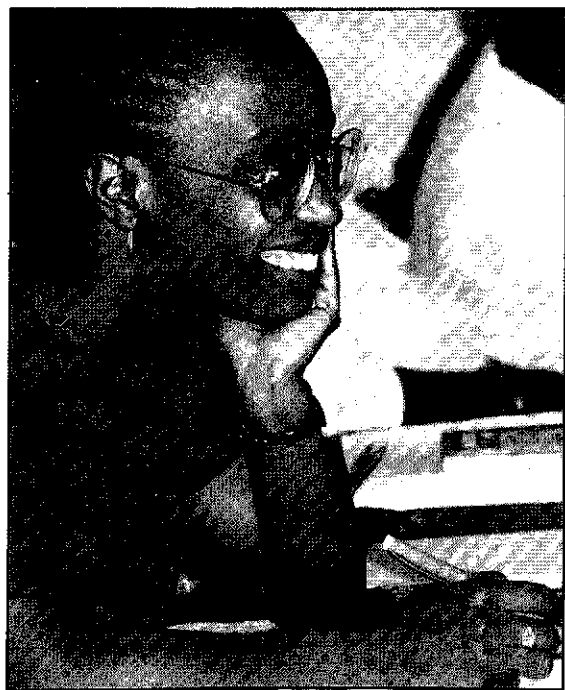
The general feeling was that the conference was an excellent beginning. Three of the most powerful dimensions had to do with composition of the gathering. For the labour and social movement groups from southern Africa, it was a first opportunity to know each other. While the apartheid regime has wreaked havoc through an entire region, its popular movement groups are hardly aware of each other's existence. Plans for active networking nationally and regionally were an urgent theme of the meetings.

A second powerful dynamic was the North-South dynamic. Southern Africans expressed amazement at the devastation that current global economic policies have caused in Canada and shock at the statistics on unemployment and the accounts of food banks. They were also surprised that Canadian activists

brought such awareness of structural adjustment policies world-wide. All sides commented on how refreshing it was to have a North-South conversation that had to do with sharing popular struggles and not giving and getting project grants.

The third powerful dynamic was that the South-South dynamic extended to Latin America. Atila Roque from the Brazilian Institute for Socio-Economic Analyses, brought a depth of knowledge of similar networks in Latin America and beyond which served to enrich and broaden the discussions at crucial points.

Idalina Valente from the newly formed Angolan NGO ADRA was struck by "the spirit of camaraderie that guided our network as well as the commitment to democratic practice shown by all." Stan Mzobe from PLANACT said that "the conference opened my eyes as far as the World Bank and IMF policies on SAP are concerned, about our economy in Africa as well as other continents." Maria



Alice de Wolff

"We are dealing with new terms of work for NGOs in South Africa. We need to move from protest to development and define what we want from development. A problem is that protest had a mass base and involvement, now we are relying more on researchers and 'experts'."

Althea McQueen - ILRIG, South Africa

Shaba of the Tanzanian Media Women's Association felt that many of her expectations were met. The results she most appreciated were the "introduction to the policies behind SAP and GATT," insights into how other nations are popularizing information on SAP, the brainstorming on how to set up a resource dissemination centre and the sense of the "need for global solidarity and joint action between the North and the South and also South-South."

Seventeen people altogether participated in the week-long consultation. The central aim of the people present was to come forward with "modest, but challenging" aims and objectives. There was a concern to learn from other networking experiences, and to avoid the danger for networks in formation to be overly-ambitious in their aims and objectives and, in the end, concretize very little. The aims and objectives set out by the group included focusing on democratic development, sharing information, circulating new publications, identifying research gaps,

developing appropriate and popular educational materials and meeting periodically.

The plan of action outlined for 1992 consisted of the following activities:

- formation of a secretariat in Harare whose tasks would include: distribution of materials, planning of a second meeting in six months, fundraising for next meeting and future work;
- organization of a follow-up meeting in six months for southern African groups;
- organization of a meeting of the full network in a year in Harare;
- identification and involvement of more partners within the countries represented;
- outreach to partners in Namibia and Botswana and possibly Swaziland and Lesotho.

The long term possibilities that emerged included establishment of a resource centre, joint research projects and a network meeting in Brazil.

At one level the consultation seems far removed from the heady rhetoric of the 1970s with "imperialism" under attack and struggles like those in Viet Nam, Nicaragua, Mozambique and Angola "lopping off its tentacles" one by one. At another level, against the seemingly inexorable logic of the "new world order" and "globalization," it seems like a time for small victories. Perhaps one of them was the founding meeting that set in motion the formation of a South-South Network on Participatory Democracy and Sustainable Development.

Two views of ways we can work together through the South-South-North network follow. Atila Roque gives us a perspective from Latin America. Alice de Wolff reflects on how the new network can strengthen the ongoing work of labour and social movements in Canada. Views from our southern African counterparts, also initially planned for these pages, will appear in forthcoming issues of SAR.



Alice de Wolff

"Priorities should be the needs of people. FOOD – At the moment the needs of capital are paramount as we can see from the depletion of fish stocks in the north Atlantic. Even with controls it would take ten years to restore. The death of fisheries has brought about extreme poverty. People would starve without government subsidy."

Lorraine Michael – ECEJ, Canada

The Harare Consultation: A Southern Perspective

BY ATILA P. ROQUE

Atila Roque is the Director of International Cooperation of IBASE[†], the Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analyses in Rio de Janeiro.

The world has changed dramatically in recent years with changes – social, political, economic and environmental – we never dreamed could occur in our lifetime. From the midst of this turmoil emerges a glaring truth – the failure of the development model that was supposed to bring to the third world the wealth and civilization of the first.

The globalization of economic production under the hegemony of the transnational corporations has managed to interlink every corner of the world under the logic of a new kind of colonialism. But instead of distributing the fruits of capitalist development, the traditional development model

has fostered social inequalities and environmental depletion.

Popular organizations have responded to the borderless world by forming a significant number of international networks dealing with a wide range of issues. Re-thinking the concept of development *vis-à-vis* democracy is one of the central challenges facing these popular organizations.

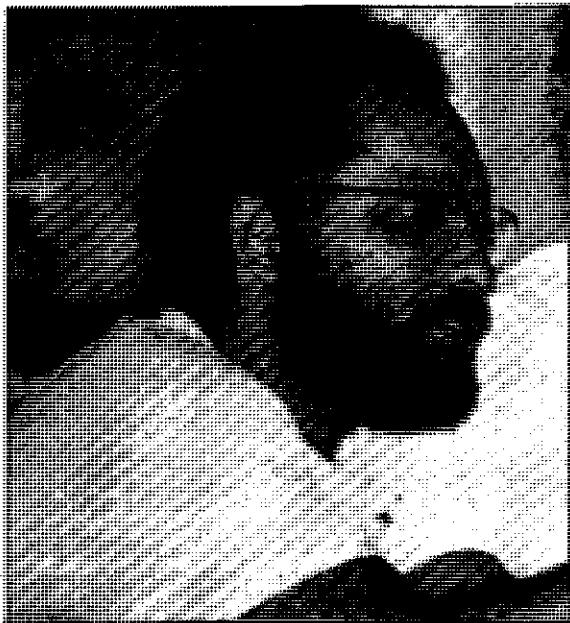
One of those networks was born in Harare, Zimbabwe last October when 15 organizations from the North and South met to explore new forms of cooperation and strengthen links already established. The organizations came from six countries in Southern Africa, Canada and Brazil to launch the South-South-North Network.

Their intent was to look toward a cooperation that would cross the South-South-North divide, a cooperation bounded by a strong sense of comradeship, built from a

common indignation about the state of the world and a great confidence in people's capacity to change it.

Our discussions confirmed that, in spite of the particularities of each region or country presented at the consultation, we are all suffering, to differing degrees, the consequences of a development model which functions to benefit a few private elites at the expense of the vast majority. We agreed that any alternative to this pattern of development had to be thought out under a global framework. In this sense, the issues identified by those who composed the initial network agenda – structural adjustment programmes, environment and GATT negotiations – offer the best windows to visualize the mechanisms which are ruling the world today. They also open spaces for us to advance our own alternatives.

From my particular perspective, as the only participant coming from



Atila Roque – IBASE, Brazil

"Should we be talking of democratic development or democracy and development? A debate in Latin America is about whether we should be talking only about democracy and not about development. We are including in that notion radical ideas of development. We need to capture a more radical notion of democracy."

Latin America, the Harare Consultation gave me a rare opportunity to meet with Southern African groups, particularly South Africans. The two weeks in Zimbabwe and South Africa provided the opportunity to share our experiences and views from Latin America on the challenges of the democratization process.

A network is not a new idea; it has been tried before. But there are differences now that give such links a new urgency. Economic globalization is now being felt, not only in the so-called undeveloped countries, but also among the wealthiest industrialized societies.

The growing social and economic problems which the so-called first world countries are facing these days are a clear sign that development is failing to achieve its ends there as well. We are witnessing the consolidation of an international order characterized by a kind of "social apartheid" in which the social gap between the rich and the poor is deepening within developed countries just as it has in underdeveloped countries.

This reality is being acknowledged even by some strong supporters of international capital, institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations. The 1990 and 1991 Human Development Report prepared by the United Nations Development Program is so far the best example of such a trend among the multilateral agencies.

On the other hand, the collapse of the socialist world has given way to an anachronistic revival of the free market ideology. The collapse of the bureaucratic and authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe is being billed as a victory for "free market forces," completely ignoring the decades of democratic resistance carried out in those societies.

Unfortunately, leftist forces seem to have been paralysed by events and may be missing the possibilities that stem from these changes. The real challenge facing popular movements and organizations worldwide is the construction of democracy. The task of progressive forces is to present an alternative development model which can create a world where the principles of equal-

ity, liberty, solidarity, diversity and participation become the main reference points to guide every dimension of human life. Those are the values to be rescued from the debris of the utopias which for so long nourished our struggle for social change.

International cooperation: The role of the NGOs

During the last few decades, traditional channels for north-to-south co-operation - governmental and multi-lateral agencies - have failed to achieve their goals.

At the same time, non-governmental organizations, both southern and northern, have emerged as important players in the international arena. As a sign of this process, in 1988, official contributions to NGOs represented 4.7 per cent of official development assistance and reached almost US\$2.3 billion. In that same year, NGOs were able to raise by their own means US\$4.2 billion.

The social, economical and environmental problems faced by the world are crying out for a complete reshaping of the international order. In this context, the NGOs ap-



Alice de Wolff

"The 'heart' of this network must be in southern Africa but we need to clarify the political and practical nature of the relationship with the north. We don't want to be the funding arm of the network. We want a relationship that is an alliance between equal partners."

Margie Bruun-Meyer - TCLSAC, Canada

pear as very innovative actors, offering an exciting counterbalance to agencies such as the World Bank, JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency) and others, especially in the South.

The NGOs have been able to re-shape the international agenda. Thanks to them, environmental concerns, gender issues and indigenous rights have been legitimized. The NGOs have progressed from being regarded as defenders of unrealistic, utopian and radical ideas to being seen as desirable partners with their rightful place in the international forum.

The World Bank, for instance, has begun to develop a special alliance with NGOs, inviting them for countless "consultative meetings" and asking them to play complementary roles in the area of "social development." The irony is that while the Bank tries to lure NGOs into "poverty-alleviation projects" with one hand, it continues to promote structural adjustment programmes with the other. A Brazilian NGO leader very properly dubbed this tendency a kind of "NGO's welfare,"

without any fundamental change in Bank development policy.

This sudden NGO notoriety can be misleading; we have to be very careful in assessing the differences which coexist under such a comprehensive concept as "Non-Governmental Organizations." We could be talking here about organizations which are so intimately tied to governmental policies and funds that they should be regarded instead as para-governmental agencies. Or we could be referring to organizations so close to the social movements that we can not distinguish amongst them.

Between these two extremes we find a wide range of organizations which are still waiting for a more detailed classification. But for the purpose of this article, it is enough to recognize that there is emerging internationally a kind of civil diplomacy, closer to the people and most often against government policies.

This is especially true in the South, where NGOs often grew out of opposition to authoritarian states,

supporting popular movements and formulating alternative visions of the development process. In Latin America, for instance, NGOs have played a remarkable role in the democratization process, as one of the main actors inside civil society. International trade, foreign debt, structural adjustment and other global issues which used to be discussed only among multilateral agencies, governments and academics are now subject to NGO campaigns and monitoring.

By creating a new track for international relations – distinct from governments or even political parties – the various networks built by NGOs help to foster new possibilities for international solidarity. The traditional Northern solidarity network has been operating for some time, often based on voluntary campaigns organized by northern citizen or/and church groups, concerned with human rights violations, famine and liberation movements in the southern countries. This kind of cooperation is motivated either by feelings of charity or by a genuine ideological identity with struggles in the South.

"Adjustment is the source of all kinds of problems, it aggravates the situation in all our concern areas. It could be unemployment, AIDS, violence against women, whatever. My group is working on unemployment and the impact of SAPs on health, particularly women's health. If we receive information from the network on housing that would be helpful. After a couple of years we will have a common pool of resources on the broad impact of SAPs in the region. This exchange will improve and strengthen all our work."

José Guambe – Structural Adjustment Working Group, Mozambique

Alice de Wolff



But more recently, there has been a shift toward a more reciprocal cooperation through which both northern and southern organizations link their strategies together to challenge the present dominant development model and fight for an alternative one. The potential of this type of North-South cooperation is starting to be explored by trade unions and other popular movements, as for example in the links being built between Latin American and Canadian groups. The potential for this kind of collaboration becomes very clear when we look at global issues such as the environment and international trade related issues such as GATT's Uruguay Round.

Another recent trend has been the development of horizontal links among Southern countries. After decades of triangular relationships – when southern organizations were not able to interact with each other except through meetings called by the North – the southern groups realized the need to promote South-South cooperation. It was a crucial step towards building their own agenda and to developing a real

partnership between northern and southern organizations.

These new international networks and regional articulations are helping to redefine the overall scenario where traditional international actors play their games. Because of the growing consciousness among popular organizations that local work needs to be combined with international action, southern groups can harness world-wide support. Today the murder of a rural leader in a remote village in the Amazon area can provoke waves of protests in different parts of the world.

There is no doubt that international cooperation among the NGOs has played an important role in developing this process. The main question now is whether their role can be developed further. It is time for NGOs to be more precise about their proposals for a meaningful democracy. They need to shift quickly from a reactive posture to a more *pro-active* one. At a time when everybody seems to be speaking the same language of "democracy," "cooperation" and "sustainable devel-

opment," it becomes imperative to have everyone's position very clearly defined. What kind of "democracy," "cooperation" and "sustainable development" are we talking about? Definitely not the same concepts promoted by the World Bank, with or without NGO participation!

Clearly, there is a lot to be done together. The Harare Consultation marked the beginning of what promises to be a tremendously enriching process of construction of a permanent South-South-North Network.

† IBASE was founded in 1981 by a multidisciplinary group of professionals, many of them returning to Brazil with international experience in Canada, the USA, Europe and Africa. IBASE activities include research and analysis at macro and micro levels, disseminated through computerized data banks, publications, audio-visuals, radio and consultancies. Its main users are popular organizations including rural and urban unions, civic associations, minority movements, and an array of grassroots organizations, local administrations, universities and research institutes.

"Volumes of research have been done and nothing has changed, we are getting poorer. We need to strengthen the south south link and integrate culture into our education. We have an obligation to fundraise within our regions as well, so that we are not totally dependent on the north."

Alice de Wolff



Maria Shaba – TAMWA, Tanzania

The Harare Consultation: A Northern Perspective

BY ALICE DE WOLFF

Alice de Wolff is the Executive Coordinator of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC)

We are so rarely able to spend a week with a group of like-minded people from different regions of the world where we can really talk about our work and the issues that deeply concern us. So I felt genuinely privileged to do just that in October at the South-South-North Network consultation in Harare.

During the week I spent at the Harare Consultation, I felt a peculiar emotional contradiction. We shared with each other our knowledge about the similarities in the terrible things that are taking place in each of our countries, but at the same time, we also shared a commitment to work with this

knowledge and continue as activists and that was a source of tremendous excitement and strength for me.

The activists who attended the consultation - from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Mozambique, Angola, Kenya, Zambia, Brazil and Canada - work with constituencies and political interests including rural people, women, trade unions, urban poor communities, environmental and peace groups.

Our discussions focused on identifying issues that we felt we could work on together. The information that emerged drew a picture of a network of international agreements and institutions all combining together to change our countries in fundamental ways. These changes include the re-organization and constraint of the role of nation states, freezing the mobility of most work

forces, and creating conditions for international trade in services and finance capital. Each of us described how our work is affected in some way by the phenomenal dislocation this is creating in many people's lives, in the south and in the north.

We all recognized that we are up against a very complex international matrix of powerful bodies, and that no one sector or national grouping can take it on alone. Toward the end of the week we agreed to form a Network, including groups from the south and the north. This decision was a strong affirmation that we all need to work together in broad coalitions or networks. We need to develop the political skills to identify the areas where we can act in concert. At the same time, we recognized that it is critical that our coalition work be grounded in strong organizing around, and thorough knowledge of, our own issues.

Our discussions pushed my own thinking and anger about women's relation to international conservative economic policies.

I used to think that these policies had certain inevitable but otherwise inadvertent impact on women, both in the south and in Canada, the U.S. and Britain. My thinking has changed, however.

Increasingly, I feel it is important to realize and emphasize that the impoverishment of women is essential to the economies envisioned by conservative policies. These policies can not work without the relegation of women's work to non-formal parts of the economy. Increasing amounts of unpaid or low-paid labour by women in caring and services industries (due to privatization and deregulation), and women's increased involvement in subsistence and informal economies, are necessary conditions for the



Maria Shaba, Alice de Wolff & Aileen MacQueen join with members of Women's Action Group, Harare

viability of structural adjustment and other conservative economic proposals.

It was a new experience for me to meet with activists from Africa and Brazil. At different times over the past 15 years I have worked in Africa and the Middle East as a researcher, project funder and coordinator. However much I perceived myself as an activist, my role during those years was as a development officer. This is the first time that I felt like and felt recognized as a political peer, as a sister. This new (for me) experience suggests some very strong directions for expanding our practices and experiences of solidarity.

It struck me that Canadians are well placed right now to enter into solidarity relations. First, we are in a position to understand the impact of conservative economic policies because of the changes in our families, our communities, and our own working lives which are a result of the U.S. Free Trade Agreement, Canadian debt reduction strategies, regressive taxes, privatization and deregulation. These policies are, in broad outline, very similar to structural adjustment programmes, the policies of the IMF and those proposed by the Uruguay round of GATT – and their impact is similar across the globe. Second, we have a growing body of experience with coalition politics because in Canada we have organized broadly to oppose this economic agenda. Most groups in this broad Canadian coalition recognize that what we are struggling with is international in scope, and that we must be working internationally.

While I learned a tremendous amount about the current situation in southern Africa and the world, I also came home with a clearer idea about the direction of several of NAC's campaigns and projects. For those of you unfamiliar with us, NAC is the largest feminist organization in Canada, a broad coalition of over 500 member groups

representing approximately three million Canadians.

The following are sketches of how some of the issues raised in Harare relate to NAC's work, and how we are refining our on-going activities so that our actions parallel and are in solidarity with women in the south.

- As mentioned above, structural adjustment programmes have a tremendous impact on women's paid and unpaid work, and we discussed the need to continue to do popular research about the specifics in different countries and communities. Lorraine Michael, who attended the Harare consultation for the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice, is also a co-chair of a NAC priority campaign called "The Future of Women's Work." She and others are designing the campaign so that forums across the country will expose the changes Canadian women are experiencing, and how those changes in many ways parallel the experiences of women in Africa and elsewhere.

- The consultation put me in touch with several more African women's groups who are interested in collaborating to make the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women a more effective tool. With more coordinated pressure from non-governmental women's groups, the U.N. Committee that monitors the Convention could become a more useful forum where women from all countries confront their governments with the eroding conditions of women's lives. NAC will continue to monitor Canada's reports on the Convention and will present another Parallel Report to the U.N. if the government misrepresents the impact of its policies on women.

- Participants in Harare recognized that we need to generate not just critiques, but visions of different forms of economic and social organization. This is by no means a simple project, and we felt we would all learn by sharing our efforts. We suggested that all our groups needed to encour-

age and develop economic planning that supports "people's agendas."

To this end we have circulated to the Network NAC's draft "Women's Charter" which outlines what kind of a country Canadian women want to live in, and how we want to be governed. In particular, we think it will be of interest to women in South Africa who are working on the development of a new Constitution.

I am hoping that a group of feminist economists will produce a federal "women's budget" based on the "Women's Charter" before the next election, and that we can share what we learn about how to do such a thing. (The only example that we are aware of is a Manitoba provincial budget proposed by the group "Choices.")

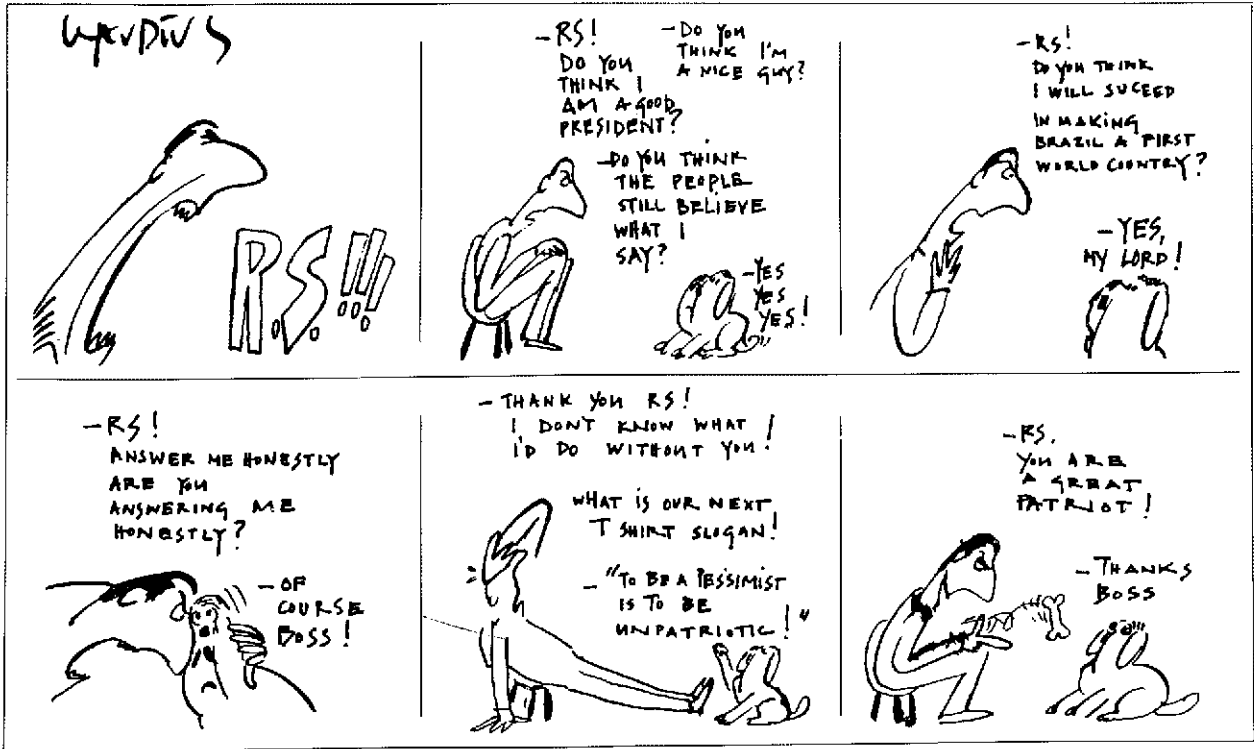
- During the consultation we discussed the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) agreement in some detail. It became clear to me that it is not sufficient for Canadians to only oppose the free trade agreements we are involved with: we must recognize that virtually all international economic institutions have adopted a conservative agenda. We need to do more popular "economic literacy" – a wonderful term used by African women's groups – around, for instance the possible impact of the GATT agreement on Canada, and on countries in the south.

- We are dreaming about organizing an international consultation with women's groups from around the world on women and conservative economics.

I think it is critical that trade union, environmental, peace, feminist and rural political activists have many more opportunities to be touch with each other, both in southern Africa and internationally. Face to face meetings, and the development of networks, are essential to the identification of parallel issues and the growth of complementary strategies. They will make it possible to learn and gain strength from each other.

Francis Munyuki

It was with deep shock and grief that SAR, TCLSAC and members of the South-South-North Network learned that Francis Munyuki and his two children were killed in a car accident in December. Francis was chairperson of the Popular Education Collective (TADG) in Harare and editor of their publication *Read On*. He did most of the local organizing for and hosting of the Network consultation in Harare. He was a skilled organizer and facilitator, and had taken on central responsibilities for the future of the Network. His death is a tremendous loss to his wife, his colleagues, and the struggle for popular participation in the building of social and economic justice in Zimbabwe. His tragic death is also a severe blow to the infant South-South-North Network. We owe it to him to nurture it into the meaningful strong exchange he was committed to.



Claudio Cecon - Politicas Governamentais - IBASE - Brazil

Botswana: Miracle... or Mirage?

BY OUR BOTSWANA CORRESPONDENT

With political change sweeping across Africa, it has become common for media pundits to point to Botswana as an example of stable multiparty democracy and rapid economic development. On the surface, there are some sound reasons for this.

Politically, Botswana's successes thus far have been notable. The constitution provides for regular elections (six have been held since independence, though there has never been a transfer of power to another party) and for a popular vote, basic rights like press freedom, freedom of speech, association, and the like. For the first time, in the 1989 elections, all 34 parliamentary seats were contested. Seven out of the existing eight parties participated and only 12 of 292 local council seats were returned to the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) unopposed. Campaigning was vigorous - although the result was devastating to the opposition (the BDP won 31 parliamentary seats, the Botswana National Front (BNF) 3 seats.).

Economically, Botswana had the most rapid rate of real growth of any country in the world between 1965 and 1985. Since 1975 the economy has grown by five times in real terms. Although this has been achieved mainly by a spectacular rise in mineral (especially diamond) exports, which now account for 80% of foreign exchange, 40% of GDP, and 60% of government revenues, the economy also boasts other successes. Its rate of growth in manufacturing value added in the past two decades is among the highest recorded by the World Bank. Only China, South Korea, Singapore, Indonesia and Libya have achieved faster rates, and UNIDO

data places Botswana at the top of the list in sub-Saharan Africa.

As has been the case for hundreds of years, cattle production also continues to play a vital role in the economy. The EEC has granted Botswana a 90% abatement on its usual import levy, and captures the lion's share of the country's exports under the Lome agreement. Although a severe drought in the 1980s cut into the national cattle herd (60% of which is owned by less than 10% of the population), it is now being rebuilt along with an increased abattoir capacity.

As a result of this economic boom, Botswana has had the most rapid rate of real growth of government expenditure (12% a year) of any country in the world. Awash with cash from diamond revenue and exchange-rate changes, the government has been able to provide free education, an expanding road network, improved water facilities and an impressive network of health clinics throughout the country.

Diamonds aren't forever

Beneath the surface, however, things do not look so promising for the future. All indications are that economic growth is slowing down. The economy grew by 4.8% in 1989-1990 which, impressive enough by other countries' standards, was 8.9% lower than in the previous year. This was largely due to flat prices for diamond sales through De Beers' Central Selling Organisation (which markets at least 80% of the world's diamonds, and all of Botswana's) after the global economic bubble of the 1980s burst, and along with it the appetite for diamond jewellery in the West and Japan. Although production has expanded and plans are afoot to create even more capacity, the near-term outlook for prices is bleak.

The current account for balance of payments has shown signs of deteriorating, and capital inflows have declined from the peak years of investment in mineral production. The Pula was recently devalued by 5%, allegedly to protect the nascent manufacturing sector, but since the share of imports in the goods consumed by poorer Botswana (basically food) is higher than that of the richest, this move has had what economists euphemistically refer to as "important distributional implications." Together with the formally illegal pass-along of South Africa's recently-imposed Value Added Tax, which has had a visible effect on prices, times are getting much harder for both urban and rural consumers.

Botswana had the fastest rate of urbanization in sub-Saharan Africa (which is saying something) in the decade and a half after independence, at 15% per annum. Although the overall 25% urbanization figure is not so high by, say, Zambian standards (over 40%), it has had a tremendous social and cultural effect. Urban unemployment now stands at around 25%, and there is an acute housing shortage, heavy pressure on social services and increasing crime. There is also a growing squatter problem, especially in Francistown. Street children abound in Gaborone, panhandling and sniffing glue at the shops, and subject to harassment and arrest by the police. The government has still not ratified the UN Children's Rights Charter, despite continuing public pressure for it to do so.

Whatever safety net the rural economy once provided all but disappeared as the diamond boom took root. Though there is some truth in the view that a mineral enclave economy has developed, the two are linked in



Vicki R. Finkel/Impact Visuals

Basarwa women at Xade in the central Kalahari Desert, Botswana, 1989

numerous ways. The widespread macroeconomic changes of the past decade have had a profound effect on the agricultural sector, not least by putting capital into the hands of larger commercial farmers and cattle producers.

The persistence of poverty in the rural areas, where three-quarters of Botswana's people still live, is a growing source of concern. The government has substantially improved the lot of a segment of the rural population through an impressive array of programs promoting agricultural development by easy finance, support for rain-fed arable farming, etc. However, the rural economy has been as substantially transformed since independence as the other sectors of the economy, with serious social and environmental consequences.

Undoubtedly the biggest losers have been the Basarwa (their colo-

nialist "Bushman" appellation has evolved into "remote area dwellers" - RADs - in developmentese), whose already precarious standard of living and way of life is being threatened by the relentless encroachment of the cattle economy. Efforts by the government to promote a villagization policy to transform the Basarwa into what have been called "solid, pastoralist Tswana yeomen" have foundered on the inadequate provision of resources and land.

Hamburgers vs. the Okavango

Land degradation from overgrazing presents a serious obstacle to further economic growth, but the chief threats to the environment come from encroachment into the national parks and the expansion of cattle production into the Okavango wetlands, one of the most spectacular and unique wilderness areas in the

world. Plans to siphon water originating in the wetlands for use in diamond processing, though temporarily shelved by the government after a storm of local and international protest, also loom large in the Okavango's future.

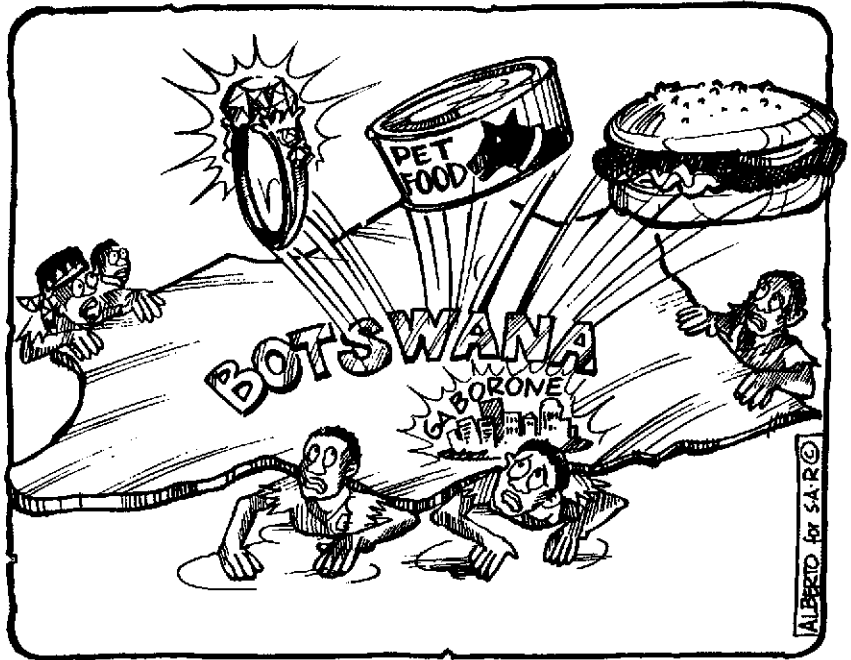
There is genuine concern that one of the last relatively unspoiled wilderness areas in Africa could disappear in a decade or two if dredging, fencing and other "development" operations are put through. Critics argue that it is unacceptable for the Okavango and its environs to be sacrificed for the purpose of, in essence, putting hamburger meat onto European tables, supplying pet food to South Africa's white suburbs, and placing diamond jewellery on people's fingers and ears. Though a National Conservation Strategy was adopted in December 1990, it doesn't address the key issues of dredging and fencing.

All of this has raised suspicion that the small circle of cattle barons who allegedly have run the Botswana government since 1966 are intent on carving up the Okavango for private cattle ranch development to take advantage of high export prices for beef. For its part, the government (supported by some mainstream conservationists) says the fence is needed to protect the Okavango from the overgrazing that has devastated much of the rural environment, and the country's cattle herd from infection by hoof and mouth disease, which has been a serious problem across the border in Zimbabwe.

Fencing is an especially contentious issue among the Basarwa and smaller cattle producers. Villagers report that migrating wild animals are being killed in great numbers on the fences, which are placed across the paths to their water. In effect, an enclosure movement that rivals the English experience in the first half of the 19th century has been developing apace throughout Botswana, and is protected by a mix of the same type of legal and semi-legal umbrellas.

Water pollution, deforestation, overgrazing and wildlife destruction also have a significant effect on the quality of life for women. Firewood depletion and the privatization of access to water facilities have added a heavy additional labour burden. Thus far, aside from an initiative for environmental education, little has been done to involve rural women in conservation strategy.

Despite these problems, however, the green movement in Botswana is weak, preferring less politically controversial conservation projects to confronting the vested interests actually threatening the environment. One of the key organizations, the Kalahari Conservation Society (KCS), is headed by the resident director of the Anglo-American Corporation and the commander of the



Botswana Defence Force, two organizations not noted for their green leanings.

There is reportedly dissatisfaction that the KCS is run by expatriates and has not sufficiently opposed the dredging project, which it vehemently denies. In turn, mainstream environmentalists have accused government critics of cynically dramatizing the fencing and river dredging issues for political gain or out of ideological zeal, getting their scientific facts wrong, and generally diverting attention from more threatening sources of ecological destruction.

Labour begins to stand up

The decline in the mineral boom has increasingly strained Botswana's labour relations, leading to the most serious outbreak of industrial strife since 1975. In the past year there have been major strikes among both mineworkers and manual workers in government service. And recently there have been stayaways and industrial action at two diamond mines, Orapa and Jwaneng, and at the new Sua Pan soda ash project.

The biggest strike in Botswana's history took place in early November 1991, at the same time as the South African national anti-VAT stayaway. According to various estimates, between 15,000 and 60,000 government and parastatal manual workers downed tools for two weeks to demand a living wage, paralyzing activity in various sectors throughout the country. The government declared the strike illegal, dismissed over 15,000 industrial class employees, and rejected a 154% increase demanded by the Manual Workers Union, the major section of the Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU). There were reports of soldiers and imported Chinese labourers put to work to maintain the main Gaborone hospital, and use of scab labour from villages in rural Ghanzi.

The heart of the dispute was disagreement over the definition of the poverty line (PDL). The union claimed previous increases did not meet the increase in the cost of living nor did they raise wages to the PDL. And for the union, the government's

PDL figure was less than half of the cost of living.

Although the industrial council for this sector accepted the union's recommendations on the cost of living and on raising wages to the poverty level, the Ministry of Finance overruled it. Procedurally, a failure to agree would have gone to the Commissioner of Labour as a dispute, but this did not happen. In any case, from the union's point of view, government had simply overruled the industrial council, the body set up to decide on negotiations. To the union, this was tantamount to breaking an agreement, a case that was bolstered by a leaked document showing that government representatives on the industrial council concurred with the cost of living figure established by a subcommittee.

Nevertheless, with no give and take on either side, the strike soon crumbled in disarray. A few days after it broke out, the union leaders, stunned by the government's tough reaction, adopted a "water testing" resolution calling on workers to return to their jobs, supposedly to see if the government was serious about dismissals. Many workers and shop stewards saw their leaders' call as a retreat, a reaction that must have considerably damaged the workers' confidence in the leadership, as was apparent in reported grumblings of "ba ja le bone" (they eat with our enemies).

The wider significance of the strike is that Botswana needs a mechanism for enforcing agreements, since the industrial relations structure has simply not kept pace with the country's economic growth. The negotiating authority of the industrial councils, vague and contradictory to begin with, is now even more confused, following the strike. Labour relations are at present where they were in South Africa in the 70s. There is no regular collective bargaining structure, no serious debate within the unions on the merits of building shopfloor

vs. political strength (much less combining them into some form of "social movement unionism"), and very narrow legal space for industrial action. Indeed the government declared the metalworkers' strike illegal, in contrast to the South Africa anti-VAT stayaway at the same period of time. Meanwhile the union is fighting a rearguard action against reemployment conditions and victimization.

Overall, despite the thousands of workers who went on strike, the labour movement is weak not because of poor leadership but because the manufacturing sector is new and relatively underdeveloped. As in South Africa, the potential for a more sophisticated labour movement and politics will only emerge when manufacturing becomes more stable and entrenched.

In short, the future of Botswana's economy is likely tied to productive value-adding enterprises and the resulting increase in exports and domestic living standards – and so, too, are the fortunes of the trade union movement and the political parties.

Politics of the shrinking pie

The strike and the state's response may point ahead both to political developments in coming years and to the wider relevance of the Botswana example. Besides rapid economic growth, the main factor sustaining Botswana's multiparty democracy has been a weak opposition.

Even now, although the economic boom is slowing, there do not seem to be any immediate serious challengers to the ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP). For one thing, the BDP has massive resources to mobilize through its state structures. And for another, the opposition parties lack unity, organization and resources.

Since independence, Botswana has had a de facto one-party state secured through the ballot box. And although there are currently unity talks between the main three of the

eight opposition parties, there have, as previously, been serious obstacles to unifying, as each party manoeuvres for advantage. Moreover, one party, the BNF, has little grassroots community or working class organizational substance to its practice. Having learned very little indeed from the mass democratic movement in South Africa, it has nevertheless won control of the Gaborone municipal government, but provided few visible benefits to the citizenry.

The question is whether the present opposition or some new formation will seize the political potential in the discontent over the economy and social dislocation of the boom years. But to do so requires reversing the central weakness of Botswana's democracy: the lack of popular participation in the electoral process, policy-making and decisions affecting community life.

The rapid changes of the past two decades have outstripped the capacity for popular involvement of institutions like PTAs, civic organizations, community forums, and public hearings for planning boards. They are too few and too new to secure continuing grassroots input – much less control[†]. Meanwhile, the kgotla, or village council system, mostly transmits state policies, though it sometimes serves as an effective grassroots sounding board. At present, democracy largely means voting once every five years.

The political and party weakness is especially striking in the case of women, who have little political power or influence on policies affecting them. The BDP and BNF, despite having formed women's

[†] For more detailed analyses see the excellent brief collection edited by Mpho Molomo and Brian T. Mokopagosi, *Multi-party Democracy in Botswana* (Harare: Sapes Trust, 1991); and also John Holm and Patrick Molutsi, eds., *Democracy in Botswana* (Gaborone: Macmillan, 1988).

sections, have no clear policy on women. Indeed, the BDP has rejected any such need, on the classic liberal grounds that it is protecting individual not group rights. The party central committees are male-dominated, women members merely representing women's wings, and rarely addressing party or political meetings. Never numbering more than two in parliament, women formed only 6% of parliamentary candidates in the 1989 elections (13% at local council level).

Although there are groups working on gender issues, e.g., for study (Gender Research Network) and action (*Emang Basadi* - "Stand up Women")[†], they have very little political throw-weight against the state bureaucracy. It is an open question whether women, workers and other politically sidelined groups can fight back against their marginalization.

[†] For a sketch of the latter's work see Athaliah Molokomme, "Emang Basadi," *Signs*, Vol. 16, No. 4 Summer 1991).

The "Kuwait of Africa"?

There is also growing concern that Botswana's close political ties with the U.S. are leading it into very dangerous waters in the region. While some Botswana like to call their country the "Kuwait of Africa" because of its mineral riches, in light of the recent experience of that country this may not turn out to be such a happy analogy. The BNF has warned that the government's plan to spend over US\$500 million to construct a huge air base near Molepolole (just a short flight to the Rand) raises serious questions about what role the BDP government sees Botswana playing in the unfolding scenario in South Africa.

First there is the difficulty of justifying such a huge expenditure of public funds (assuming it's all Botswana money, as the government maintains despite rumors of U.S. and French involvement) on the military when the local economy is slowing down and global military spending is declining. More omi-

nously, however, there are numerous examples where military bases have been constructed in pro-Western countries to enable the U.S. in particular to project power into what it deems to be "regional troublespots," such as Clark and Subic Bay in the Philippines, Mombasa in Kenya, Diego Garcia, Dhahran in Saudi Arabia, and last but not least Kamina in Zaire, from which the CIA has been supplying UNITA for years. It is clearly a long-standing aspect of U.S. strategy to pre-position bases in areas where the possibility of a threat to its strategic or economic interests exist, and the question is whether the Molepolole base is intended for this purpose, either looking south or north.

For its part, the government insists that the present airfield next to the university in Gaborone needs to be moved, and that the new airfield is designed primarily to accomplish this. At a recent public forum on the issue, however, some speakers claimed the base will be targeted at



General store, northern Botswana

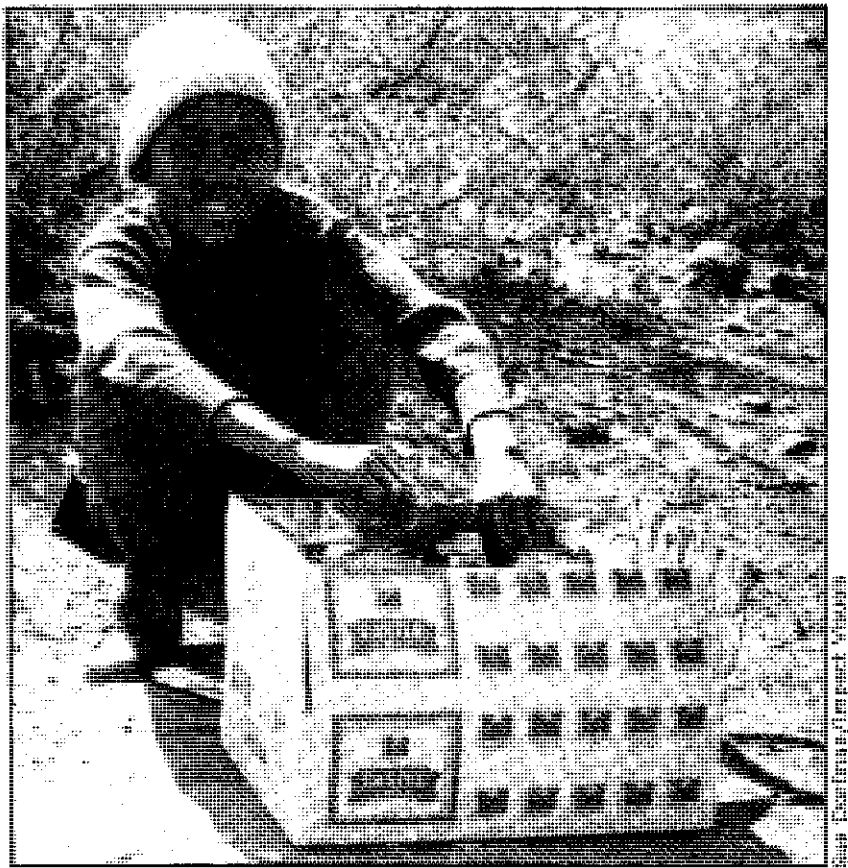
Sue Dorfman/Impact Visuals

a future less pro-Western ANC government – and even at preparing a Desert Storm II. At the very least, if charges of significant U.S. involvement are true (a recent exercise saw hundreds of American troops [Rangers] descending on Botswana for a joint training exercise with the BDF, for example), it does suggest that “instability” in the “new South Africa” is seen as enough of a threat to justify a large scale commitment of imperial resources to retain a strategic foothold in the region. This is particularly troubling since it would imply that official strategic thinkers in the U.S. are actively anticipating either that the CODESA participants will have difficulty in reaching a stable and acceptable settlement or, even more ominously, that some capacity for destabilization tactics must be readied in case a future South African government becomes too democratic for imperial tastes. Should either of these scenarios come to pass, there would be little that Botswana could do to escape the effects.

Botswana as model

We noted at the outset of this article that, despite the many question marks over Botswana's future, its successes as a functioning democracy should not be minimized. True, the one-sided results of the 1989 elections have been troubling to some who felt a better showing by the opposition would have benefitted the democratic process overall. And there have been some even more disturbing trends in the area of press freedom.

The offices of Mmegi were raided shortly after it published the leaked industrial council document, and the reporter who wrote the story was detained in January for 24 hours and beaten badly by police trying to obtain the name of his source. Moreover, the press has been warned by a government official against publishing “negative reports” on public affairs “lest they get engulfed in the storm,” whatever that might mean. The recent revelation that



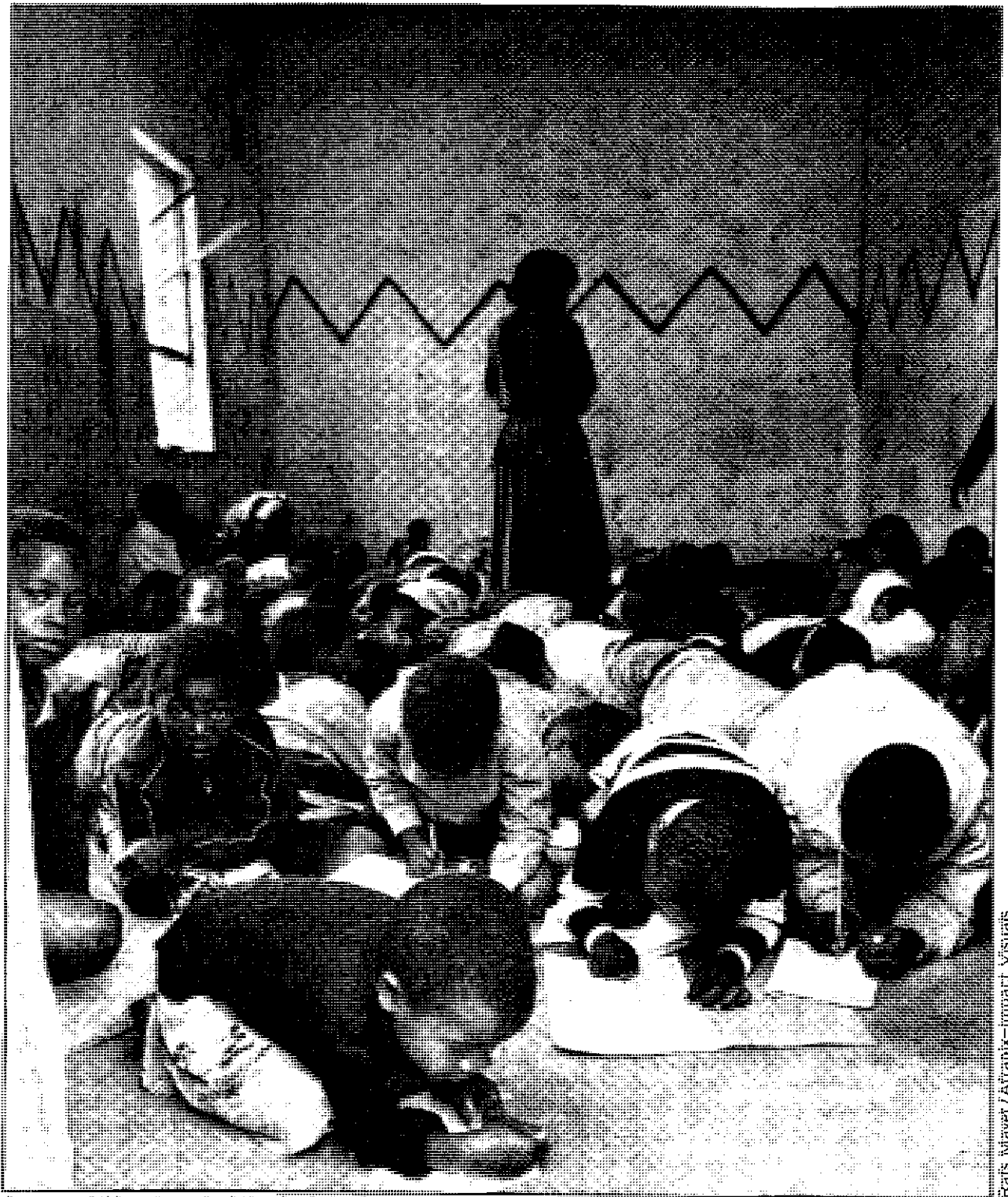
Boy peddling goods out of a South African beer box in Botswana

one of the country's major weeklies had close links with South African military intelligence has also raised questions about the independence of the press.

Still, enough has been accomplished to make the question “Can Botswana serve as a model of multiparty democracy in Africa?” an appropriate one. The answer? Yes, provided several factors apply: that your economy grows by 500%; that the political opposition and labour movement doesn't present enough of a threat to the status quo to test your democratic institutions; that a culture of relative political tolerance exists; and that you don't need to step on any globalist toes in order to survive politically at home! Whether such conditions are likely to prevail in other African countries

over the next few decades people can judge for themselves.

But consider, in this regard, the argument from one less than sanguine futurologist who suggests that Africa will increasingly become “a handful of Switzerlands in a sea of Biafras.” While continental developments have not yet reached quite that stage, on any such spectrum Botswana still inclines toward the first category. At the same time, as we have seen, there are clear signs that Botswana's present “anomalies,” including pluralistic democracy and a growing economy, may over time become less obvious than its affinities with other countries on the continent. If the “Botswana case” does give some cause for hope there is also a need for sober realism in assessing its prospects.



Rais Mayet/Afrapix-impact Visuals

Squatter children in township school, Durban, 1989

School Work

The Education Policy Debate in South Africa

BY JOE MULLER AND NICK TAYLOR

Joe Muller teaches at the University of Cape Town and convenes NEPI's Editorial Group. Nick Taylor is a researcher in the Education Policy Unit at the University of the Witwatersrand and is NEPI's national coordinator.

The shift from the politics of "protest" to the politics of "development" puts policy debate centrally on the agenda in contemporary South Africa. Whether the focus is land, the economy, health, housing or education, the policy agenda is about alternative visions for the new South Africa. It is a highly contested debate, as much about representation, power and legitimacy as it is about specific policies. Moreover, there already exist many powerful actors who are attempting to tilt the balance of policy debate in one direction or another. In such a context it is vitally important that the mass democratic movement develops its own capacity to put forward clearly formulated progressive policies and to make them stick. In this article we look at the attempt to do so in one crucial sphere, that of education, by examining, quite specifically, one potentially crucial protagonist in the struggle around educational issues, the National Education Coordinating Committee and its National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI).

The search for alternatives

Not surprisingly, education struggles throughout the 1980s were overwhelmingly confrontational and reactive against a state determined to crush all opposition. Indeed, the unifying motif of the education struggle was opposition to the state in all its forms - policies, bureaucrats and, very often, on-site personnel like teachers, principals and

inspectors. It was a politics of rejection pitted against all suggestions for amelioration. Improvements were invariably dismissed as schemes to prop up apartheid education.

While a legitimate tactic at the time, this approach helped contribute to the breakdown of an educational system already deeply scarred by the underfunding and neglect characteristic of apartheid educational policy. Thus what confronts us now is a situation where the infrastructure of the education system is in chaos. In addition to a severe lack of schools, the schools that are operating are generally under-supplied and overcrowded. Students must contend with inadequate supplies of books and dilapidated buildings. Under-qualified and demoralized teachers are common and students must embark on their matric, the examination taken at the end of high school, amidst township violence and gangs in the schools. Any strategy for a post-apartheid school system must deal therefore with the combined challenges of tackling illiteracy, generating the skills required for economic development, stemming violent conflict, and creating conditions for effective teaching and learning in the schools. This is a formidable list of policy tasks indeed.

The mass democratic movement and its educational arm, the NECC has long been aware of the importance of reconstruction in education. Indeed the NECC recognized this need from the outset, with its creation in December 1985 marking a shift in the mobilizing strategy of the movement. The slogan of "liberation now, education later" became "people's education for people's power." This marked the end of a decade of school boycott politics and the beginning of the long march

to reclaim the schools.

By late 1989 it had become clear to the NECC that they should establish a negotiating forum on education to lay the foundations for a single non-racist education department. As part of this goal, the NECC launched the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) at its National Congress in December 1990. NEPI was to be composed of 12 research groups whose final reports would be presented in August 1992. Convenors and executive officers were appointed, a national secretariat was set up and the national education reconstruction effort was underway.

Life after February 2, 1990

The reformulation of education policy was, therefore, to involve a shift in the form of struggle, a difficult enough task in itself but one that was soon to be rendered all the more difficult by the acceleration of broader political developments. Thus, the unbannings and releases of February 2nd, 1990, brought a dramatically altered political stage. Suddenly the NECC's national leaders were being invited for direct talks with government ministers and departments. Direct ANC-government talks regarding educational matters followed shortly thereafter. The urgent need for concrete, realizable policy alternatives was unambiguously clear.

On this new terrain, NEPI was very quickly forced to confront its own meagre human resources and inexperience at policy research on a national level. Moreover, in practice, the continuing offensive wing of the democratic movement was to provide little support for the kind of work envisaged for NEPI, the immediate political imperatives of the struggle almost inevitably dictating the saliency of apparently



First day of school at a newly desegregated primary school, Johannesburg, 1991

more pressing priorities. Equally importantly, NEPI was now faced with a host of contending actors in the education policy debate – these ranging from the education officials of the apartheid regime to corporate players and World Bank experts. In consequence, NEPI finds itself caught between the immediate pressing need for activism and the confrontation of questionable initiatives in the educational sphere on the one hand and its longer term agenda of grounding movement educational policies more firmly within well well-researched alternative policy formulations on the other.

The tensions between immediate political and long-term developmental imperatives have remained a central feature at every level of NEPI. Whilst understanding the need for NEPI's longer term research pro-

cess (an 18 month trajectory was mentioned), national leaders – their concerns focused around an imminent Patriotic Front education conference, and the education negotiation forums being put forward by the state – increasingly looked to NEPI and other educational policy units (EPUs) for immediate conclusions, however provisional. Moreover, the urgency of such demands gave added weight to another of NEPI's concerns regarding the political space it now found itself occupying: upwardly accountable to the NECC rather than downwardly accountable to the sectors within the popular movement who had all along been most actively engaged in education struggles.

To its credit, NEPI was concerned from the outset with questions of participation and legitimacy.

It has been aware of the need to build mechanisms of popular consultation into policy analysis to ensure accountability. There were also attempts to balance racial, gender and regional representation at least in the convenorships of the research groups. Of all of these, regional absences were probably the most serious. Very few people from the rural, black campuses have become directly involved in NEPI, let alone people not at universities. Efforts were made to compensate for this by arranging workshops, seminars and information sheets informing people and inviting participation. Nevertheless, the absent voices remain a major concern.

New playing field and new players

To complicate matters further, any

negotiating forum involving the NECC and NEPI will have to contend, as noted above, with the appearance of a plethora of actors, both old and new, on the educational policy stage. These range from the South African government's own Department of Education and Training (DET) and National Education to a host of others in both the public and private sectors, some with significant international connections.

In May 1990 the de Klerk government announced its own Educational Renewal Strategy (ERS). Clearly, the 20 member working group had already been in full swing before February 2, 1990, its existence bearing all the hallmarks of a secretive, in-house, top-down policy strategy initiative. As it happens, the release of the ERS' 94 page "Discussion Document" in June 1991 was met with widespread condemnation from the Urban Foundation and the Committee of University Principals at one end to the teachers, unions, NECC and the ANC at the other. Significantly, the singular lack of legitimacy of the ERS process was the major reason for the rejection.

Equally significantly, the ERS proposals demonstrate just how limited the government's education agenda remains. For the central feature of these proposals is their complete silence on the transformation of the apartheid education systems into one central system. The government sometimes falls back on the notion of "local choice" as a high-sounding excuse for an unwillingness to tamper with the legacy of apartheid in the educational field. In addition, it has made some small effort to make black schooling legitimate by increasing its funding. But quite apart from the fact that these new levels of funding remain entirely inadequate, there is a much more fundamental flaw: within the current political and economic context of South Africa, a refusal to integrate the education system racially ensures that increased expenditure alone will not remedy the situation.

The gap between the maximum the government seems willing to consider in terms of change and the minimum the movement must continue to demand remains very wide indeed.

Private sector in education

The private sector has also been unusually active in the educational policy field since February 2, 1990. There are several key players. One is the Private Sector Education Council (PRISEC), a lobby group of the five major employer organizations. Another is the Private Sector Initiative (PSI), a somewhat shadowy committee with vast funds at its disposal. Then there is the Urban Foundation's education policy unit, EDUPOL. This is a sort of private sector EPU, one that has endeavoured to build up some networking links with NEPI.

In addition, there is the Education Foundation, a brokerage body that has successfully established ties with American and World Bank experts. It has also managed to set up a computer modelling facility which will be made available to government and NEPI alike. And finally there is the education section of the Independent Development Trust (IDT), a body with extensive state resources for social upliftment programmes. The IDT is not only building classrooms, but is also funding a wide array of educational service projects. It has become the only internal donor to be able to match the formidable firepower of such international funders as USAID, WUS and Interfund.

These new educational policy players are generating a multiplicity of new options. By and large, however, these are options designed to keep the course of educational change operating within rather narrow parameters. But the attractions of some of these schemes should not be underestimated either. The danger of falling in with schemes which may have long-term negative consequences simply because of monetary exigencies, or because they are technically attractive, should be all too

apparent. Liberal initiatives emanating from the private sector raise the prospect of class inequalities replacing institutionalized racial inequality as the major obstacle to an equitable school system. Yet NEPI, for reasons alluded to above, has yet to build up the infrastructural capacity with which to engage with many of these private sector schemes or to interact with the protagonists of them with firm and clear alternatives.

What role for NEPI?

How, then, is the goal of education for democracy to be safeguarded? It will be necessary to move beyond the culture of mere revolt amongst students, to confront the need to integrate the white schools that have been part of the racist apparatus, and to develop a range of progressive options around issues of transforming the structure of the schools, democratizing the curriculum, and the like. Clearly, NEPI must have more to offer on these various fronts of the struggle to reconstruct education in South Africa than merely high-sounding slogans. However, the odds are stacked against NEPI's unqualified success.

Thus, far too many of the researchers are overloaded with other obligations while others are entering policy analysis and thinking on a national scale for the first time. As noted, the evolution of a host of relationships between the state and other policy players from other points of the political spectrum further challenges NEPI's prospects. Other twists and turns in the political process may find NEPI simply passed by. But the costs of this happening would be high. Although old methods of non-collaboration and confrontation have given way to other methods of engaging education issues, the mass democratic movement has nothing remotely on the educational horizon which could provide the kind of underpinnings for progressive activity that NEPI has set out to make available to the movement. In this sense, NEPI simply cannot be allowed to fail.

Southern Africa Notebook:

Jumping the Gun II

Just when you thought *SAR* might have gone completely over the top – can Canadian policy towards South Africa really be quite so bad as the editors and Linda Freeman (“Jumping the Gun? Canada and South Africa 1991,” *SAR*, January 1992) combined to say in our last issue? – they go and make our critique look wimpish. Consider the bizarre juxtaposition of two articles that appeared within a recent three day span last week. On Thursday, January 23 there’s the banner front-page headline in the *Globe and Mail*: “Canada angers ANC by ending high-tech sanctions against South Africa.” On Saturday (January 25), again on the *Globe*’s front page, “De Klerk attempts to soothe white fears: Assured [white] veto on constitutional changes.” Jumping the gun, indeed.

And what, you’re probably asking, does Linda Freeman have to say about this? She responded to our query as follows:

It certainly looks as if Canada is

prepared to take the most optimistic view of the Codesa (Convention for a Democratic South Africa) talks underway in South Africa. Although Mulroney insisted last summer that Canada was not prepared to follow U.S. and European decisions to lift sanctions, and that there was nothing wrong in Canada being the last to remove them, things have certainly changed. In January, the government quietly lifted the ban on sales of high-tech equipment and software, a move cheered by the Canadian Exporters Association.

Last September the Southern Africa Task Force in External Affairs had helped soften Commonwealth sanctions and, indeed, the decision to lift these sanctions was defended by Lucie Edwards, the now outgoing head (as of the end of January) of the Task Force, as bringing Canada’s export restrictions into line with the practices of other Commonwealth countries. Ironically, the day before the new (January) circular outlining the government’s new

policy, the Prime Minister’s office had sent a letter assuring the Quebec anti-apartheid movement that Canadian sanctions would be maintained!

Clearly the Canadian government’s attention is focused more at home on the constitution and the economy than on South Africa. However, the policy that is emanating from External Affairs underlines a shift in attitude towards the de Klerk government. At the least, Canada is joining other countries in taking the pressure off the white government even as that government in turn is proposing a white veto on constitutional changes, even as further revelations now link state security forces with the hit squads or “third force” which have terrorized the townships in the last few years. We seem to be reverting to a more traditional policy of keeping company with our major Western allies, rather than championing the interests of the majority in South Africa who, in normal democratic systems, would rule.

Michael Valpy, Won’t You Please Come Home

White veto? Apparently, though, that sounds pretty good to Toronto’s *Globe and Mail*. Our sometime *SAR* collaborator Michael Valpy finally makes it to the mast-head of the *Globe* (as “Deputy Managing Editor”) and what do we get? The paper runs one of the worst editorials on South Africa ever to appear in the Canadian press. We know that’s really saying something, but consider “Clashing rights in South Africa,” December 21, 1991 – written before De Klerk’s latest pronouncement but dealing with much the same issue with regard to various proposed constitutional

dispensations in South Africa.

It’s an editorial that refuses – intellectual dishonesty is the only plausible explanation – to look beneath the surface of existent rhetoric. Ask almost anyone in South Africa what a white veto means and they’ll tell you it’s designed to stop a majority (inevitably largely black) from taking steps *vis-à-vis* the economy that might begin to redress socio-economic inequalities or qualify the power of (white) capital. And yet what can the end of apartheid mean if it doesn’t move beyond the mere fact of obtaining the franchise to attacking the cruel

legacy of apartheid that has made the gap between the richest and the poorest in that country the widest in the world?

To its discredit the *Globe and Mail* makes no mention whatsoever of this bottom-line of vetoism, even, coyly but disgracefully, seeking to give a Canadian twist to things by suggesting that whites are merely insisting “on constitutional guarantees of their status as a (to coin a phrase) distinct society.” Or if that comparison doesn’t quite grab you, try thinking, à la the *Globe* editorialist, of the distinctly

privileged, distinctly powerful white community in South Africa as poor little Rhode Island, granted two senate seats by James Madison in order to protect it from big bad New York. (Indeed, contemplate James Madison himself, presented centrally to its argument by the *Globe* as some mere tormented champion of "individual rights" - as if his model of constitutional checks and balances for early America hadn't been quite self-consciously presented as a way of keeping the hands of

the mob, *qua* majority, off property. Here, perhaps, the *Globe* invokes history more accurately than it realizes!)

No, the *Globe and Mail* to the contrary notwithstanding, Mandela's "promised ... powerful bill of rights, enforced through civil and criminal courts, that would protect freedom of speech, association and religion" has to be enough to satisfy the "white fears" the newspaper is so concerned about. Oth-

erwise the current stalemate over the constitution would merely move to the post-apartheid round when black expectations of socio-economic change become cruelly frustrated by - you guessed it - that good old white veto. The struggle continues of course, but at the very least can't we insist on some greater measure of frankness from the *Globe* in discussing such issues. Michael, we know you can't write every word in the paper but ... won't you please say something to them?

A Crocker of ...

Think what you're missing if you don't happen to spend your spare time browsing through back copies of academic journals: a complete re-writing of recent southern African history, for example. Take "the Reagan doctrine," that cruel policy of "roll-back" of progressive regimes by any means necessary that, in southern Africa, found the U.S. tacitly sanctioning South African aggression against Mozambique and underwriting an even more direct form of intervention in Angola. Then compare what we know with an article by Chester Crocker in a 1989 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, an article that finds Crocker reflecting back on the imperial taming of a battered and broken Mozambique during his term as Assistant Secretary of State for Africa in the State Department during the Reagan years as follows: "When Mozambique's imaginative leadership cast confronta-

tion aside in 1983-84 to conclude its non-aggression pact with South Africa," he writes, "it demonstrated the 'power of the weak', reaching out to play a constructive region-wide role and seeking to engage Pretoria in a reciprocal framework of economic, security and political links. Ironically, South Africa's failure to respect fully its own obligations under the Nkomati Accords only added to Maputo's leverage, credibility and external backing"!

It's true that U.S. and South African tactics diverged after Nkomati, South Africa continuing its military operations while the U.S., deeming Mozambique to be sufficiently softened up by destabilization, began to switch from force to finance (IMF, World Bank, USAID) in order to control outcomes there. But *SAR* readers will require no elaborate editorial gloss to see that Crocker's version of events, by

glibly turning upside down the facts of socialist Mozambique's destruction and the vulnerability to outside dictate imposed upon that country by its now-pauper status, perfectly defines the smug inhumanity of the victors. We need merely recall Mozambican President Chissano's own account (as previously quoted in *SAR*, November 1990) of the kind of "leverage" his country gained by suing for peace with imperialism: "The U.S. said, 'Open yourself to ... the World Bank and the IMF'. What happened? ... We are told now: 'Marxism! You are devils, change this policy'. OK, Marxism is gone. 'Open market economy.' OK, Frelimo is trying to create capitalism. ... You tell me to do away with Marxism, the Soviet Union and the GDR and give me [only] \$40 million. ... Now they say, 'if you don't go to a multi-party system, don't expect help from us'."

(Hail) - and Farewell

A brief footnote: we won't have Lucie to "kick around any more"! As Linda Freeman notes above, Lucie Edwards, head of the Southern African Task Force in External Affairs (and sometime star of the "I Love Lucie Show" - see *SAR* July 1990), is leaving that position to take up a similar brief regarding the Middle East. We've often criticized Edwards' bizarre fix on Canada's southern African policy -

a combination of advanced liberal rhetoric (flecked with intelligence and concern) on the one hand and grey apologetics (that seemed to go well beyond the call of duty or common-sense) for every twist and turn in our government's none-too-savoury line on the other. But we have to give credit where credit is due. She did emerge, far more often than most other External

Affairs mandarins, from behind the Ministry's defensive perimeter to meet the public - in this case, the anti-apartheid movement - half-way (well, a third of the way at any rate!). She chose to engage in debate and provided at least some of the illusion (or was it the substance?) of a democratic decision-making process in the foreign policy realm. Miss her? Maybe not. But we're not likely to forget her either.

Mozambique: What Is To Be Done?

BY BRIDGET O'LAUGHLIN

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*In our last issue we published an extended review-essay by Bridget O'Laughlin that used Christian Geffray's *La Cause des Armes au Mozambique as a touchstone for exploring the roots and resonance of the war in Mozambique* ("Interpretations Matter," SAR, January, 1992). In that text, she noted that the body of her review had not, in her words, "addressed so far the underlying question that many readers of SAR seem to want answered: What does reading Geffray tell us about where Mozambique and Frelimo?" She therefore concluded her essay with the following final section, one that can also stand on its own as a useful contribution to the broader debate on the "new terms of solidarity" in southern Africa.*

Since Frelimo's Fourth Congress there has been a process of criticism of the policies I have discussed in my review and a reformulation of strategy. In the wake of these changes, does Frelimo today represent class interests that we as socialists can continue to support?

Frelimo itself was relatively open about the changes in its positions at the time of the Fifth Congress. It defined itself as a broad mass party encompassing all classes. Therefore its program no longer included the end of exploitation as a strategic objective. There are probably forces within Frelimo who accept the building of national capital as a legitimate goal for this phase and feel that in the longer term socialist construction is still on the agenda, but the party did not present a socialist platform. Although the word socialist (either as social democracy or democratic socialism) reappears in the documents of the

Sixth Congress, there is no evidence on paper or in practice that Frelimo at this point is pursuing a socialist strategy. Although there is more open coverage of political debate in the media, this does not apply to discussions within Frelimo itself. Nonetheless it seems clear that there are different strategic positions within Frelimo, and that socialists are a minority.

Socialist solidarity means taking class analysis into the negotiation and organization of assistance. As socialists we want to work as directly as possible with labour unions, cooperatives and associations of small producers. We know that a capitalist state, which is what Mozambique now has, cannot be counted on to promote the interests of the working classes.

Does this mean that socialist solidarity organizations should cease to support the Mozambican gov-



Central Committee meeting of Frelimo - voting major constitutional change, 1990

Joel Chiziane/AIM

ernment? Should we instead influence the NGOs with whom we work to negotiate projects of assistance directly with nascent progressive Mozambican NGOs, unions and cooperatives? Capital has jumped in quickly here. Mozambique now has, for example, associations for executives, junior executives and women executives and a Rotary Club with international contacts and visits. Many churches also receive international aid from parent or related organizations. Associations that represent groups with little economic and political clout clearly need support.

Direct support to unions, cooperatives and progressive NGOs is presently accepted in Mozambique, and should be the principal focus of socialist solidarity work. Such projects should not be viewed, however, as a total alternative to support for programs based in the state-apparatus. Mozambican NGOs are new and fragile, and most are themselves directly or indirectly dependent on the state for infrastructural support. Further, many Mozambicans most deeply in need are not reached by existing Mozambican NGOs and are living in situations that make it very difficult for them to organize their own representative organizations. Public health and education systems delivering mass-based services are under attack and cannot be adequately replaced by scattered community-based projects.

One solution to these problems would be for the foreign NGO to organize and administer projects directly, thus determining how resources will be allocated and controlling the application of funds. Indeed many of the existing NGOs in Mozambique do operate in this way, setting themselves up as a kind of parallel state apparatus, an alternative to what is viewed as a corrupt and/or inefficient Frelimo state. I do not agree with this option, for at best it maintains a weak and inefficient state and at worst deepens

problems of coordination and efficiency. There are many areas, like health and education, where only the state can furnish mass-based services. It must be helped and pressured to do so.

This does not mean that a donor organization has no control over what kind of projects are realized and how money is allocated. Most donors do in fact negotiate with the Mozambican government as to how aid will be used. If progressive forces in the Americas learned something out of the 1970's, it would seem to be the lesson that the state is both representative of the dominant class forces in society and a terrain of struggle. This is presumably a lesson that progressive NGOs put into practice regularly in their work since most receive a substantial part of their budget from the governments of their own clearly capitalist countries. Negotiating with the Mozambican state is similarly possible and necessary.

The Mozambican state is presently controlled by the Frelimo party. The new constitution introduced, however, a multi-party system, which means that in the future there may be a non-Frelimo government. Given the present multi-party context, it seems to me that solidarity groups and NGOs should in general channel their support work directly to target-groups, through local NGOs and through the state, rather than fund the projects of a particular party. In the case of Frelimo and the transition from a unitary party/state, this rupture will often seem like abandoning of old loyalties and trusted friends. And Frelimo itself may, as a political movement, move even further from its former program of socialism or its present program of democratization. Those who come to hold state-power may represent forces so reactionary that they refuse to work with progressive NGOs.

As of now, however, the Frelimo government is the legitimate and sovereign government of Mozam-

bique. No matter how vituperative the critique of Frelimo, no serious observer would suggest that Renamo or some other political grouping has constituted on any part of Mozambican soil a legitimate counter-state. Geffray, for example, concludes that although Renamo is more than an association of bandits, it is not a political organization. He sees it as a parasite, living off the reproduction of the war. Most of the political groupings that have thus far declared themselves as opposition to Frelimo in the forthcoming elections share an even sharper adherence to a strategy of development based on promotion of a national bourgeoisie, sometimes defined in purely racial terms.

The war has destroyed Mozambique, including the moral fibre of a country where one once walked without fear, in city and country, at any hour of the day or night. Solidarity organizations have fought for so many years to publicize the cynical tolerance and sometimes direct support for this terrible war coming from the advanced capitalist countries. It would seem to me tragic to abandon this stance of solidarity with Mozambique because Frelimo is no longer a representation of our own dreams of socialism.

Sorting out the relationship of solidarity groups to Mozambique will of course force us to re-examine the political base of solidarity work in our own countries. The marxist critique of capitalist society remains strong and convincing, but we have sometimes used Third World revolutions as a surrogate proof for our own anti-communist working-classes that socialism really can make life better, somewhere. Establishing a clearer rationale for socialist solidarity work means being able to show the real interdependence of struggles that unite workers and peasants in different countries. It also requires a critical and prolonged discussion among all socialists of the experience of socialist strategies of political and economic development.



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