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# INSIGHT

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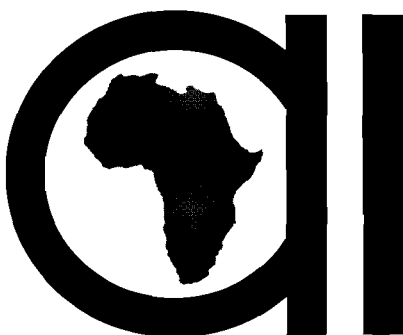
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# Africa's watershed?

*Richard Cornwell*

In many respects, modern Africa is a product of the Cold War. It is difficult to imagine, for instance, that Africa's states would have gained their independence so quickly in the absence of superpower rivalry, or that an international environment would have emerged otherwise so conducive to the survival of petty dictatorships. Even the dialogue about economic and development policy in the continent has been couched principally in the language of the competing global ideologies. The end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet bloc and of the Marxist faith will change perceptions both of and in Africa.

It is no coincidence that the "second liberation" debate is occurring now that the major powers no longer need to vie for international support from the African states. The East-West conflict incidentally provided African élites with the means of survival. For the first time since independence, domestic support is more important than foreign patrons, and African leaders have had to confront the inherent weaknesses of their regimes and to consider sharing power with others.

Questions about the depth and significance of the democracy debate apart, there is no guarantee that change will prove successful or that the political reforms now envisaged can withstand the pressures of the economic realities and social cleavages of the region.

The discrediting of communism reinforced Africa's inclination towards multipartyism and market economics, but the World Bank and the IMF's insistence upon structural adjustment programmes and political accountability as conditions for future assistance were powerful incentives. However, structural adjustment programmes involve a sharp decline in living standards for most and a steep rise in the price of food and social services. What then if the democracy movement proves to have been driven largely by popular demand for improved living standards, as some commentators argue? Structural adjustment programmes tend to aggravate social welfare problems, diminishing the capacity of governments to cope with political demands. So there is an apparent contradiction between the imperatives of democratization and structural adjustment: just as the former stimulates the popular demand for better social and welfare services, the latter requires that this be denied. How will the weak states of Africa resolve this apparent contradiction?

Meanwhile, the men with the guns remain important players in the political arena. The reduction in ideological conflict will reduce the political and military incentives for

outside powers to intervene on the continent; but an Africa omitted from the calculations of external rivals will not necessarily be a more peaceful place. The end of superpower competition probably will result in a reduction in arms transfers to Africa; but less globalization of local disputes also will mean that outside powers have less influence on the conduct, termination and outcome of such conflicts. Local rivalries and antagonisms probably will have freer rein, being more remote from world centres of power and insignificant in terms of the global system. African states can no longer rely on outside assistance to end local wars that are no threat to vital foreign interests.

The tension between ethno-politics and the demands of the nation state is unresolved, and is reviving even outside Africa. There is, therefore, also the possibility of complete political disintegration in some states if the major international players no longer feel a pressing need to sustain largely fictitious entities as diplomatic or juridical units.

The restructuring of the global order over the past two years is unprecedented in peacetime. To say the least, proclamations of the final victory of democracy and capitalism are premature, but these ideas probably will dominate the next decade of international economic and political development. Transnational capital will set the rules for the global political economy, and the competitive environment will not be a friendly one for most of what has become known as the Third World.

Some people are already predicting a civilizational Cold War between the rich North and the impoverished South, possibly with Islam leading the opposition to Western hegemony. Fundamentalist Islam has proved resilient to both modernization and secularization, but its successes have been limited to those areas already Muslim.

What of the Non-Aligned Movement, which is confronted by a sudden identity crisis: what sense does it make to proclaim one's non-alignment in a unipolar or even multipolar world? In Accra in September the Movement held its tenth ministerial conference, claiming to represent most of the world's nations and seeking to play a role in actively shaping a new and equitable world order. The question now is whether the industrialized nations will find this demand easier or more difficult to ignore in the post-Cold War era, particularly if the Movement throws its weight unequivocally behind the domestic democratization process?

The Accra delegates emphasized the need to revitalize the

United Nations system based on respect for the *equality of nation states*. They also noted the contradiction between the industrial world's praise for the democratization of national structures and its simultaneous denial of the same principle in international affairs. Ghana's Jerry Rawlings emphasized that the Third World was not looking for charity but for fair prices and fair access to world markets. Within national boundaries, he said, moral and ethical principles are claimed to justify the authority of governments. But in the international arena, nations pursue their interests even at the cost of their expressed principles. Power, not virtue, decides relations between states; and for all the talk of accountability, the transnationals retain a great deal of autonomy in their activities. As André Gunder Frank has put it, electoral democracy is not necessarily reflected in the marketplace: "In the market, it is one dollar, one vote. That is, many dollars, many votes; no dollar, no vote."

It is easy to dismiss the pretensions of the Non-Aligned Movement, but is it not possible that the emerging world order is now more fluid than less, and that a certain amount of questioning will occur now that the development debate has moved away from ideological posturing?

The Movement's appeal to the international community to match its will, determination and resources against underdevelopment and poverty will not necessarily be ignored. Will the plight of the Third World *per se* now replace the mission of anti-communism? Welfare is becoming a leading issue in the post-industrial world; will it become an international concern?

On several questions – environmental, gender and health issues, and human rights and empowerment – there is an awareness of the importance and the possibility of getting wider consensus than hitherto. If the new openness in African politics does continue, it will create space for serious debate on these matters, which might establish points of contact with people elsewhere.

With the Cold War a thing of the past, will the publics and governments of the richer countries take a more dispassionate and informed view of the problems of the poorer states? Or are their attention-spans too short for any serious debate on development issues. These questions probably will remain unanswered for some time yet as the evolving world order is uncertain. The suddenness of the Cold War's conclusion has left a vacuum requiring a complete reassessment of national purpose among the leading nations.

For the moment the focus in world affairs is going to remain rooted on the Eurasian continent. The opportunities now presenting themselves in Eastern Europe are unlikely to return and the keystone to global security is widely perceived as depending on economic recovery there. This area will dominate the concerns of the industrialized nations for the immediate future.

What if the world simply turns its back on Africa? What if Africa becomes further marginalized, cut off from the rest of the world not as a deliberate policy by governments, but because of its failure to pay debts, secure new aid and investment, or find markets for its goods? Some people are beginning to argue that this would be no bad thing, compelling Africans to define and establish their own development paths using their own resources, human and material.

More than ten years ago Patrick Marnham was already arguing along these lines. In his *Dispatches from Africa* he wrote:

For the outsider who enters Africa, the governing dream has always been to change the place. The models for such change have been drawn from "the North"... As the North has penetrated Africa, it has proved less and less capable of learning from the experience; we can only instruct.... We fear Africa because when we leave it alone, it works.

Given respite from civil wars, African societies and informal economies have shown remarkable resilience, despite a hostile natural environment. There is something appealing about the idea that Africa, thrown back upon its own resources, will perforce find its own solutions.

But the idea of isolation may be a pipe-dream. Last December an editorial in *West Africa* pointed out:

There has been much allusion to the marginalisation of Africa. This notion only sees the continent as a passive part of the world community. Africa is only 'marginalised' when her leaders decide not to be active participants in the global changes. Some commentators have argued that the much-dreaded marginalisation is good for Africa, since it means that Africa will be left alone to get on with solving her problems. The trouble is that even an isolated Africa would not actually be left alone. The processes under way, especially in Europe, are designed to extract maximum advantage for Europe in its dealings with the rest of the world. As long as Africa remains a part of the world system, she remains isolated at her peril.

Over the next few numbers I hope that *Africa Insight* will be able to carry some contributions focused on these issues.

# Designing the framework for a Southern African Development Community

*Erich Leistner, Senior Research Fellow at the Africa Institute, argues that the time is ripe for rethinking the entire institutional framework of regional economic co-operation in Southern Africa.*

## The “new” South Africa and its neighbours

Once South Africa’s relations with the rest of the world are normalized, it will probably be invited to join the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) and the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States (PTA). Present members of these organizations look forward to that contingency with “a combination of exhilaration and fear”.<sup>1</sup> In South Africa, where the practical implications have barely begun to receive serious thought, membership of PTA and, above all, the SADCC tends to be viewed in a positive light.

South Africa joining the community of African states as a fully accepted member will be an event of momentous consequence for all of sub-Saharan Africa. Despite its daunting problems, the South African economy still has the potential to stimulate economic progress in Southern Africa. At the same time, however, the vast “economic distance” between South Africa and its neighbours makes it imperative that the pattern of future interaction be considered with the utmost care.

A unique opportunity to place the whole region on a sounder economic footing could be wasted and relations between the “new” South Africa and its neighbours poisoned if inappropriate institutional arrangements were to be chosen. At present (early 1992), some ill-considered ideas are floating around in this regard.

Amongst others, there is a tendency, in South Africa no less than in SADCC and PTA circles, to take it for granted that South Africa will join these organizations more or less on their terms. What is more, the SADCC is moving away from its original approach of confining its activities to co-operation and co-ordination, and is aiming at integrated markets for goods and factors of production. It also propagates bureaucratic intervention and the strengthening of central decision-making bodies in regional affairs.

This appears to be the SADCC’s response to a crisis of identity. The emergence of an internationally-accepted

South Africa deprives the organization of its principal *raison d’être*: the lessening of dependence on South Africa. In any event, dependence both on South Africa and on outside donors has actually increased since the founding of the SADCC in 1980. External aid is decreasing, partly in response to the organization’s modest achievements, partly as a result of the new political constellation in the region and globally. The SADCC’s right of existence is also in question because its objectives are narrower than those of the PTA, the membership of which includes all SADCC countries except Botswana.

In response to the threats to its continued existence, the SADCC – and more specifically its secretariat – has opted for the policy changes indicated above. The recently issued policy paper, *SADCC: Towards economic integration*, outlines the new approach and also how the organization proposes to fit South Africa into its structures. The SADCC clearly hopes that “the eleventh member” will largely make up for the shrinking overseas aid funds, and that South African domination can be forestalled by putting in place an appropriate organizational structure before the country gains admission.<sup>2</sup>

While the SADCC – apart from the economically incongruous membership of Tanzania – is a truly Southern African regional organization, the same cannot be said of the PTA, which extends from Lesotho in the south to the Horn of Africa in the north. At present, the PTA is particularly important as an organization promoting trade between its members. South African membership and the organization’s continued existence, are not burning issues at present. They are therefore not discussed here.

The choice of institutional arrangements will crucially affect Southern Africa’s prospects for economic development. In what follows, three aspects of such arrangements are examined: firstly, the suitability of the SADCC as a vehicle for promoting closer regional interaction; secondly,

the relevance of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as a model for Southern Africa, and thirdly, the question of South African membership of the SADCC.

### Economic co-operation or integration?

In opting for integration, the SADCC appears to be in line with the international trend towards the formation of huge trading blocs in Western Europe, the Americas and around the Pacific Rim. While acknowledging that the economies of scale that closer integration in South Africa can yield "should ... not be exaggerated"<sup>3</sup> the organization is emphatic that the real question is not whether "some form of integrative project" will be attempted in the region but only on what terms and principles.<sup>4</sup>

The SADCC's new policy entails an increasingly interventionist approach to investment decisions and the strengthening of decision-making powers by regional authorities at the expense of national governments. This is difficult to reconcile with the fact that SADCC member states still think and act more in terms of national self-interest than of regional goals. How, then, does the SADCC propose to bring about a less parochial attitude and prompt members to surrender to a supranational body their rights of decision-making in respect of trade, investment and international migration?

African experience – notably the demise of the East African Community; the ineffectualness of Ecowas (the Economic Community of West African States); and the still-born 1980 Lagos Plan for an African common market – has unmistakably shown the Utopian nature of economic integration schemes seeking to combine fragile economies that are overwhelmingly dependent on selling raw products overseas while hardly trading with each other. Considering the powerful role the urge for national self-determination still plays in the vastly more diversified and developed states of Western Europe, it is surprising to see the SADCC playing down the significance of national sovereignty for the politically and economically fragile states of Southern Africa.

Certainly, the SADCC expressly acknowledges that trade integration as a simple linear process – from preferential to free trade area, to customs union, to common market, and so forth – is "inappropriate for the SADCC region".<sup>5</sup> Yet the goal it seeks to attain through successive steps comes very close to a common market with a unified external tariff, the fairly unhindered movement of labour and capital, but with an "outward looking growth strategy".<sup>6</sup>

As John Ravenhill has put it:

No government attempting to survive in a crisis situation can afford to give attention – let alone scarce resources – to projects that at best will offer a long-term payoff. ... At best the potential of such comprehensive schemes (such as customs unions and common markets) lies in the long term; at worst, they impose significant constraints on national decision-making autonomy prior to the realization of major benefits.<sup>7</sup>

The foremost problem from which trade integration schemes in the less-developed world usually suffer, are the "backwash" or "polarization" effects in which market forces concentrate industrial development around regional growth poles. Attempts to make up for the unequal distribution of the gains of economic integration by means of fiscal compensation

and industrial allocation schemes have nowhere succeeded in equalizing the distribution of benefits between members.<sup>8</sup> To quote Ravenhill once more:

The experience of customs unions and common markets in the developing world has been one of universal failure to realize their intended objectives. ... Surely it is time to rethink strategy. Why persist with schemes that are ignored, that increase frustration, and that, even in the unlikely event that they were to be implemented, offer little prospect of significant gains in the short term while imposing considerable constraints on government action?<sup>9</sup>

He concludes by reaffirming his long-held contention that the SADCC, as originally conceived, provides a more appropriate model for African co-operation than Ecowas, and ends by saying:

If we are serious about overcoming the constraints that impede African cooperation, we should be focusing on the coordination of policies rather than on integration.<sup>10</sup>

Dealing with Southern Africa, Gavin Maasdorp similarly advocates technical co-operation and enhanced bilateral trade rather than ambitious integration schemes.<sup>11</sup>

This is not to deny the substantial economies of scale that can result from market integration. In principle, Tony Hawkins is right but slightly too apodictic in referring to Southern Africa when he states that the aim of economic co-operation – faster growth, more jobs, more investment, higher living standards – "... is *not* achieved by loose co-ordination but by eliminating trade barriers and exploiting the resultant gains from trade".<sup>12</sup> Southern African experience suggests that while the benefits of technical co-operation in respect of transport, power, water, labour migration, research, etc may not be dramatic, they are real and tangible enough to encourage yet further interstate co-operation regardless of political tensions. Intra-regional trade is still a fraction of total external trade.

At their present stage of economic and, even more, political development, the states of Southern Africa are not yet ready voluntarily to submit to schemes demanding substantial curtailment of national decision-making. The creation of larger regional economic units should be perceived as a long-term objective that must be striven for by systematically strengthening mutual understanding and trust between states through the practical experience of technical co-operation, trade and consultation.

### The SADCC as a vehicle to promote closer regional interaction

#### The original SADCC approach

The founding of the SADCC in 1980 was largely a reaction to South African proposals for a Constellation of Southern African States. Fearful lest they be turned into South African satellites, the founding members chose the lessening of dependence on the Republic as their principal objective. Economic development was another objective. In practice, however, the organization tended to place most emphasis on its members being victims of South African destabilization and the consequent need for international action against South Africa, together with financial support for its members.

That is not to say that economic development was not a real concern. Conscious of the poor results of economic

integration schemes in Africa and elsewhere in the less-developed world, the SADCC deliberately opted for solutions to co-operation and co-ordination of policies, including the joint search for shared problems. It also decided not to have a costly and unwieldy bureaucracy. It decentralized decision-making as much as possible by allocating responsibility for specific sectors (agriculture, energy, tourism, and so on) to existing ministries of member states. Further, the SADCC encouraged the sharing of facilities and services (such as transport, training, or research) in order to avoid costly duplication.

### Achievements

The SADCC is rightly considered one of the most effective regional groupings in Africa. After eleven years of existence, its achievements, nevertheless, are modest. It is generally agreed that above all the SADCC has succeeded in drawing international attention to Southern Africa and eliciting liberal financial support from overseas donors. It has helped to create a sense of regional identity, though whenever regional interest competes with national self-interest, the latter usually prevails (see below).

According to Margaret Lee, the decentralized institutional structure of the SADCC had facilitated regional co-operation and development. Thanks to the open dialogue promoted by the organization, members have shared information about problems and achievements, and many improvements have resulted from members openly criticizing each others' policies.<sup>13</sup>

In a 1990 press interview, the SADCC's Executive Secretary, Simba Makoni, stated that although industry, investment and trade had been high priorities for SADCC, it had "not demonstrated that high priority with concrete action on the ground. ... It is a disappointment ...". On the same occasion, he also described the development of human resources as a disappointment and an "area of some tempered progress".<sup>14</sup> No new capacity in transport, especially ports and railways, had been created.<sup>15</sup>

Spectacular regional schemes such as the Cahora Bassa and the Kariba hydroelectric projects and the Tanzania railway predated the SADCC, while transborder projects like the Lesotho Highlands Water Scheme, the Sua Pan Soda Ash project in Botswana, South African-Swaziland rail links, joint water schemes by South Africa, Swaziland and Mozambique, as well as South Africa's rehabilitation of Maputo's port and power station all took place outside the orbit of the SADCC.

There is no need for a comprehensive assessment of the SADCC's achievements and shortcomings in the present context. Our focus rather is on a few aspects that could have important practical implications for South Africa. After all, the SADCC expects South Africa to play a significant role as financier and "engine of growth" for a grouping that is set to integrate as fast as it can. South Africa must have no illusions about the environment within which it would have to operate if it were to join the SADCC.

### Financial independence

Apart from several other considerations, the SADCC's financial position places a question mark over its long-term future. Not only has more than 90 per cent of the funding for its projects come from foreign and less than 10 per cent

from local sources so far,<sup>16</sup> but even its administrative structure is dependent on foreign donors. An internal SADCC discussion paper refers to "the yawning gap between rhetoric and reality with respect to resource mobilisation", and poses the question, "Is SADCC serious about regional cooperation and integration?" It then goes on to say that these objectives "have meaning in the long term only with the concomitant commitment of local resources to regional development".<sup>17</sup>

The uncertain financial position was highlighted when the Nordic countries, the organization's foremost funders, warned that they are becoming tired of refinancing infrastructural projects in countries that have not given due regard to maintenance and operation.<sup>18</sup> The donors' impatience over the SADCC's failure to mobilize its own financial and manpower resources is another long-standing grievance. Not surprisingly, a SADCC/OECD study opines that arrangements for the financing of SADCC institutions over the longer term have become "a matter of some concern".<sup>19</sup>

### National interest and the spirit of regionalism

The extent to which member countries have the political will to support regionalism, more concretely, whether they are prepared to accept short-term sacrifices at home in the interest of regional progress, crucially affects the prospects for the success of integration schemes. Whereas the emergence of a spirit of regional identity is clearly one of the SADCC's achievements, the following leaves little doubt that the SADCC's integration plans cannot, at this stage, count on unwavering political support from member states.

A recent article by Michael Mulikita illustrates their reluctance to abandon national projects in favour of cost savings through regional projects.<sup>20</sup> Thus, Zambia received as a gift from the Japanese government the ultra-modern Samora Machel Memorial School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Zambia. It could arguably have been transformed into a regional training centre, but President Mugabe ordered that Zimbabwe should secure foreign technical assistance to build a similar complex. In 1984, Zambia frustrated SADCC plans to standardize regional airlines' use of Boeing carriers by purchasing a DC-10 aircraft amid a great deal of pomp and fanfare. Zimbabwe has restricted imports of cheap Botswana textiles.

Plans for a \$300-million strategic regional food reserve, ten years after they had been announced in 1980, had not yet overcome the obstacles raised by national self-interest.<sup>21</sup> According to the *Southern African Economist*, the most emotive issue of the 1989 summit meeting was the venue of the 10-year anniversary meeting in 1990.<sup>22</sup> The 1991 summit was deadlocked over the allocation of regional responsibility for fisheries and tourism to Namibia.<sup>23</sup>

Some members engage in ambitious manpower development and training schemes – especially vocational training – without taking into consideration the similar schemes of their neighbours. An outstanding example of what has been described as "national chauvinism", was Zimbabwe's disregard for the electricity surpluses readily available from Zambia or Mozambique in planning its own generating capacity.<sup>24</sup>

As Bernhard Weimer writes, there is "an obvious lack of will and capacity to translate the logic of regional co-ordination and planning into the respective national decision



making process". He quotes Emang Maphanyane's statement that national planners have remained "totally parochial". Indeed, as an SADCC document observes, "Regional cooperation has yet to become a factor in the strategies for national development".<sup>25</sup>

At a World Bank workshop on regional integration and co-operation, the importance of political will was stressed time and again as a fundamental precondition for successful integration. One of the workshop's principal conclusions is fully applicable to the SADCC's plans for integration:

Visionary leaders face difficult choices and perilous risks when they take steps to integrate their economies with those of their neighbours and the world as a whole.... Successful regional efforts must ... combine the vision of political leaders with the active involvement of the population.<sup>26</sup>

### Allocation of sectoral responsibilities

The allocation of overall responsibility for the various economic sectors to particular member countries is an interesting feature of the SADCC's operations. Swaziland, for example, is the co-ordinator for manpower, Lesotho for tourism, Tanzania for industry and trade, and so forth. According to a SADCC information officer, the organization's activities are based on these co-ordinators: "You start with the coordinators and go upwards. So if you have weak coordinating units, it means you have weak implementation."<sup>27</sup> When the country in question does not have the necessary expertise for a given sector, it is expected to draw on the expertise of all member states.

While designed to achieve cost savings by avoiding a large central bureaucracy, sectoral allocation, as presently organized, is increasingly perceived as an impediment to the efficient functioning of the SADCC. According to Ken Vernon of The Argus Africa News Service, each country approaches its field as it sees fit.

So, for example, in Tanzania a small group of officials in the department responsible for industry toil away at the job of co-ordinating the industrial development of nine other countries several thousand kilometres away – in addition to shouldering their normal work load. Given the inefficiency of African bureaucracies at their best, the first major stumbling block in the SADCC's path becomes apparent.<sup>28</sup>

The second stumbling block, according to Vernon, is the fact that each member country remains responsible for identifying its own developments, securing funding, implementing the project and repaying any loans obtained. As a result, it is impossible to differentiate between bilateral aid projects and SADCC projects – yet the SADCC claims them all as its own.<sup>29</sup> On occasion, member countries try to obtain funding for the same national project from the SADCC as well as from the PTA.

A wide-ranging SADCC/OECD study on the SADCC's operations acknowledges its success in establishing contacts with the outside world but goes on to say that the organization

... appears to have been less successful in using its pragmatic procedures and decentralised structures to draw on and better exploit its own intra-regional capacities and project skills to design, supervise and implement major projects and policy initiatives within its own Programme of Action.<sup>30</sup>

The study also found that a good deal of confusion prevails over responsibilities not only within the sectoral structures but also between the latter and the secretariat.<sup>31</sup>

No significant improvements appear to have been made since the publication of that study in 1988, because in a recent report, the organization speaks of the need to move from the existing arrangement towards "the creation of specific regional entities answerable to the central regional decision-making bodies".<sup>32</sup>

### South Africa joining the SADCC?

SADCC spokesmen have on numerous occasions expressed the hope that an internationally-accepted South Africa will join the organization as its eleventh member. Disregarding South Africa's enormous economic problems,<sup>33</sup> the SADCC actually believes that the country will replace the organization's increasingly reluctant overseas donors. The Arusha summit of 26 August 1991, for example, agreed that a post-apartheid South Africa is expected to –

... fill the role of present co-operating partners through the provision of aid and investment capital to SADCC member states.<sup>34</sup>

At the same time, the SADCC – and more specifically Zimbabwe which is industrially more advanced than the other members – is apprehensive of being overwhelmed economically and dominated politically by the regional giant. The SADCC hopes to tame the giant by having in place functioning regional structures covering trade, infrastructure and production relations before South Africa becomes a member and by bargaining with that country, offering it

greater access to regional markets in return for agreeing to restructure on a more equitable basis its relationships with the rest of the region in such areas as transport, water and electricity, as well as finding solutions to such problems as migrant labour....<sup>35</sup>

Considering that South Africa has readily sold its exports to SADCC and PTA countries without being a member; has helped to sustain neighbouring railway administrations; and generally has interacted with the neighbours over a broad spectrum of economic activities despite the OAU embargo, the SADCC's bargaining position is not impressive. And whatever government may emerge in South Africa, is unlikely to be less concerned with its national interests than present SADCC members.<sup>36</sup>

In a fully integrated Southern Africa, South Africa would undoubtedly overshadow its partners economically – its GDP is more than three times that of all SADCC countries together, while in 1983/86 it sold them 5½ times as much as it bought from them. As the *Southern African Economist* has observed, if South Africa were to join the SADCC as it is, "then it is hard to see how SADCC could continue to have much reality", and, apart from Angola and Tanzania, the other members would become mere "outlying units of a natural economic zone".<sup>37</sup>

The SADCC secretariat must know that the safeguards it proposes cannot bring about the desired balance between current members on the one hand and South Africa on the other. By advocating economic integration while at the same time urging South Africa to join as eleventh member, it is trying to square the circle.

The SADCC attempts to deal with this dilemma by proposing – as indicated above – a regulatory framework within which South Africa can be safely accommodated while at the same time obliging it to finance the organization's programme of action, including affirmative action in

respect of its poorest members. The interventionist approach is to apply to all SADCC activities, not just South Africa. The organization's 12th summit conference in Maputo in early 1992 reflected this approach which has led to the following observations:

Instead of allowing trade to drive economic integration, the SADCC members tend to see the proposed new SADCC as principally a regulatory body. This has the potential to render the new SADCC merely a group of bickering bureaucrats, arguing about who should get compensation for what.<sup>38</sup>

Our critical review of some major difficulties facing the SADCC is not meant to run down the organization. It rather serves to support the contention that the issue facing a "new" South Africa is not whether to join the SADCC (and the PTA) but to rethink the entire institutional framework of regional economic co-operation in Southern Africa. Whereas the SADCC's original basic approach was sound, its current policy proposals are make-shift rather than the answer to the region's long-term needs. These needs would be served best by thorough and impartial studies of available options, starting with the creation of appropriate forums where arrangements for regional co-operation can be negotiated.

Rather than trying to pursue a policy of economic integration that would inevitably end in the same frustration and failure that have marked integration schemes elsewhere in Africa, the countries of Southern Africa should pragmatically build upon the many facets of functional co-operation that are already an outstanding feature of the region. These include transport, power, water, telecommunications, training, agriculture, minerals, banking, tourism and migrant labour. Furthermore, as existing trade relations show, there is a vast scope for expanding bilateral and multilateral trade arrangements.

By exploring the myriad opportunities to improve and intensify existing interaction, all participants stand to gain economically while at the same time establishing a basis of mutual understanding and trust which, in due course, might serve as the foundation for a policy of integration.

## Conclusion

This leads to the conclusion that the interests of South Africa, no less than of the region as a whole, would be served best if –

- South Africa would join neither the SADCC nor PTA as presently constituted;
- the functions, structures and interrelationships of all major regional bodies, including the SADCC, PTA, Southern African Customs Union (Sacu) and the Common Monetary Area (CMA), were to be thoroughly reassessed in order to give the region the institutional framework most likely to promote economic development;
- this rationalization of regional institutions were to lead to a reconstituted, and truly regional (that is, excluding Tanzania) SADCC to be known as the Southern African Development Community or SADC – as already suggested in a SADCC document;<sup>39</sup> and
- South Africa were to join the SADC.

No more appropriate model suggests itself to inspire the transformation of the SADCC, in keeping with its original approach, than the Organization for Economic Co-operation

and Development (OECD). Before elaborating the point, the question may be briefly examined whether an organization exclusively concerned with economic issues is indeed appropriate.

In September 1991, a workshop held in Maputo on "Cooperation and Security in Post-Apartheid Southern Africa" focused on the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) as a possible model for the region.<sup>40</sup> Without commenting on the workshop's somewhat tentative conclusions, it has to be said that the idea of combining both security and economic co-operation in the competence of a single organization may have political attractions but looks impractical in present-day Southern Africa.

South African experience has demonstrated that trade and other economic co-operation can – up to a point – take place quite effectively outside a formal framework of treaties and political understanding. Given most African politicians' innocence in economic matters, one should aim for an organization as technically economic, and as informal, as possible while reserving political and security matters for a separate organization better suited for summitry with its pomp and speech-making. Obviously, international economic relations are inseparable from political processes, but in the interest of efficiency, economic issues should, where at all possible, be dealt with on a technical level.

## The OECD as a model for Southern Africa<sup>41</sup>

### Why the OECD?

It is an organisation which disburses no money, has no supranational powers, and is more a place for research and discussion than a forum for negotiation or rhetoric.<sup>42</sup>

Ideally, this description of the OECD would equally apply to the type of regional organization that Southern Africa needs at the present point in time, that is, a pragmatic, non-interventionist and *open-ended* organization that will allow the countries of the region to proceed from economic co-operation to integration whenever this may be desired *as well as feasible*.

Efforts to develop Southern Africa through regional co-operation call for a highly pragmatic, non-ideological approach, such as has been followed with outstanding success by the OECD. It is an example that deserves to be carefully considered now that grandiose schemes, similar to those that have crashed elsewhere in Africa, are being planned in the region today.

Most African integration schemes were, to a greater or lesser degree, inspired by the example of the European Economic Community, and it might therefore be objected that Southern Africa must evolve its own pattern in keeping with its specific circumstances, and should not fall into the trap of imitating yet another foreign model. However, no one who understands the essential nature of the OECD approach can believe that it would be counterproductive to adapt it to Southern Africa.

Only a few fundamental features of the OECD are discussed below.

### What is the OECD?

Basically, it is a forum where representatives of the governments of the industrialized democracies discuss and attempt

to co-ordinate their economic and social policies. Founded in 1961, it replaced the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) which had been set up in 1948 in connection with the Marshall Plan.

Its present European members are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Its extra-European members are Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Turkey and the USA.

The Commission of the European Communities participates in the work of the OECD, while what used to be Yugoslavia took part in many of its activities. Paris is the official seat, and the languages used are English and French.

### Objectives

According to Article 1 of the Convention signed in 1960, the organization seeks to promote policies designed:

- (a) to achieve the highest sustainable economic growth and employment and a rising standard of living in member countries, while maintaining financial stability, and thus to contribute to the development of the world economy;
- (b) to contribute to sound economic expansion in member as well as non-member countries in the process of economic development; and
- (c) to contribute to the expansion of world trade on a multi-lateral, non-discriminatory basis in accordance with international obligations.

These aims are to be pursued both individually and jointly.

Article 2(e) provides specifically for assistance to less-developed countries, members as well as non-members,

... by appropriate means and, in particular, by the flow of capital to these countries, having regard to the importance to their economies of receiving technical assistance and of securing export markets.<sup>43</sup>

### Approach

In terms of Article 3, members agree that they will:

- (a) keep each other informed and furnish the organization with the information necessary for the accomplishment of its tasks;
- (b) consult together on a continuing basis, carry out studies and participate in agreed projects; and
- (c) co-operate closely and where appropriate take co-ordinated action.<sup>44</sup>

Jean-Claude Paye, the current Secretary-General, has aptly called the OECD a "club" whose "real common denominator" is to be found in its shared values. In the economic sphere, this means the market economy. In the world of politics it is pluralist democracy which all member countries recognize "as providing the fertile ground which is needed to nurture the market economy, itself founded on individual freedom and initiative".<sup>45</sup>

Two outstanding features of the OECD's fundamental approach have been inherited from the OEEC, the generally acknowledged success of which had highlighted their importance. They are: "the full respect for sovereignty and non-interference with the responsibilities of national governments", and flexibility.<sup>46</sup>

The way respect for national sovereignty is shown will become clear from the discussion of OECD decision-making below. As regards flexibility, this is illustrated by the extension of membership to extra-European countries; by the creation of numerous working groups, committees, separate organizations, and so on, to meet changing needs and circumstances, as well as by the way non-governmental organizations and individual experts are drawn in. In the words of Jean-Claude Paye:

In more than 150 committees and working parties, government officials and ministers, with the help of the Secretariat, and, in many cases, of experts from the academic world, business and the unions, meet to consider how to implement the best possible policies in their own particular areas of interest.<sup>47</sup>

His next sentences are particularly interesting:

Any OECD meeting is, in fact, a form of advanced training seminar. The collective wisdom it generates influences policy formation and development in member countries.<sup>48</sup>

### Structure<sup>49</sup>

The Council is the supreme body of the organization. It consists of one representative for each member country. It meets either at Heads of Permanent Delegations level (about twice a month) under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, or at ministerial level (usually once a year), under the chairmanship of the minister representing the country elected to this function (one-year term). The Council is assisted by one Executive Committee composed of 14 members of the Council designated annually by the latter. All member countries have established Permanent Delegations to the OECD, each headed by an ambassador.

The more than 150 committees and other bodies (some sources give a figure of more than 200) are serviced by an International Secretariat headed by the Secretary-General. He is appointed by the Council for a term of five years.

The greater part of the work of the OECD is prepared and carried out in the committees, working parties, and the like. Participants are usually civil servants coming either from the capitals of member states or from the Permanent Delegations to the OECD. The area of activity covers the whole spectrum of economic and social policy, from macro-economics to education, from shipbuilding to rural development, from the environment to development assistance, from trade to science and technology policy.<sup>50</sup> (See below for more particulars.)

Given the composition of its membership, the *financing* of OECD activities cannot be much of a problem. In the available literature, the only concrete reference traced was Article 20 of the 1960 Convention, sub-article 2 of which reads:

General expenses of the Organisation, as agreed by the Council, shall be apportioned in accordance with a scale to be decided upon by the Council. Other expenditure shall be financed on such basis as the Council may decide.<sup>51</sup>

### Decision-making

The OECD is not a regulatory body but rather a forum for the exchange of informed views on policy questions. Like the OEEC before, it has been described as an "international economic conference in permanent session".<sup>52</sup> The process of consultation and discussion may lead to one or more of the following forms of action to achieve its results:

- *resolutions* relating to the work of the organization or its constituent bodies;
- *recommendations* that members should take a certain course of action;
- *decisions* for implementation by members; and
- *formal agreements* subject to signature, ratification or other appropriate action by governments.

These tools had been developed by the OEEC, and, reporting in April 1960, the Burgess Commission stated that practically every representative who appeared before it had recommended strongly that the reconstituted organization (the OECD) should continue to dispose of them.<sup>53</sup>

Unanimity in decision-taking is an important feature of the OECD's functioning. Sub-article 6.1 of its Convention provides that "decisions shall be taken and recommendations shall be made by mutual agreement of all the Members" except when provision has unanimously be made for special cases. In accordance with sub-article 6.2, if a member abstains from voting, this shall not invalidate the decision or recommendation in question, which shall be applicable to the other members but not to the abstaining member. In terms of sub-article 6.3, no decision shall be binding on any member until it has complied with the requirements of its own constitutional procedures, while the other members may agree that "such a decision shall apply provisionally to them".<sup>54</sup>

When it is difficult to achieve unanimity on a decision, the Council may prefer to replace a decision by a recommendation which, while not binding, is morally persuasive enough to induce member countries to do their best to comply. In any event, deadlocks rarely occur because the detailed examination of all aspects of an issue in a "frank spirit of give-and-take" generally succeeds in ironing out difficulties before the Council stage is reached.<sup>55</sup> It has also been found that the atmosphere of frankness is enhanced by the absence of publicity.<sup>56</sup>

At first sight, the rule of unanimity may seem incompatible with effective action, but experience proves that it has created an "atmosphere of mutual confidence within the Organization". And though it has sometimes held up a decision, it has in many instances eventually assisted in reaching agreement.<sup>57</sup> Whereas one might think that unanimity forces the Organization to resign itself every time to "the dullest, lowest denominator solution", the opposite is the case: "experience shows that the agreements concluded always tend to be directed towards the loftiest aims".<sup>58</sup>

### Scope of activities

As already indicated, the scope of the OECD's activities is vast and expanding in response to changing national and international conditions. To illustrate with a few instances.

The foremost committees are for Economic Policy; Economic and Development Review; Development Assistance (DAC); North-South Economic Issues; Commodities; Trade; Capital Movements and Invisible Transactions; Financial Markets; Fiscal Affairs; Competition Law and Policy; Consumer Policy; Maritime Transport; International Investment and Multinational Enterprises; Tourism; Energy Policy; Industry; Steel; Scientific and Technological Policy; Information, Computer and Communications Policy; Road

Transport Research; Education; Manpower and Social Affairs; Environment; Urban Affairs; Controls of Chemicals; Agriculture; and Fisheries.

Four autonomous or semi-autonomous bodies also belong to the organization: The International Energy Agency (IEA); the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA); the Development Centre and the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). The Development Centre was set up in 1962 for the collection and dissemination of information in the field of economic development, research into development problems and the training of specialists both from industrialized and less-developed countries.<sup>59</sup>

Beyond the above, the OECD has official relations with dozens of international, European and other regional organizations in the public as well as the private sector.<sup>60</sup> In recent years, it has developed a dialogue with the economies of South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Thailand. In response to the specific problem posed by the collapse of socialist regimes in central and eastern Europe – the speedy transition from a centrally-planned to a market economy – a Centre for Co-operation with the European Economies in Transition has been set up within the OECD Secretariat. Contacts have also been established with a number of Latin American countries.<sup>61</sup>

### Achievements

The OECD pattern of economic co-operation has demonstrated its effectiveness over more than four decades. Referring to the diverse forms of successful co-operation between Western Europe and North America after World War II, the Burgess Commission reported that "everybody agrees that one of the most effective has been the OEEC, and everybody also believes that this cooperation should be continued and strengthened".<sup>61</sup> The Commission's findings on the OEEC method of co-operation – which, of course, continues in the OECD – warrant being quoted at length:

... a certain 'OEEC spirit' has been created. Through constantly working together on terms of intimacy and frankness, people of different nationalities have come to recognise the economic interdependence of nations and the need for and the possibility of multilateral economic cooperation. This *habit of cooperation* has made it possible for Governments and their representatives, by a mutual appraisal of their problems, to develop the policies and procedures best calculated to solve them.<sup>63</sup> (Italics added.)

Another publication says that by inducing in member countries the habit of comparing their views in order to solve their common problems, the organization's approach has promoted the emergence of a European way of thinking.<sup>64</sup>

According to the Burgess Commission, the OEEC was also successful in another field: "That of developing techniques of cooperation between Governments on the one hand and independent experts and non-governmental organizations on the other ...".<sup>65</sup>

Among the important achievements attributed to the OECD have also been the prevention of recurrent crises; the bringing to light of essential problems and real priorities that otherwise might not have received timely attention; and the point that it has made member countries "more courageous in embarking together upon difficult policies than they would have been acting separately and at different times".<sup>66</sup>

### Is the OECD a suitable model for Southern Africa?

In the context of Western Europe and the world economy, the OECD obviously has played, and continues to play, a highly appropriate and successful role. The answer to the question whether, and to what extent, it is a model to inspire the institutional arrangements for future economic interaction in Southern Africa, depends on the strategy to be chosen – regional economic integration or co-operation and co-ordination? That choice will presumably hinge on political interests and the perceptions of economic decision-makers in the public and private sectors.

Whatever strategy is chosen, it is always problematic to try and transpose a model from a situation where it has been a success, to a very different environment. The unfortunate impact of the European Community (EC) model in Africa has already been referred to above. To assist a sober assessment of the OECD as a model, a few pertinent observations may be listed.

#### *Factors that might make it difficult to follow the OECD model in Southern Africa*

The OEEC/OECD (just as the EC) was created in response to the shocks of World War II and the chaotic post-war situation. It is a question whether there exists a comparable trauma to motivate Southern African leaders favourably with respect to regional interaction.

Most OECD member countries have a relative abundance of skilled and generally competent manpower from which to draw personnel for the organization's diverse committees, working groups, and so forth. In Southern Africa, including South Africa, such manpower is in desperately short supply.

OECD member countries have no obvious difficulty financing the activities of the organization. This stands in sharp contrast to the poverty prevailing in Southern Africa, and, more specifically, SADCC's overwhelming dependence on overseas funding.

With a good deal of justification, the OECD has been called "the rich man's club" (all the powerful economies of the world belong to it). Compare this with the economies of Southern Africa (and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa), all of which are highly vulnerable and face profound structural obstacles to development.

OECD members are strongly committed to a free market economy and multiparty democracy. By contrast, all Southern African governments are more or less interventionist, while the political climate is not hospitable to democracy.

Broadly speaking, the OECD member countries are much more sophisticated in pursuing enlightened self-interest in international commercial relations than are African countries.

#### *Why the OECD provides an attractive model for Southern Africa*

It is based on international co-operation and co-ordination, and is an unquestioned success, whereas the integration model is widely questioned even in respect of the EC, and has proved an utter failure in Africa. Our discussion of the SADCC has illustrated how narrow national self-interest tends to prevail over regional considerations.

The OECD model entails no infringement of national sovereignty, and is based on the co-ordination of national efforts within a framework of international co-operation –

which, of course is the approach initially espoused by the SADCC.

Frank and confidential exchange of views, experience and information, generally by competent officials and other experts, has brought the OECD member countries closer together and has created a sense of community that has been of direct benefit to the participants and their countries. If a similar process could be set in train in Southern Africa, this would be of inestimable value all round.

The OECD's flexibility in meeting changing circumstances and needs, and also in its approach to consultation and decision-taking, is worth being emulated in Southern Africa. This may be compared to the tenacity with which SADCC members have fought for interests that are of a prestige rather than a material nature.

Outside donors and investors would presumably be favourably impressed if Southern African countries were to demonstrate economic realism by opting for a pragmatic, step-by-step approach to regional co-operation rather than following the interventionist and over-ambitious goal of economic integration.

If the countries of Southern Africa are determined to aim for economic integration, they would be well advised to begin by practising the OECD's methods of consultation and decision taking because these would help to create the sort of mutual understanding and trust as well as the sense of common purpose which are indispensable if closer economic ties are to be forged between countries.

### Conclusion

The issues raised in this article clearly require much further thought, notably the question whether existing regional organizations in Southern Africa could or should be adapted to meet the desiderata spelled out above, and, if the answer is affirmative, how this would have to be achieved. Apart from the future of the Southern African Customs Union, matters such as the relationship between the SADCC and PTA need to be clarified.

Put in a nutshell, the gist of the article is as follows.

Neither the SADCC – nor, for that matter, the PTA – in their respective present forms are optimal vehicles for future regional development in Southern Africa.

South Africa therefore should not contemplate joining either the SADCC or PTA until the question of an appropriate institutional framework for closer regional interaction has been thoroughly investigated.

The SADCC's current efforts to embark upon a course of economic integration, while at the same time establishing the institutional framework into which a "new" South Africa can safely, but profitably, be fitted, do not look promising in view of the organization's past achievements and the potentialities and needs of the countries concerned.

It might be objected that the OECD model is too complex for Southern African conditions. However, this objection would apply *a fortiori* to the vastly more demanding integration model espoused by the SADCC.

What the region needs, can probably be achieved best by transforming the SADCC into SADC – a Southern African Development Community embodying much of the original SADCC approach together with certain basic features of the OECD.

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- 2 *SADCC: Towards economic integration* (Document SADCC/SCO/4/91/4), para 5.17. A thoroughly revised version of this document was submitted as a theme document to the SADCC conference held in Maputo on 29 to 31 January 1992. The issues discussed in the present article are brought out more clearly by the earlier version. Since the Maputo version does not invalidate any of the quotations taken from the earlier version, no further reference is made to the later one. See also footnote 34 below.
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- 53 W Randolph Burgess, *op cit*, pp 41-42, para 119.54 OECD, *History... , op cit*, p 44.
- 55 OECD, *OECD at work, op cit*, p 8.56 *Ibid*, p 11.
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- 63 *Ibid*, p 16, para 16.
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# The policies and politics of informal settlement in South Africa: A historical perspective

*Philip Harrison is a Town and Regional Planner in the Natal Provincial Administration's Physical Planning Directorate. In this article he locates the development of informal settlement in South Africa within the historical context and within the framework of the state's evolving urbanization policies. He also discusses the current policy debate.\**

## Introduction

Virtually all Third World cities have two starkly contrasting components. There are the formal urban areas established in terms of conventional town-planning procedures, but there are also the shanty towns that usually develop without official authorization. These areas, known as informal settlements, are housing an increasing proportion of the expanding urban population. In Addis Ababa, for example, 85 per cent of the people are informally housed. This compares with 70 per cent for Luanda, 60 per cent for Dar-es-Salaam and 50 per cent for both Cairo and Lusaka.<sup>1</sup> The inescapable reality of informal housing is reflected by an observation in a United Nations' publication that informal settlements "can no longer be regarded as unfortunate appendages to the real city, in many parts of the world, they *are* the city".<sup>2</sup>

South Africa is no exception. A report recently released by the Urban Foundation estimates that seven million South Africans live in urban informal housing.<sup>3</sup> The largest concentrations of informal settlement are within the PWV and the Durban Functional Region, where the informally housed population is 2,2 million and 1,8 million respectively. Cape Town and Port Elizabeth each have a population of over 300 000 outside formal residential areas, while many of the other major towns have informal settlements developing on the urban periphery and on vacant land within local authority boundaries.<sup>4</sup>

Informal settlements within South African have widely varying characteristics. It is therefore useful, at this stage, to clarify terminology. Informal housing can be defined very

broadly as "shelter constructed outside of the formal housing delivery mechanisms".<sup>5</sup>

The Urban Foundation has recognized two general categories of informal housing.<sup>6</sup> First, there is "spontaneous" informal housing that falls entirely outside the framework of conventional town planning. This category includes backyard shacks within formal towns and freestanding informal settlements such as Crossroads.<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that "spontaneous" informal settlement and squatting are not used as synonymous terms in this article. Squatting is used to refer only to the occupation of land without the permission of the landowner.<sup>8</sup>

Secondly, there is informal housing constructed within the context of officially sanctioned site-and-service schemes such as Orange Farm, Ivory Park and parts of Khayelitsha.<sup>9</sup> There are about 100 such schemes in South Africa incorporating a population of approximately one million.

Informal housing, in its various forms, is a major element of South Africa's urban landscape that can no longer be ignored or wished away. This article locates the current challenge posed by informal settlements within its historical context and within the framework of the state's changing policies towards urbanization.

## Historical analysis

Informal settlement has emerged in different guises throughout this century, and is currently developing on an unprecedented scale. The state response to informal settlement has also differed over time and has been dictated by wider political objectives.

In broad terms the following phases can be identified:<sup>10</sup>

- pre-1923: Early urbanization and the Public Health Movement

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- 1923-1939: The Native Urban Areas Act (influx control and racial segregation)
- 1939-1948: Rapid urbanization and the proliferation of informal settlements
- 1948-1967: Apartheid, mass housing and the destruction of informal settlements
- 1967-1979: The housing freeze and the re-emergence of informal settlement
- 1979-1985: Self-help housing and the gradual acceptance of black urbanization
- 1986-1990: The policy of orderly urbanization
- post-1990: Democratization and urban reconstruction

### **Pre-1923: Early urbanization and the Public Health Movement**

Informal settlement is not a new phenomenon in South Africa. In Cape Town, for example, informal settlement became a feature of the urban environment after ex-slaves set up shacks on the fringes of the town following their emancipation in 1834.<sup>11</sup> Both Kimberley and Johannesburg developed initially as shantytowns and were later formalized. However, in Johannesburg the majority of the 80 000 blacks resident in the city at the turn of the century remained within overcrowded compounds, backyard shacks and pockets of informal settlement.<sup>12</sup>

Racially mixed inner city slums and informal settlements were branded by the authorities as health hazards. In Cape Town, slums were destroyed after an outbreak of bubonic plague in 1902 and blacks were moved out of the city to the new township of Ndabeni. The 1918 influenza epidemic prompted the establishment of Langa as a “model township” for blacks.<sup>13</sup> In Johannesburg an outbreak of the plague in 1904 resulted in slums being burnt to the ground and blacks being moved to Klipspruit, twenty kilometres out of town.<sup>14</sup> New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, was established for similar reasons.

It has been argued that the fear of disease emanating from the racially mixed slums and shantytowns was used as an excuse to move blacks to the urban periphery.<sup>15</sup> Torr wrote that “infectious disease and concepts of public health, operating as societal metaphors, had exercised a profound influence on the evolution and development of urban segregation”.<sup>16</sup> However, it is also true that the epidemics drew attention to the appalling living conditions of urban blacks and persuaded local authorities to attend to the provision of housing. For example it was after the influenza epidemic that Johannesburg agreed to establish the Western Native Township. The public health movement also gave birth to modern town planning in South Africa. The epidemics resulted in a Health Act which included regulations to co-ordinate and control development.<sup>17</sup>

By 1922 some formal housing had been provided for blacks in the major cities. However, in most of South Africa’s towns no provision had been made and blacks squatted on the urban periphery or in backyards.

### **1923-1939: The Native Urban Areas Act (influx control and racial segregation)**

In 1923 the government acted to control the perceived problem of racially mixed slums and informal settlements by introducing the Native Urban Areas Act. The Act represented

a two-pronged strategy. First, the movement of blacks into urban areas was to be restricted by a system of influx control. The Act partly incorporated the recommendations of the Stallard Commission which had reported that “Natives should only be permitted within municipal areas in so far and for so long as their presence is demanded by the wants of the white man”.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, the Act empowered local authorities to set aside land for blacks and provide formal housing within segregated areas, known as locations.

Local authorities were, in general, not eager to take up their commitments in terms of the Act and progress in replacing shacks with formally constructed houses was slow. While Johannesburg and Bloemfontein acted immediately to provide housing, Port Elizabeth for example, waited until 1935.<sup>19</sup>

### **1939-1948: Rapid urbanization and the proliferation of informal settlements**

Urbanization reached a peak during the World War II. Rapid industrialization and the declining rural economies fuelled this mass exodus to the cities. The number of blacks in Johannesburg, for example, increased from 244 000 in 1939 to 400 000 in 1946.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, as a result of disruption caused by war, the construction of new houses came to a virtual standstill. The result was the unprecedented proliferation of informal settlement.

In 1948 it was reported that “Pretoria is hemmed in on every side by squatter villages that exist illegally on the neighbouring farms. The police are powerless to act ...”<sup>21</sup> In Durban the squatters were moving into Cato Manor, where the population increased from 17 000 in 1943 to 50 000 in 1950.<sup>22</sup> In Cape Town, by the early 1950s, two-thirds of the black population lived within inner-city slums and in shantytowns on the urban periphery.<sup>23</sup>

Johannesburg faced the greatest challenge. Squatters in Johannesburg were organized under the leadership of James Mpanza, head of the Sofasonke Party, who led an invasion of vacant land near Orlando where an informal settlement was set up with its own form of administration.<sup>24</sup>

Attempts to destroy such settlements in Johannesburg were entirely unsuccessful. The reasons for the failure were spelt out by a squatter leader.

The Government was like a man who has a cornfield which is invaded by birds. He chases the birds from one part of the field and they alight in another part ... we squatters are the birds ... we will see whether it is the farmer or the birds who gets tired first.<sup>25</sup>

Recognizing the futility of attempts to eradicate informal settlement, the Johannesburg City Council adopted a policy of “controlled squatting” which was similar in many respects to present-day government policy. Johannesburg established Moroka as the country’s first major site-and-service scheme, where 50 000 people could live within an officially sanctioned informal settlement.

World War II brought the relaxation of influx control and a breakdown of the colour bar as these social restrictions no longer served the needs of a rapidly industrializing economy. A new realism was reflected by the 1948 report by the Fagan Commission, which had been appointed by the Smuts Government. This Commission acknowledged that the “urbanized black” is a permanent part of towns and cities and that blacks should be given some say in local governments.

The Commission did not go as far as to recommend the abolition of influx control but did state that pass laws should gradually disappear. In essence the Fagan Commission proposed a policy of “orderly urbanization” as it accepted that the process of urbanization could not be stopped although it could be guided and regulated.<sup>26</sup>

### 1948-1966: Apartheid, mass housing and the destruction of informal settlements

The recommendations of the Fagan Commission were never implemented as a new government that was committed to the “Stallard Doctrine” came into power. Its aim was to reverse the flow of blacks into the urban areas and restore social control. Informal settlements were perceived as a visible manifestation of a lack of such control. An era of unprecedented “ethnic spatial engineering” was to follow. The two major instruments used by the government were the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951. During the 1950s the government started to eliminate shanty towns and inner-city slums. Those destroyed included Sophiatown and Newclare in Johannesburg, District Six in Cape Town and Cato Manor in Durban.

These mass removals were accompanied by a major construction programme. The great townships built during this era included Soweto (Johannesburg), KwaMashu and Umlazi (Durban) and Nyanga and Gugulethu (Cape Town). Paradoxically, the greatest progress in meeting housing requirements for blacks was made during the first decade that the Nationalist Party was in power.<sup>27</sup>

By the mid-1960s informal settlement within and around South Africa’s towns and cities had largely been eradicated. In its place were the sprawling townships.<sup>28</sup>

### 1967-1979: The housing freeze and the re-emergence of informal settlement

In 1967 the government took the decision to freeze all township development outside the “homelands”. Further housing construction took place within the homeland boundaries where 66 towns were established between 1960 and 1970. The housing freeze was implemented at a time when migration to the major metropolitan centres was accelerating, despite tightened influx control. The result was the re-emergence of informal settlements, this time on the periphery of the urban areas.

The re-emergence of informal settlements around Durban was the most dramatic. It was estimated that by 1971 there were 300 000 shack dwellers within the Durban/Pinetown metropolitan area. This increased to over one million by 1981.<sup>29</sup> The close proximity of the homeland boundary to Durban was one of the critical factors facilitating the rapid development of informal settlement within this locality.

Cape Town was in a very different situation; yet even there informal settlements re-emerged during the 1970s. This was despite the stringent imposition of influx control within the Western Cape, which was designated as a Coloured Labour Preference Area. The increasing influx of migrants from the Transkei and Ciskei were not provided with housing as they were regarded as illegal entrants into the area. In addition large numbers of coloureds also lived in shanty towns as a result of the serious backlog of affordable housing. In 1977 there were between 120 000 and 180 000 coloureds and 50 000 blacks within Cape Town’s shanty

towns.<sup>30</sup> Before 1975 the settlements were racially mixed. However, the Divisional Council encouraged blacks to move from other areas to the new, wholly black settlement at Crossroads. The policy towards coloured squatters was one of containment ie existing shacks were allowed to remain but no new shacks were allowed to be built.

In the PWV informal settlement occurred mainly in the form of backyard shacks within existing urban areas. Freestanding informal settlement was only to re-emerge by the mid-1980s.

During the 1970s new and more positive attitudes began to develop within South Africa towards settlement. This attitude shift has been a slow process that has, even by 1992, not been completed.

The factors underlying this shift were the following:

- international trends;
- the influence of liberal South African academics and the business sector;
- resistance to removals;
- fiscal constraints on the state; and
- the inescapable reality of *de facto* informal settlement.

Internationally, a paradigm shift was underway by the late 1960s. Prior to this time hostility towards informal settlement had been universal. These settlements detracted from the image of modernization that developing countries were trying to portray, they were symbols of the loss of control by central authorities and they were viewed as sources of crime and disease. However, a movement of scholars and development workers, led by the influential theorist John Turner, challenged these perceptions. Turner argued that informal settlements are not the problem but are part of the solution to the housing crisis and that informal settlements represent the creativity and energy of the poor. Turner urged decision-makers to support the self-help efforts of informal settlers.<sup>31</sup>

At the 1976 United Nations Habitat Conference in Vancouver there was almost universal acknowledgement that informal settlement could play a significant role in the national development process.<sup>32</sup> The following quotes reflect this change in direction:

[Informal Settlements] are also laden with opportunity for human advancement. But to realise this potential, there must be a whole new vision, a reversal from many previous positions, and a more positive attitude which truly appreciates the existing and potential contribution of the inhabitants of slums and squatter settlements.<sup>33</sup>

Squatter settlements are almost always a natural phenomenon. The incomers are not malevolent. They are people seeking to fulfil their natural hopes for betterment or people acting out of sheer desperation. Nothing could be more healthy than this dynamic and courageous phenomenon. Indeed, squatter settlements are a form of pioneering which should be treated with respect and helped to become an object of reward rather than of punishment.<sup>34</sup>

In retrospect informal settlements may have been over romanticized at this time as life in such settlements is often harsh and people may live in them for lack of any other option. Nevertheless this new perception successfully established a far more positive approach to informal settlement.

The changing international perspective was taken up by liberal South African academics, who in turn influenced state thinking. For example, in 1975 Maasdorp and Humphreys referred to informal settlements as “self-help community development by the poor” and argued that “there is in fact

sufficient evidence in the rapidly urbanizing countries to show that squatter communities are highly successful solutions to the problems of mass urbanization".<sup>35</sup> Maasdorp and Humphreys called for the introduction of site-and-service schemes, referring to the approach adopted by the Johannesburg City Council during the 1940s.

The creation of the Urban Foundation in 1976 was also an important development. The Urban Foundation voiced the interests of that faction of business which favoured rapid reform and argued cogently for a more realistic urbanization policy.

Another persuasive factor was the growing resistance to attempts to destroy informal settlements. The political cost of existing policy was increasing to a level that was no longer acceptable. The focus of struggle was the Western Cape where the government feared that a relaxed attitude towards squatting at Crossroads would set a precedent for further squatting. In 1977 Modderdam and neighbouring squatter camps were razed by the authorities; the next target was to be Crossroads. This action resulted in immense negative publicity for the government and overnight Crossroads became an international *cause célèbre*. The government decided to postpone the bulldozing of Crossroads and in April 1979 Dr Koornhof, Minister of Co-operation and Development, announced that the residents of the squatter camp would be accommodated in a new housing scheme. Khayelitsha was built as the scheme into which the residents of Crossroads and other squatter camps could move and Crossroads itself was eventually relieved.

Fiscal constraints on the state and the inescapable reality of existing informal settlement were also factors which eventually decided government to change its policy direction. Although the provision of housing slowed down considerably during the 1970s, it was nevertheless government policy to remain an active participant in the housing delivery process. The fiscal implications of meeting housing demand through government-financed mass housing schemes were clearly immense.

By 1979, however, the housing freeze outside homelands was still in effect, influx control was being enforced, no form of informal settlement was officially tolerated and the government remained committed to public housing, although very few houses had been built during the 1970s. Yet, for the reasons outlined, there was a growing awareness within officialdom that the present policies were untenable.

### **1979-1985: Self-help housing and the gradual acceptance of black urbanization**

This period was a time of transition. Although the state officially pursued anti-urban policies, it was increasingly recognized that this approach was economically and politically dysfunctional. By 1985 the government had largely adopted the liberal paradigm which had been promoted by South African academics such as Maasdorp during the 1970s.

By the early 1980s the extent of the housing crisis was becoming apparent. The urbanization surge and the years of inactivity in the housing field had spawned a new generation of informal settlement. This reality led to calls for the government to abandon its official policy of public housing and the accompanying high zoning and building standards which discouraged lower quality housing.

In Natal, during 1980, the Chief Town and Regional

Planner was among those who argued that state funds were simply not available to build houses for everyone and that the inevitability of informal settlement should be accepted. It was contended that the task of the government should be to order informal settlement through site-and-service schemes.<sup>36</sup> During 1981 the Urban Foundation provided a model for future development by establishing Inanda Newtown near Durban as a site-and-service scheme to resettle an informally settled community that had been stricken by typhoid and cholera epidemics.

In 1982 the government followed this lead by announcing a new strategy for black housing. In terms of this policy the government would restrict its role to providing infrastructure and services while the private sector and individuals would be responsible for the construction of the houses. Site-and-service schemes would be promoted with "self-help" as the catchword. It was emphasized that "squatting would not be accepted but that where it is a reality it must be controlled and where practical upgraded".<sup>37</sup> Liberal academics and the business sector applauded the government for accepting a more pragmatic approach to housing. It was argued that the state's resources could be spread far wider, benefitting many more individuals. The new policy was, however, criticized from a radical perspective in terms of which self-help was perceived as a deliberate attempt by the government to divest itself of its responsibility for providing housing and as a ploy to depoliticize the housing arena.<sup>38</sup>

At this time self-help housing was still being promoted within the context of influx control and anti-urban policies, although influx control had clearly failed in its objectives and the government was gradually extending home ownership rights to urban blacks. In 1979 the Riekert Commission had recommended that blacks in urban areas qualifying for permanent residence should experience the full benefits of the free market, while influx controls would be tightened to control the numbers of this privileged urban class. However, in 1984 the Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill, which was to give effect to the Riekert Commission recommendations, was withdrawn in the face of strong resistance. During the same year Dr Louis Rive, Chairman of the Natal/KwaZulu Planning Council, urged authorities to acknowledge the inevitability of urbanization and accept the reality of shantytowns.<sup>39</sup> In 1985 the Minister of Constitutional Development, Chris Heunis, announced that unconditional property rights would be granted to urban blacks and that the housing freeze, which had been in place since 1966, was lifted.<sup>40</sup> This allowed for the upgrading and extension of townships which had previously been under threat of removal. In Natal, for example, the Natal/KwaZulu Planning Council identified seventy priority upgrading programmes for existing townships.<sup>41</sup>

During the transitional period, 1979 to 1985, pragmatic policy adjustments undermined the territorial basis of apartheid. However, it was the 1985 report by the President's Council on "An Urbanisation Strategy for the Republic of South Africa" which sounded the deathknell for influx control and anti-urban policies. The President's Council accepted urbanization as an inevitable process and put forward that it should be used positively to the benefit of all communities.<sup>42</sup> Most of the recommendations of the President's Council were accepted by the government in a 1986 White Paper.<sup>43</sup> The President's Council report and the

White Paper were curiously reminiscent of the 1948 Fagan Commission report.

### 1986-1990: The policy of orderly urbanization

Although the 1986 White Paper saw urbanization as an economically beneficial and socially desirable process, it emphasized the need for urbanization to be planned, ordered and directed.<sup>44</sup> Clearly, squatting and uncontrolled informal settlement would not be consistent with a policy of "orderly urbanization".

The President's Council report addressed the question of squatting and informal settlement and provided guidelines which are still generally in line with the state's present approach to informal settlement.<sup>45</sup> The President's Council differentiated between informal settlement and squatting.

"Squatting", which was defined as illegal settlement, was regarded "as being always undesirable" but it was accepted that "informal settlement can make an important positive contribution to the urbanisation process".<sup>46</sup> However, the report did make a further distinction between "undesirable informal settlement", which takes place "in a completely unordered way involving social and health risks" and "desirable informal settlement", which occurs on land that has been identified for urbanization and serviced. It was accepted that "nowhere in the world has the demolition of squatter settlements had the desired results".<sup>47</sup> The President's Council therefore proposed indirect measures to control squatting such as legalizing certain existing settlements, upgrading, provision of land for site-and-service schemes and determination of economically feasible standards as controls in designated areas.<sup>48</sup> In the White Paper, however, the government emphasized that direct controls would still be applied through the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act, together with the measures proposed by the President's Council.<sup>49</sup>

In practice the application of policy towards squatting and informal settlement has not been clearcut. The distinction between squatting and "desirable" and "undesirable" informal settlements was often blurred. Strategies regarding informal settlement also vacillated in response to developments in the wider political arena.

This point was made by Bernstein when she discussed the following three possible approaches by government to informal settlement:

- *coercive* (shack demolition, harassment, etc);
- *laissez faire*, in which development is allowed to take place without government intervention; and
- *supportive*, in which informal settlements are upgraded where appropriate and site-and-service schemes are promoted.<sup>50</sup>

Bernstein argued that government policy sat "uneasily and ambiguously between all three of the possible responses".<sup>51</sup> In 1988, for example, an amendment to the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act tightened control on squatting, while at the same time provided a mechanism (ie Section 6A of the Act) with which to legalize settlements and establish site-and-service schemes. During this period certain squatter/informal settlement communities were relocated while others were granted secure tenure and their settlements were upgraded (eg St Wendolins). A significant number of site-and-service schemes were also developed.

On the one hand there was the perceived need to control and regulate urbanization. On the other hand there was a growing awareness that spontaneous informal settlement was inevitable given the housing backlog. For example, in 1987, the Minister of Information and Constitutional Development described informal settlement as more of a solution than a problem and spoke of the need to support the informal housing sector.<sup>52</sup>

Despite the government's commitment to accommodating urbanization in an orderly fashion, the housing backlog continued to escalate during the second half of the eighties. Informal settlements grew rapidly. For the first time since the 1950s substantial freestanding informal settlements appeared in the PWV. Land invasions and densification of informal settlement continued around Durban, although there were indications that the rate of growth had begun to slow down. Cape Town is believed to have overtaken Durban as the fastest growing metropolitan area in the country, with estimates of the number of "squatters" moving into the Cape Metropolitan area each month varying from 5 000 to 10 000. In the Eastern Cape around East London and Port Elizabeth informal settlers moved into some of the worst conditions in the country.<sup>53</sup>

This informal settlement developed within the highly charged environment following the township revolts of the mid-1980s. The Urban Foundation has argued that "by its nature spontaneous housing is susceptible to conflict"<sup>54</sup> and that the "phenomenon of informal settlement is riven by multiple sources of potential and real conflict".<sup>55</sup>

The following dimensions of conflict were identified in a recent Urban Foundation report.<sup>56</sup>

- 1 Conflict within informal settlements. The violence between ANC/UDF and Inkatha aligned groups within informal settlements of Natal and the Witdoeke and Comrades of Crossroads have been cited as examples.
- 2 Conflicts with residents of formal townships. This often occurs when informal settlements lacking basic services emerge in close proximity to formal townships which have a much higher level of services.
- 3 Conflicts with hostel dwellers. Violent confrontations between hostel dwellers and informal settlers have become an alarming feature of the conflict within the PWV region.
- 4 Conflict with high income neighbours. Residents of middle and high income areas have felt threatened by the close proximity of rapidly developing informal settlements. Events at Hout Bay, Noordhoek and Midrand illustrate typical responses from such communities. The response to squatting from conservative local authorities in the Transvaal and certain farming communities has been particularly severe as witnessed by the recent attacks on squatters in the Western Transvaal by right wing vigilantes and demolition of certain settlements by individual land owners and local authorities.
- 5 Conflict with authorities. Attempts to relocate squatter communities into site-and-service schemes has triggered conflict. The resistance to the removal of the community of Langa in 1987 is believed to have sparked widespread conflict in the Eastern Cape.

By 1990 squatting and informal settlement were highly visible and politicized phenomena, and it was increasingly

recognized that an urgent and effective policy response was required.

### Post-1990: Democratization and urban reconstruction

On 2 February 1990 South Africa entered a new phase in its political development. This political change impacted significantly on urban policy and planning. Important developments included the following:

- the White Paper on Land Reform;
- the scrapping of the Group Areas Act and other restrictive legislation;
- provision for non-racial local authorities with a single tax base and other negotiated forms of third-tier government;
- the creation of the Independent Development Trust, which now provides a R7 500 subsidy per serviced site;
- the Less Formal Township Establishment Act which allows for rapid development of land for low income communities; and
- the entry of the ANC and other groups into the policy debate.

The White Paper on Land Reform, released early in 1991, reflected the increasing concern of the government over the problems posed by squatting and uncontrolled informal settlement.

The following quote from the White Paper reflects the dilemma recognized by government:

On the one hand squatting is perceived as a serious threat by established communities, while on the other it is seen as the cumulative result of discriminatory measures and an inadequate housing policy.<sup>57</sup>

The White Paper stressed that the integrity of land rights and the interests of established communities would be protected. It therefore stated that “squatting that takes the form of trespass on and taking over the property of another cannot be tolerated in an orderly society”.<sup>58</sup> At the same time the White Paper accepted that the government has a responsibility towards the homeless who seek a livelihood in urban areas and that squatting is part of the urbanization process.<sup>59</sup>

In attempting to resolve this dilemma the White Paper proposed that “the emphasis in dealing with squatting should always be on guiding those people towards land which is suitable for less formal settlement on which at least rudimentary but upgradeable services are available”.<sup>60</sup> The White Paper states that “action must take the form of timely prevention rather than cure at a later stage”.<sup>61</sup> It is clear from the White Paper that the focus of strategy with respect to squatting and “disorderly” informal settlement would be the rapid designation and servicing of land on which informal or “less formal” settlement could take place in an orderly manner. A more recent policy statement described an objective of government as being “to manage urbanisation effectively to prevent squatting”.<sup>62</sup>

This emphasis on the timely provision of land and services to forestall squatting was a logical extension of the 1983 policy on self-help housing, the 1985 recommendations of the President’s Council and the government’s stated policy of “orderly urbanization” (1986).

Mechanisms to achieve rapid development of land for low income residential development have been provided in

the Less Formal Township Establishment Act 113 of 1991, while the capital subsidy provided by the Independent Development Trust (IDT) makes the large scale provision of serviced sites much more feasible. In order to assist with the early identification of squatting and the movement of squatters into site-and-service schemes, the Minister of Planning, Provincial Affairs and National Housing recently announced the establishment of “squatter auxiliary units” in the four provinces. While the Democratic Party and the African National Congress strongly opposed the formation of these units, the government emphasized that the main task of the new structures would be to achieve a negotiated solution to local conflicts surrounding squatting.<sup>63</sup> The activities of these units has varied from province to province. In the Transvaal, for example, these units have actively intervened to move squatters from illegal to legal settlements, while in Natal the MEC for local government has indicated that these units will not be involved in the demolition of shacks.

Informal or “less formal” housing is now an accepted form of shelter, provided that it occurs within an officially sanctioned site-and-service scheme. In practice much, although not all, informal housing outside site-and-service schemes is accepted as a *de facto* reality and tolerated.

The Urban Foundation has continued to play a critical role in developing policy proposals and stimulating debate. Its influence on thinking within both government circles and “non-establishment” groupings with regard to urban and regional development is significant. It is therefore of value to consider the Urban Foundation’s approach to informal settlement and identify differences in principle or emphasis that may exist between it and the government.

The Urban Foundation has called for “a positive and unambiguous central government strategy which explicitly embraces informal housing delivery as part of an overall housing delivery system in South Africa”.<sup>64</sup> The Urban Foundation has also argued that there should be an Informal Housing Act as an instrument to promote various forms of informal housing development and resolve conflicts and complex issues of property rights that will inevitably arise.<sup>65</sup>

The government and the Urban Foundation now share many basic departure points with respect to housing policy. However, as regards informal settlement, there are at least two noticeable differences in emphasis.

*First*, the Urban Foundation is more willing to accept informal settlement outside site-and-service schemes. The Urban Foundation argues that spontaneous informal settlement is inevitable given the inability of housing delivery systems to meet total housing demand and contends that the government should accept new supportive roles with regard to informal settlement. These include:

- the legalization of illegal informal settlement;
- the adoption of national upgrading programmes;
- reformulation of building codes;
- support for community groups;
- support for non-government organizations; and
- support for informal finance organizations.<sup>66</sup>

*Secondly*, the Urban Foundation places more emphasis than government on *in situ* upgrading. Although the government does not exclude the possibility of *in situ* upgrading, its general approach is to direct squatters and informal settlers

from existing unplanned settlements to newly laid out site-and-service schemes. The Urban Foundation has pointed out that *in situ* upgrading is winning increasing international support as a key element of national housing policy. It regards relocation of informal settlers to new schemes as an unnecessarily disruptive process if *in situ* upgrading is a viable alternative option.<sup>67</sup>

Despite these existing differences, the Urban Foundation approach (which also represents the thinking of the Private Sector Council on Urbanization) and government policy has converged in recent years. However, there is no broad national consensus surrounding the role of informal housing. Right-wing groupings remain hostile to informal housing. On the local level there has even been resistance to the establishment of site-and-service schemes.

The position of the ANC and other “non-establishment” groups is less clear. While some constituencies within the ANC accept the “liberal” approach advocated by institutions such as the Urban Foundation, the Independent Development Trust and the Development Bank, there are other elements arguing for far greater state intervention in the housing provision. An ANC discussion document reporting the proceedings of a recent workshop stated that “the provision of housing for the poor was seen as a state responsibility. However, there was no clear consensus as to whether this meant that the State would build all the housing or whether it would merely facilitate the construction of housing and put its money into services.”<sup>68</sup> The same document referred to the need to “upgrade squatter settlements as a matter of priority in the short term”.<sup>69</sup> How squatter settlements would be viewed in the longer term was not stated. At the ANC National Consultative Conference on Local Government (October 1990) it was decided that the basic goal of a housing policy should be “houses for all within the next ten years and the immediate provision of serviced land”. It was argued that “site-and-service schemes will be necessary in the short term, but only if this is coupled to a commitment to decent and affordable housing”. It would appear, therefore, that the ANC accepts informal housing, in its various forms, as a short-term necessity but not as the ultimate solution to the housing crisis.<sup>70</sup>

## Conclusion

While the present housing crisis has its roots, at least partly, in the policies of the past, today’s reality of seven million South Africans living within informal settlements has to be accepted. With a housing backlog of over 1,2 million units in urban areas, there is no alternative but to recognize that a large proportion of our population will continue to be informally housed for the foreseeable future. The responsibility of government and the private sector must therefore be to support informal housing delivery processes, using them creatively to resolve the housing shortage. At the same time it is necessary that informal housing occurs within a liveable environment that is as safe and healthy as possible. To achieve this both site-and-service schemes and *in situ* upgrading will have to be actively promoted as housing strategies. Peter Joubert acknowledges an acceptance of the present stark reality when he writes:<sup>71</sup>

How we respond to the needs of these communities is one of the major challenges facing South Africa for the remainder of this

century and into the next. We could bulldoze the shacks in the hopes that their occupants will disappear, but they will simply spring up somewhere else – more dilapidated, more desperate, more hostile. We could ignore them, and they will slowly become a health threat and an economic burden on our formal cities. Or we could use our resources and expertise to turn this massive wave of human energy into a positive component of urban and economic development.<sup>71</sup>

While it should be acknowledged that, given the present realities, informal housing should be promoted as a necessary component of the total housing delivery package, it must be recognized that informal shelter is not ideal housing for anyone. Once all South Africans have access to at least basic services then serious attention should be given to upgrading the quality of housing and infrastructure

## Considerations for the future

As far as the future is concerned, I believe that the following key factors should be considered in formulating policies and strategies with regard to informal settlement.<sup>73</sup>

### Basic health and safety standards

The promotion of informal housing does not imply the acceptance of hazardous and unhealthy living environments. Informal settlements have developed on floodplains and dangerously unstable slopes. Diseases such as cholera, typhoid, tuberculosis and measles are the scourge of many informally housed communities, while violence and crime are also often at alarmingly high levels. The Urban Foundation has referred to upgrading as “securing the health and safety of communities”. Longer term development programmes should follow this initial emergency response to the problems of informal settlement. Adequate sanitation (for example, the introduction of ventilated pit latrines) and potable water (for example, standpipes) are the most basic elements of an upgrading strategy. Street lighting, roads for emergency vehicles, effective policing and primary health care facilities are also essential.

### Security of tenure

Security of tenure is necessary if upgrading is to be successful in the long term. Unless residents are assured of their legal right to occupy they will be reluctant to invest in housing and other facilities. Land tenure within informal settlements is, however, often a complex issue as there are often conflicting land claims and poorly considered changes to land tenure may be socially disruptive.

### Affordable development

Upgrading of informal settlement can unintentionally result in displacement of the people for whom the programme was originally intended. In many instances development is simply not affordable for the poor – a result of the following factors:

- infrastructure, service and building standards are often inappropriate;
- newly introduced rates and other service charges are an added burden to the poor;
- informal settlers are often unable to gain access to formal channels of credit; and
- upgrading land tenure may introduce a property market in which the poor cannot compete.

To ensure affordable development it is essential that standards reflect the ability of the community to pay. Rather than have a

situation where standards are unenforceable, it is better to have lower standards acceptable to the community and which provide minimum conditions for a liveable environment.

Special attention should also be given to developing innovative means to provide credit for the construction of informal shelters.

### Community participation

Community participation is essential in any programme if development is to effectively meet the perceived needs of the community and if development is to be an empowering process. Meaningful community participation is, however, exceptionally difficult to achieve and requires immense patience and sensitivity to local community dynamics. Problems that are likely to be encountered include:

- raised expectations;
- communication difficulties;
- community conflict;
- lack of credible, representative structures; and
- the time required to ensure participation.

### Economic development and job creation

Residential expansion or upgrading has to be accompanied by job creation if development is to be sustainable. The upgrading process should therefore be used creatively to generate local economic development. This can be achieved through:

- making use of small-scale contractors and hired labour from the communities;
- active promotion of the informal, small-business and urban agricultural sectors, and
- providing opportunities for skills training.

### Protection of the natural environment

Residents of informal settlements are far more dependent on the local natural resource base than their formally housed counterparts. They are often forced to rely on the immediate availability of local sources of energy, water and food production. The natural systems providing these resources such as forest stands, wetlands, streams and grasslands are frequently under severe pressure. In Natal, for example, the pollution of water courses running through informal settlements has become a critical problem. There are fears that cholera and typhoid epidemics are imminent.

It is therefore important that sound environmental management strategies should be incorporated into any development programme.

### Effective administration

The successful implementation of a development programme is largely dependent on whether or not an adequate institutional support system is in place.

At present many informal settlements are excluded from any form of local authority. At other levels of government there is a multiplicity of departments and funding agencies responsible for various aspects of development. The result is fragmentation of authority and overlap of functions.

It is essential that negotiated constitutional change should result in a rationalized, more effective institutional structure. At local level the management of informal settlements requires careful consideration. Possible solutions may

include the extension of local authority boundaries to include informal settlements or the inclusion of such areas within metropolitan authorities.

### Notes and references

- 1 Urban Foundation, *Informal housing: The current situation*, August 1991. This report is one of a series dealing with urbanization policy in South Africa. The series is a product of a major five-year study directed by the Private Sector Council on Urbanization and managed by the Urban Foundation's Policy Unit. This initial report on informal housing is to be followed by a report detailing policy proposals which should be published early in 1992.
- 2 W Garces, "Slum improvement" in R Pama et al (eds) *Low income housing, technology and policy*, United Nations, 1977.
- 3 Urban Foundation, *op cit*.
- 4 *Ibid*, Table 1, p 7.
- 5 *Ibid*, p 24.
- 6 *Ibid*, pp 4-6.
- 7 The Urban Foundation, 1991, estimates that 86 per cent of informal housing units in the PWV are backyard shacks. By contrast over 90 per cent of informal settlement within the Durban Functional Region is freestanding.
- 8 Squatting is a term that is subject to many definitions. The definition of squatting as "illegal informal settlement" is not sufficiently precise as there are many shades of illegality. In this article "squatting" is used only to refer to settlement that occurs without the consent of the landowner. In terms of this definition the majority of informal settlements cannot be regarded as squatters. Backyard shacks, for example, are unauthorized in terms of local authority by-laws but are permitted by landowners. Much of the sprawling informal settlements around Durban is also excluded from the definition of squatting as local chiefs and other authorities have allocated "sites" to newcomers.
- 9 In site-and-service schemes land is identified and serviced prior to settlement. Sites are purchased on which informal housing may be built subject to certain minimum standards.
- 10 P Morris, *Soweto: A review of existing conditions and some guidelines for change*, Johannesburg: Urban Foundation, 1980. In this book Morris outlines the history of Johannesburg and Soweto by identifying seven phases between 1886 and 1980. While these phases largely coincide with those used in this article for the pre-1948 period, they differ for the later period.
- 11 J Western, *Outcast Cape Town*, 1981, p 32.
- 12 D Smit, *The political economy of urban and regional planning in South Africa*, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Natal, 1990.
- 13 J Western, *op cit*, p 46.
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- 21 Report in *The Forum*, 3 April, 1948.
- 22 G Maasdorp and A Humphreys, *From shantytown to township*, Cape Town: Juta, 1975.
- 23 J Western, *op cit*.
- 24 R Davenport, *op cit*.
- 25 Oriël Monongoaha quoted in J Western, *op cit*, p 277.

- 26 The Forum, *op cit*.
- 27 D Smit, *op cit*.
- 28 For example, Maasdorp and Humphreys, *op cit*, reported that there were 38 000 shacks in Durban in 1958, compared with only 1 950 in 1966.
- 29 Maasdorp and Humphreys, *op cit*; and *Urban Foundation, op cit*.
- 30 The emergence of shantytowns around Cape Town during the 1970s is described in J Western, *op cit*, pp 277-308.
- 31 R J Skinner and M J Rodell, *People, poverty and shelter: Problems of self-help housing in the Third World*, London: Methuen, 1983, p 9.
- 32 *Ibid*, pp 12-14.
- 33 W Garces, *op cit*.
- 34 P Psomopoulos, "Editor's page", *Ekistics*, vol 48, no 286, January, 1981.
- 35 Maasdorp and Humphreys, *op cit*, p 73.
- 36 Proceedings of a workshop on housing, Pietermaritzburg, 1980.
- 37 Quoted in *Daily News*, 28 January, 1982.
- 38 See for example P Wilkinson, "The housing question reconsidered: Towards a political economy of housing in South Africa", *Work in Progress*, vol 4, 1980.
- 39 *Natal Mercury*, 14 September, 1984.
- 40 *Natal Mercury*, 4 May, 1984.
- 41 It was reported in the *Natal Mercury*, 16 September, 1984 that between 1966 and 1984 the Port Natal Administration Board, responsible for black townships in the region, had not built a single house. In the Durban metropolitan area the total number of formal houses built each year averaged 1 000, only 10 per cent of what was required. The lifting of the housing freeze was therefore of significance.
- 42 Report of the Committee for Constitutional Affairs of the President's Council on *An urbanisation strategy for the Republic of South Africa*, 1985.
- 43 Department of Constitutional Development and Planning, *White Paper on Urbanisation*, 1986.
- 44 *Ibid*.
- 45 President's Council, *op cit*, pp 129-136.
- 46 *Ibid*, p 129.
- 47 *Ibid*, p 135.
- 48 *Ibid*, p 133.
- 49 The White Paper, *op cit*, also proposed that the control of squatting should become the responsibility of the various "own affairs" and provincial administrations.
- 50 A Bernstein, "Informal settlers: South Africa's new city builders", *Optima*, vol 37, no 1, 1989, pp 18-23.
- 51 *Ibid*, p 20.
- 52 Dr S van der Merwe quoted in the *Daily News*, 8 July, 1987.
- 53 Urban Foundation, *op cit*, provides a comparative analysis of informal settlement within and around South Africa's six major urban centres.
- 54 *Ibid*, p 25.
- 55 *Ibid*, p 34.
- 56 *Ibid*, pp 29-30.
- 57 *White Paper on Land Reform*, 1991, para B4.22.
- 58 *Ibid*, para B4.2.4.
- 59 *Ibid*, para B4.2.1.
- 60 *Ibid*, para B4.2.2.
- 61 *Ibid*, para B4.2.4.
- 62 Natal Provincial Administration, *Policy framework for dealing with squatting*, 1991, p 2.
- 63 The formation of squatter auxiliary units, which would be operational for 24 hours a day, was announced in July 1991. These units were to be managed by the provincial administrations which now have full responsibility for combatting squatting. The ANC responded by accusing the government of "declaring war on squatters" and the Democratic Party referred to "squatter hit squads" (*Natal Witness*, 8 September, 1991). However, in a policy document the government emphasized the need for these units to "facilitate between all role players for an amicable settlement".
- 64 P Joubert, "Encirclement", *Leadership*, vol 9, p 65.
- 65 A Bernstein, *op cit*, p 24.
- 66 Urban Foundation, *op cit*, p 51.
- 67 *Ibid*, pp 43-45.
- 68 African National Congress, *Report on the proceedings of a consultative workshop on local government*, 22 September, 1990.
- 69 *Ibid*, p 34.
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# Africa's rain forests – Retreat and hold

*Denis Fair, Senior Research Fellow at the Africa Institute, examines the extent to which the rain forests of Africa are being depleted and measures which are being taken to conserve them. This article deals principally with the forests of West Africa. A following one will deal with those of Central Africa.*

The world's tropical forests, ringing the globe in a comparatively narrow belt through Latin America, Africa and Southeast Asia, are in retreat. Their preservation, vital to the global climate, to half the world's animal and plant species and to the economies of many nations, is threatened by the penetration of farmers and lumbermen and by rising population numbers. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported in 1991 that 17 million hectares of tropical forest are being lost every year, an area equal to that of Austria, Denmark and the Netherlands combined and at a rate 50 per cent higher than a decade ago. The FAO's 1980 estimate was that Africa's 700 million hectares of tropical forest was being cleared at a rate of 3,7 million hectares a year, deforestation outstripping the rate of new tree planting by 29 to 1.<sup>1</sup> Forests are a renewable resource but, says the World Bank, they are being treated as non-renewable; they are being mined.<sup>2</sup>

In the broadest sense, tropical forests range from the *rain forests* – closed, moist, high, evergreen and broad-leaved, enjoying virtually a continuous growing season with few or no moisture shortages and no serious extremes of temperature – to the *open forests* or woodlands of mixed forest and grassland on their drier margins. The rain forests themselves include a wide range of sub-climates and vegetation types, and precise definition from country to country of what is rain forest and what is not is often difficult.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, most of the area in West Africa today and a much smaller area in Central Africa shown as rain forest is in fact inferior secondary growth resulting from the disappearance, for whatever reason, of primary or virgin forest.

The FAO estimated that Africa's rain forests covered about 200 million hectares in 1980. They reach from the Zaire River basin through Gabon and Cameroon and the coastal belt of West Africa to Guinea. Compared with the open forests, the wood from which is used principally for domestic fuel, it is the industrial potential of the rain forest's timber that commands attention on world markets – the hard cabinet woods such as mahogany, the softer woods such as

okoumé ideal for plywood and veneer, and many other multipurpose woods.

Although the destruction of both the closed and the open forests is equally damaging to the environment, the valuable export-earning timber of the former presents African governments with the problem of resolving the conflict between productive and protective approaches to the exploitation and the conservation of this resource. Too often short-term returns have been won from a resource that essentially demands long-term investment.

About two million hectares of Africa's rain forests are being cleared each year for agricultural and commercial forestry purposes, most seriously in West Africa where the rate of deforestation has reduced the tree cover to about ten per cent of its original extent. Central Africa's prospects are much brighter. Population densities are low and much of the forest is inaccessible and undisturbed. Whereas the depletion rate in Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria has been 15,6 per cent and 14,3 per cent per year, respectively, and the highest in the world, rates for Zaire, Congo, Gabon and the Central African Republic are well below one per cent and for Cameroon 1,2 per cent per year.<sup>4</sup>

## The rain forest environment

It is the fragility of the rain forest environment that makes the careless exploitation of its resources such a destructive practice. It is not in the soil that the forest's nutrients are mainly stored but in the trees and plant matter, the biomass. When this cover is removed these critical nutrients are lost. It also causes soil temperature to rise and exposes the soil, poor in humus-binding ingredients, to the erosive effects of tropical downpours. Because of these conditions, "the rain-forest system is less resilient to change than almost any other African system" and its regeneration once it is removed, is severely retarded.<sup>5</sup> In fact, it may not be possible to recreate it at all but only to see it replaced with secondary forest or with plantations of exotic trees such as

pine and eucalyptus. At worst, it could be degraded to a "useless wilderness".<sup>6</sup>

In earlier times the low density of human habitation in the rain forests of tropical Africa and the traditional methods of shifting cultivation practised (and still practised in some parts of Central Africa) allowed the soil and the trees their long-term need to recover. But in West Africa, especially, the demand for timber by logging companies, for valuable foreign exchange-earning crops such as cocoa, coffee and rubber, and for more farmland and shorter fallow periods for food crops by rising population numbers, have given the rain forest little chance of survival in its virgin state. Agriculture is the main culprit. Estimates of forest destroyed are more than three times that from logging, shifting cultivation alone being responsible for almost 70 per cent of the deforestation in tropical Africa.<sup>7</sup>

## Conservation

Writing in the mid-1950s on the wealth of Africa's forests, George Kimble stressed that they are "finite and in many areas they are being destroyed faster than they are being replaced".<sup>8</sup> In some countries long-term consequences were being overlooked in the pressure of immediate needs so that forest departments were fighting a losing battle against encroachment. But he also observed that "both the governed and the governors have come to realize that well-being rather than revenue is the criterion of success of a forestry programme; that the chief end of a forestry policy or forestry service is to maintain, not to destroy; and that in the long run the prevention of erosion and the preservation of satisfactory supplies of ground and river water are every bit as important as the supply of cash and raw material". More and more territories, he continued, are therefore bringing in forestry legislation that will promote the ends of development, management and conservation.

However, the post-war demand by the industrialized countries for Africa's tropical woods and the eagerness of many developing countries, newly independent in the 1960s, to increase exports and earn foreign exchange for their ambitious development needs saw the productive aspects of forestry expansion take precedence over the protective. Thus, nearly forty years later, Melly was obliged to note that "governments of developing nations seem to be faced with an appalling choice: destruction of a prized natural resource vital to the climate of the globe, or a self-denying renunciation of one of the few export products whose price does not seem to be sliding inexorably downwards".<sup>9</sup>

Only in the mid-1980s, after years of almost uncontrolled exploitation of Africa's rain forests has the level of concern risen to the extent that governments are now beginning to give serious attention to the conservation of those that remain, to the replanting of those that have been degraded and to agroforestry – an environmentally sound land-management system – as a promising alternative to shifting cultivation. The call for action has come from various sources. In 1985 the World Resources Institute, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) drew attention in their Tropical Forests Action Plan (TFAP) to the alarming rate of forest destruction. They pointed out that, although 40 per cent of the world's biologically-rich tropical moist forest had been cleared or degraded,

there was not nearly sufficient political awareness of the negative impact on human welfare and the environment. Greater political will was necessary, they stressed, to mobilize both human and financial resources to do something about the problem.<sup>10</sup> In Africa particularly, the crisis facing the rain forest has not been politicized to the extent experienced in southeast Asia or in Latin America where, in Brazil for instance, violent reaction by vested interests has met efforts to curb the destruction.

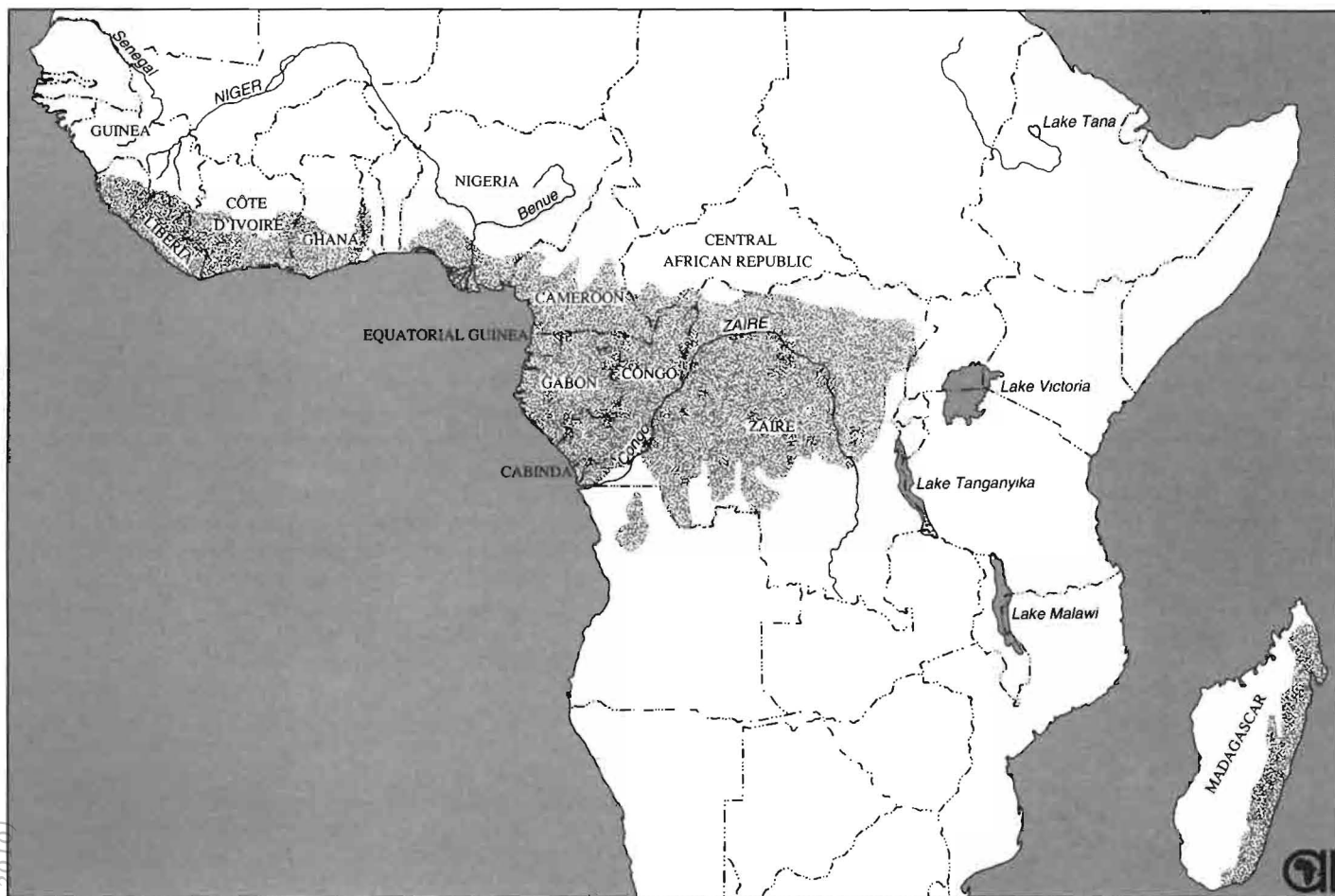
The call for the conservation of the forests is now more vocal and comes from African governments and from the international community including not only the World Bank and the UN's FAO but also the timber importing countries and concerned non-governmental organizations. Bodies representing both producers and consumers such as the African Timber Organization (ATO) and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) have now come round to giving priority to environmental concerns. They have responded in part to the pressures from some 28 international groups such as the Worldwide Fund for Nature and the Friends of the Earth, all part of a larger world rain forest movement, one of whose achievements was the presentation of a petition, supported by three million signatures, to the UN General Assembly in September 1989.<sup>11</sup> In 1991 the French President called for a halt to the destruction of the tropical forests at the tenth World Forest Conference in Paris.

The internationally-sponsored TFAP, regarded at first as a major contribution to saving the tropical forests and adopted by many countries, has since been criticized.<sup>12</sup> As a result its authors have re-examined its objectives and strategies. The plan placed too much emphasis on timber production and not enough on conservation, and forest dwellers were not involved in the projects emanating from the plan. New approaches are more comprehensive and production and conservation practices are better integrated, as current strategies show (see below). A World Bank team has been working, too, on an approach that begins with assessing the level of exploitation that the forest in each country can support and then determining the level of production that can be safely applied. The rain forest movement goes even further and wants all commercial logging of natural forests banned. Some developed countries have already ceased the importation of tropical timber and wood products from indigenous forests, and in mid-1991 the World Bank indicated that its funding for the commercial logging of primary rain forests would end. Instead, it wants to confine logging to existing areas of plantation or secondary forest.<sup>13</sup>

## Côte d'Ivoire

Côte d'Ivoire is Africa's classic example of how exploitive logging and the unorganized expansion of the agricultural frontier promoted the country's short-term economic advancement – its "economic miracle" of the 1960s and 1970s – but has threatened its longer-term ecological and economic stability. Côte d'Ivoire's 14–16 million hectares of natural rain forest at the beginning of the century has been reduced to some 2.0 million hectares today, of which no more than one million is considered economically exploitable.<sup>14</sup>

In the fifteen years after World War II the export of timber, virtually all in the form of unprocessed logs, increased tenfold and by a further fivefold to 1973. The value of timber exports



**Figure 1** The natural extent of tropical rain forests prior to land clearing. (After L A Lewis and L Berry)

even surpassed that of coffee in 1969 and 1972.<sup>15</sup> The World Resources Institute reported that between 1965 and 1972 agreements assigned more than two-thirds of all productive forests to concessionaires and that, when timber contractors had virtually exhausted the more valuable species, shifting cultivators moved in to clear the depleted forests.<sup>16</sup>

Nor did a reforestation rate of 3 000 hectares per year by Sodefor, the state-run forestry development corporation, between 1966 and 1982 have much effect when deforestation was proceeding at 300 000 hectares per year. Moreover, deforestation and fires on the northern margin of the rain forest have encouraged the southward advance of the dry forest and savanna zone. "It's not chance", states one environmentalist, "that the harmattan (the hot wind off the Sahara desert) is felt so severely even in Abidjan; the forest which used to serve as a protective shield is disappearing."<sup>17</sup>

The high rate of felling continued in the 1970s, exports reaching 3.8 million cubic metres (m<sup>3</sup>) in 1980 when Côte d'Ivoire was Africa's chief exporter of timber. But in the face of an alarming depletion these volumes could not be sustained and by 1988 exports had fallen to 750 000 m<sup>3</sup>. Significantly, however, the decline was accounted for by log exports. Processed wood, with its value-added advantage, increased from 380 000 m<sup>3</sup> to 450 000 m<sup>3</sup> over the eight-year period. Adding to the fall in exports was a slump in overseas markets for most tropical woods. Ironically, the

few species for which there was a demand were unobtainable owing to the degradation of the country's primary forest resources.<sup>18</sup>

The Ivorian government became concerned with the situation in 1972 when it attempted to restrict the amount of timber that could be felled, but its efforts were ineffective and timber use greatly increased. In the 1980s, with World Bank and Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) assistance, the strategy adopted was in line with the TFAP, namely, to offset timber losses by establishing hardwood plantations on previously logged areas and maintaining existing ones on the assumption that these could produce a much greater rate of timber growth than natural forests.<sup>19</sup>

The recent international concern for a more conservation-oriented approach saw Côte d'Ivoire launch 1988 as the Year of the Forest.<sup>20</sup> Again with World Bank and CDC support, a 30-year project now aims at arresting the further depletion of natural forest, at restoring much of it and at ensuring the long-term contribution of the forest sector to the economy. Previous approaches were considered too narrow. It is now necessary not only to conserve the forest but also to stabilize and intensify agriculture (since less land will be available for agriculture) and to involve the local populace itself in forest management. The processing industry, too, is to be encouraged and made more efficient. Although Ivorians own two-thirds of the country's forest

enterprises, commercial production is principally in the hands of large, mainly foreign, firms which not only process timber locally but also have their own marketing and export services.<sup>21</sup>

The first phase of the project, costing \$147,8 million, includes measures to improve the surveillance of 1,5 million hectares of forest, of which 700 000 hectares will be managed by private companies under longer-term contracts.<sup>22</sup> Previously, short-term contracts had encouraged irresponsibly high rates of timber extraction with no concern for long-term conservation. A detailed land use and agricultural development plan will also be implemented for the buffer zones immediately around protected forest areas. Finance will be provided for the upkeep of some 55 000 hectares of industrial plantations and the establishment of 9 000 hectares of new ones, all aimed at restoring the production of timber from natural forests managed on a sustainable basis and from plantations to the 1981-1983 level of 4 million m<sup>3</sup> per year. Maintenance of the country's national parks, covering 600 000 hectares, will also be taken care of. The capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Waters and Forests (Minagref) and Sodefor will be strengthened and forestry research and training stepped up. Once its finances improve in an economic climate not dominated as now by slack cocoa, coffee and timber demand, the government has indicated that a ban or partial ban on the export of uncut timber will be considered.<sup>23</sup>

## Ghana

Ghana's rain forests, down to 2 million hectares from 8,2 million in 1900, have been "seriously depleted" despite government attempts to regulate deforestation and to control concessionaries.<sup>24</sup> Development of the timber industry was substantial in the 1960s and the value of timber shipped doubled between 1966 and 1972, making it the country's second largest export commodity. In 1972 the government made an effort to ban the export of certain species unless in processed form and also lowered taxes, export duty and transport costs on secondary species so as to encourage their use.<sup>25</sup>

For a variety of reasons Ghana entered a period of economic decline in the late 1960s and the 1970s. Its economy was mismanaged and its currency was seriously over-valued resulting in real export earnings falling by half between 1970 and 1982.<sup>26</sup> Timber exports were among those affected, falling from 1,3 million m<sup>3</sup> to only 111 000 m<sup>3</sup> over that time.

In 1983, in an effort to extricate itself from this damaging situation, the government adopted an economic recovery programme sponsored by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It involved a massive devaluation of the currency and a substantial drive to improve foreign exchange earnings through greater commodity exports, especially cocoa, minerals and timber. As part of the programme the World Bank, United Kingdom and other sources assisted the timber industry to raise the export of logs and processed wood to earlier levels and a Timber Export Development Board was established. In the two years after 1985 the number of independent logging companies increased from 90 to over 300 and were removing about 90 per cent of the commercial timber from their concessions. As a result, between 1982 and 1987, production more

than doubled to 1,24 million m<sup>3</sup>, timber exports nearly quadrupled to 413 000 m<sup>3</sup>, their value increasing six-fold to \$100 million in 1988.<sup>27</sup>

Critics claim, however, that it was mainly raw logs that were exported. This contrasted with the government's stated aim of increasing processed exports of sawn timber, plywood, veneer and furniture. It was further alleged that only two-thirds of export earnings accrued to the government, the remainder being lost through incompetence and corruption in official and private organizations. Hard questions, the critics said, had to be asked "about why timber was ever made a key sector (alongside gold) in the doctrine of export-led recovery" in view of the manner in which this natural and national resource was being exploited.<sup>28</sup>

This excessive cutting down of its forests in the interests of export expansion has since caused the government to turn to the discouragement of raw log exports and to place the emphasis on timber processing instead. In 1989 it banned the export of 18 species of logs. All raw log exports are to cease by 1992 and those of all sawn timber by 1994.<sup>29</sup> The World Bank and other international development agencies are also assisting the government to improve the capabilities of the Forestry Department and the management of forests outside the reserves, among other actions.

As if to give credence to its new strategy, Ghana hosted the tropical hardwood seminar held in Accra in March 1990, organized by its Timber Export Development Board and the ITTO.<sup>30</sup> It was stressed that wood production, on the one hand, and protective forestry, on the other, must be given balanced treatment in the nation's social, economic and land use planning. It remains to be seen, comments the Economist Intelligence Unit, whether the government will be able to keep to its intention to limit unprocessed timber exports in view of the industry's capacity to earn foreign exchange.

## Liberia

Liberia's rain forests, now covering 3 to 4 million hectares, have suffered severely over the years at the hands of shifting cultivators and loggers. The former alone have been responsible for clearing about one-half of the country's forested areas. The fact that regeneration from farmland to secondary high forest takes about 100 to 130 years is an indication of how severe the impact is.<sup>31</sup>

Commercial exploitation of the rain forest began in earnest in about 1960, a boom in output being experienced between 1967 and 1973 when exports increased from 18 000 m<sup>3</sup> to 447 000 m<sup>3</sup>. Foreign concessions were easily obtained during these years and, according to Hasselman, "timber concessionaires, after having taken out the choice trees of the tropical rainforest, did nothing for 15 years but leave behind a devastated landscape".<sup>32</sup> After a slump in the 1970s exports rose to a massive 1,19 million m<sup>3</sup> in 1989.<sup>33</sup> Timber exports accounted for 7,5 per cent of the value of all exports after iron ore (49 per cent) and rubber (25 per cent).

Virtually all timber exports are raw logs and, despite government efforts, very little progress has been made towards establishing a viable processing industry. The main concern is a large saw and plywood mill near the port of Greenville. It was opened in the mid-1970s but it operates at limited capacity even at the best of times. A possible pulp mill was

discussed with a Romanian consortium also in the 1970s but nothing eventuated.

Forty years ago the government of the time was aware of the need to protect the country's forest resources. It passed a Forest Conservation Act in 1953 and established the first of its national forests, now covering 1,7 million hectares, in 1959. But so vast is the forested area and so limited the manpower that the enforcement of control measures was virtually impossible. A Forestry Development Authority was established in 1974 and, according to Mallett, although it has been practising modern methods of forest conservation for the past ten years, its work has been seriously disrupted, if not brought to a standstill, by the outbreak of civil war in early 1990 and the appalling damage to the Liberian economy.<sup>34</sup>

## Nigeria

Nigeria's southern forested belt, coinciding with the heavily populated Ibo, Ibibio and Yoruba regions, originally covered some 7,2 million hectares or a little less than 8 per cent of the country's area. Very little of the primary rain forest remains, about one million hectares, and is now confined to a few forest reserves. The rest is degraded secondary forest, much of it represented by the widespread oil palm.<sup>35</sup> Nigeria's timber resources, both for export and for domestic use, have fallen severely in recent years as a result of indiscriminate and selective felling and the clearance of the forest for food and tree crop production.<sup>36</sup> In the early 1970s timber exports accounted for 3 per cent of non-oil exports but these have all but ceased. The depletion of timber stocks for local use is serious and the need is urgent for further reforestation and timber conservation.<sup>37</sup>

## Conclusion

If the rain forest of West Africa is in retreat – “already well along the path to destruction” say Lewis and Berry – can the process be halted and even reversed, and will the present strategies which are being adopted be sufficient?<sup>38</sup> The “key question”, says Melly, is whether a system of sustainable wood production exists? Can cutting timber from a stable reserve of forest be made similar to harvesting fruit from an orchard which stays in place? “In ecological terms, there seems little doubt that it is possible to harvest the rain forest for timber without reducing its present extent.”<sup>39</sup> This view is supported by Lewis and Berry who claim that “the destruction of the rainforest is not inevitable. It could be prevented if assistance were provided to help develop strategies in which harvesting and replanting were in phase with each other so as to allow timber to provide a continuous source of wealth for nations with rainforest areas”. The authors of the TFAP confirm that “the prognosis for tropical forests is indeed grim if action is not taken soon”; but they believe that there is still “a strong basis of hope. Deforestation can be arrested and ultimately reversed”. They point to successful solutions to deforestation and land misuse that have been demonstrated in Queensland, Australia, but “these efforts have been isolated and on far too small a scale to address the problem”.<sup>40</sup>

Are current strategies, therefore, adequate both to halt the rate of deforestation and to achieve acceptable rates of reforestation? Lewis and Berry say that if natural forests are

“to be utilized as a long-term resource, a set of new strategies must evolve”.<sup>41</sup> A “drastic rethink” of forest policy is necessary, insists Melly. But he sees little sign that foreign governments have even begun to appreciate what is entailed in shifting their forestry strategies to an environmentally sustainable approach and, adds Harrison, the science of forest management in Africa is still in its infancy.<sup>42</sup> Melly questions, too, whether present policies are practicable in poor African countries faced by “enormous social pressures, and a shortage of land, staff and money to police the forest zones and to check on loggers and local people”.<sup>43</sup>

Wherever the solution lies, the ITTO meeting in Accra in March 1990 stressed that Africa could not expect greater foreign investment to develop its forest-based industries unless one could see emerging a stronger political commitment to safeguarding its forests.<sup>44</sup> The World Bank's decision, mentioned earlier, to halt the funding of commercial logging projects worldwide might help to boost that commitment. And there is another aspect: whereas European Community members imported 2,7 million m<sup>3</sup> of logs and only 700 000 m<sup>3</sup> of sawn timber from Africa in 1988, the Far East countries have already banned the export of logs or are increasingly curtailing it. The International Tropical Timber Council urged African countries to phase out log exports and to go for more downstream activity in machined timber, furniture components and other value-added possibilities. In this way timber resources can be more efficiently used and conserved, a greater share of income from wood exports can be retained, and technical and management resources and employment can be increased.

Radulovich has inserted an interesting and no doubt contentious issue into the conservation debate indicating that the complexities of the problem are immense and its perception and relevance differs between developed and developing countries.<sup>45</sup> He claims, with respect to global warming and the greenhouse effect, that deforestation contributes only a minimal increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) compared with that by the combustion of fossil fuels (petroleum, gas and coal) in developed countries. He believes that rather than conservationists turning their attention to the problem of deforestation in tropical countries, they should be giving priority to the problems of poverty and malnutrition. Large forested areas in these countries should be developed into productive agricultural schemes.

He cites the example of the Cerrado region of Brazil where several million hectares have been put into production, where soya bean yields nearly equal those of the United States and where, with irrigation, more than two crops per year can be reaped. Moreover, regarding the sustainability of agriculture in the tropics, centuries of terraced rice production in Asia and consecutive sugar-cane cropping in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere show that even steep land and acid-infertile soils can be productive indefinitely. The squandering of natural resources, obviously, is criminal, says Radulovich, but so too is the deprivation suffered by people in developing countries whose problems cannot be solved by the better management of their forests. Deforestation cannot be considered in isolation, ignoring the other realities of life in the Third World.

Clearly relevant to these views is the new science of agroforestry, the collective name for land-use systems involving trees combined with crops and/or animals. It aims to

protect the environment and to replace shifting cultivation, now no longer efficient or rational in the African context but upon which the livelihood of many people still depend. In essence, agroforestry emphasizes the multipurpose nature of trees as sources of food, fodder, fuelwood and small timber and as conservers of soil and improvers of soil fertility. In forestry, by contrast, trees tend to be perceived as monopurpose plants.<sup>46</sup>

Harrison contends that agroforestry – trees planted on a vast scale on farmland (or pasture) and fully integrated with crop and livestock production – “offers by far the speediest road to reforesting Africa” and “arguably the single most important discipline for the future of sustainable development in Africa”.<sup>47</sup> However, having come of age only in the 1980s, “the potential of agroforestry remains vastly under-exploited” and its successful application to West Africa’s deforestation problems has clearly still a long way to go.<sup>48</sup> The World Bank and other development agencies, such as the FAO, are supporting on-going agroforestry research projects – a leader in this field being the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture at Ibadan, Nigeria – and ways of assisting governments in implementing agroforestry programmes including the need to achieve a high level of local participation and a strong political commitment to long-term solutions. Much of the recent support for forestry programmes in the countries dealt with in this article incorporate agroforestry approaches in their reforestation and conservation schemes.

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# Sydney Kumalo (1935 – 1988)

## A tribute

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It was with a sense of great loss that the South African art community (some two years or more ago, now) learnt of the death of one of its greatest and most respected contemporary artists, sculptor Sydney Alex Kumalo, who died after a short illness on 11 December 1988.

Sydney Kumalo was born in Johannesburg in 1935 and grew up in an urbanized African (Zulu) family and environment. He was educated at Madibane High School, Diepkloof, Soweto. His basic art training he received at the now famous Polly Street Art Centre<sup>1</sup> in Johannesburg, to which he first went in 1952. He was guided and greatly encouraged by Cecil Skotnes during the five years that followed. Both Cecil Skotnes and the African art dealer and collector, Egon Guenther, introduced Kumalo to traditional and classic African sculpture, for which the artist had an immediate and intimate feeling – and with which he found himself at once in tune. Kumalo then studied with the well-known South African sculptor Edoardo Villa for two years in 1958 and 1959. In 1960 he was appointed instructor at the Polly Street Art Centre, moving with the Art Centre from Polly Street to the Jubilee Social Centre in Soweto in the same year. When Skotnes resigned in 1964 Kumalo was appointed to the senior position. This he held for four years until 1968 when he resigned to concentrate fully on his own art.

During 1967 Kumalo visited the USA and Europe as a guest of the United States/South African Leadership Exchange Programme (USSALEP). He again visited Europe in 1979 and again the USA in 1985. Kumalo was married, and for the greater part of his career resided with his family on the Witwatersrand in Mofolo North.

Kumalo was held in high esteem by his fellow artists and the art community of South Africa. His fame also spread beyond the borders of his own country. He was in many ways the doyen of South African black art. As such he was an important influence, especially on younger black sculptors, by whom he is greatly revered. Through his teaching at the Polly Street Art Centre and later at the Jubilee Centre, as well as through his personal example of integrity, dedication and ability, he inspired and guided students such as Ezrom Legae, Leonard Matsoso and Louis Maqhubela who in their own right became outstanding artists.

Traditionally, tribal artists in South Africa have always



Sydney Kumalo with his bronze sculpture called *Xhosa Girl* photographed in 1977  
(South African Bureau of Information, Pretoria)

been wood carvers. This is also true of those early South African black sculptors Ernest Mancoba (b. 1910), for example, or Job Kekana (b. 1916), who first worked under the influence and tutelage of white or European patrons, and thus Western art orientations.<sup>2</sup> Most of the known work



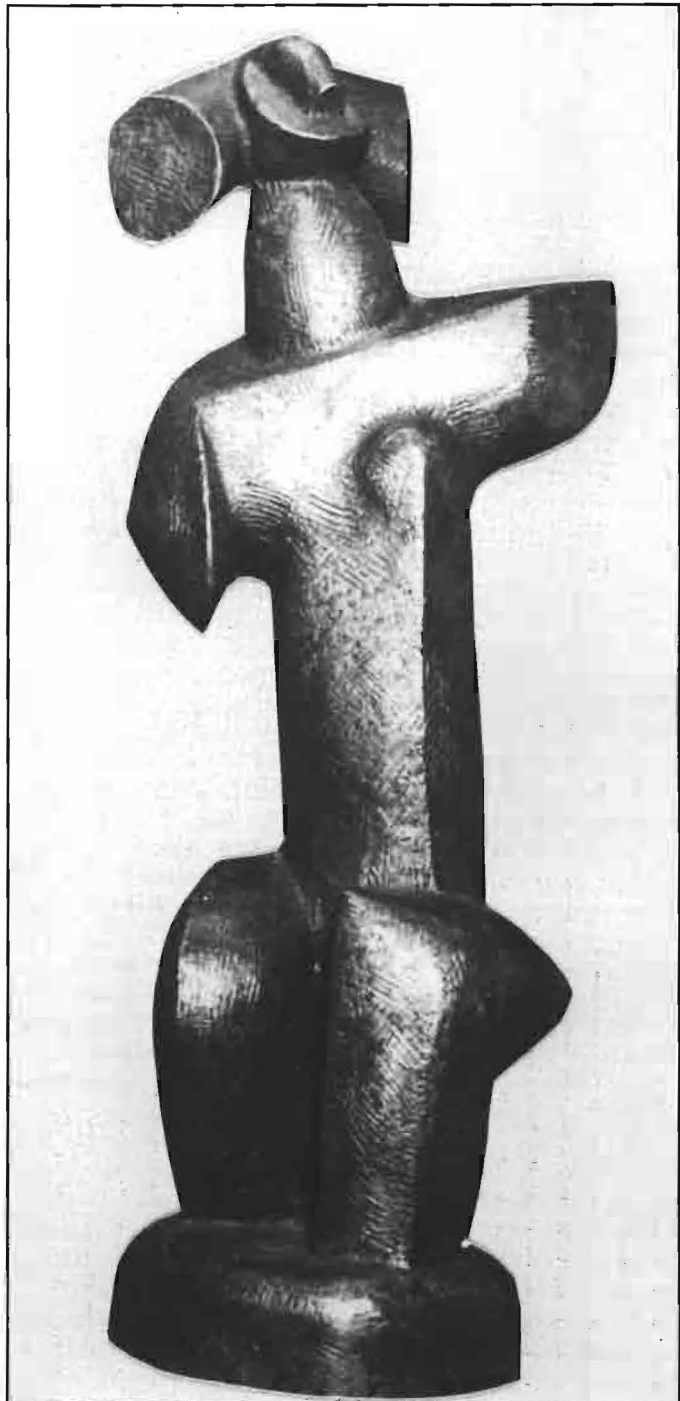
*Two Bulls*. Bronze. H. 116,5 cm. 1975  
(De Beers Centenary Art Gallery, University of Fort Hare)

produced by these early black sculptors was invariably closely related to the church and religious environment where it originated. There are, however, indications that these early sculptors also attempted to bring an African essence and African feeling into their work. Even today the majority of South African black sculptors carve in wood. Two of the notable exceptions are Sydney Kumalo and Ezrom Legae, both whom had an urban upbringing in the black townships of Johannesburg. These two artists developed as modellers, not carvers. Rankin<sup>3</sup> attributes this (*inter alia*) to the fact that natural materials such as wood were not readily available in the city, whereas brick clay was to be had for the asking. In those early years of its existence the Polly Street Art Centre, where Kumalo and Legae trained, had very limited financial and material resources; students had to make do with what was available.

As modeller, Kumalo's medium was terra cotta. His terra cotta models were then cast in bronze. Particular and detailed attention was always given to the finish of both the model and the cast. The latter was often treated for a darker patina. Rankin<sup>4</sup> particularly points out that, although conceived by a

modeller, Kumalo's work showed certain conventions, such as the texturing of the terra cotta or bronze, suggestive at times of a nostalgia for the carving techniques traditional in African society.

Kumalo's art is first and foremost based on aesthetic considerations. In particular he evolved a type of abstraction from representation that resulted in an authentic figurative expressionism, a fundamental quality of 20th century South African black sculpture. In many respects Kumalo was thus first to create a genuine contemporary or modern indigenous



*Upright Figure*. Bronze. H. 67 cm. 1974  
(De Beers Centenary Art Gallery, University of Fort Hare)



South African sculpture. This he attained through his understanding of classic African art and the way in which he conceptually absorbed this understanding. And blended and integrated this understanding with both his own personal consciousness and creativity and the values of Western art he had assimilated. Through this cross-fertilization he made a contribution of great significance, revealing himself as an accomplished professional of great strength and ability.

Kumalo was an intense observer of life, and observed it with great knowledge and insight. His art reveals a sincere



Zulu Chief. Bronze. H. 66,5 cm. 1963  
(South African National Gallery, Cape Town)



Froglike Figure. Bronze. H. 70 cm. 1977. Private collection  
(South African Bureau of Information, Pretoria)

and sensitive personal vision and attunement with life. Here is ample evidence of a strong and independent imagination and an ability to render spiritual and intellectual qualities and concepts by transforming them to pure aesthetic form. Put plainly, Kumalo was a fine sculptor, aware of what was aesthetically appropriate to what he wished to express.

In considering Kumalo's *oeuvre* as a whole it is clear that man was central to and the dominant theme of his art. Kumalo found the human form a most appropriate vehicle for artistic expression. Through posture, gestures, rhythm, in short through pattern of body configuration, Kumalo's sculptures express inner and spiritual feelings. These are always rendered in terms of sound aesthetics and in a controlled manner, lending to his works a dignity, spirituality and universal, timeless validity reminiscent of the best of ancient and classic African art.

Two themes especially preoccupied Kumalo, the human form and the beast, the latter often rendered in anthropomorphic form. In African culture (especially art, ritual and mythology), man and beast may assume a variety of roles according to the demands of circumstance and so be ascribed different imagery and symbolic values. It is clear from Kumalo's work that he understood this, and that man and beast were for him not only related, but interpenetrant. Kumalo gave both man and beast form and shape in a very earthy-realistic manner, again reminiscent of ancient Africa.

In her excellent assessment of Kumalo's sculpture, Watter<sup>5</sup> points out that the artist's work is largely self-explanatory and the impact immediate. She found his success to lie in his capacity to fuse elements of two different styles in a new synthesis – forms evolved from traditional African sculpture yet amalgamated with the crystallized gestures developed from medieval European sculpture by the Expressionists, notably Ernst Barlach, Jacob Epstein and Henri Laurens. Watter believes that Kumalo added dynamic rhythms which broke through the static tribal integument,

reaching out to sophisticated notions derived from urban consciousness. She goes on to state that Kumalo appeared to stand at the interstices of two cultures. Watter also points out that Kumalo gave particular attention in his sculpture to the three-dimensional quality of planes and contours in space to which his terra cotta medium was very suited, and that once pieces were dry he worked further on them until the most tenuous spatial tensions were reached between their subtle asymmetric forms.

In many of Kumalo's pieces, although executed in some medium other than wood, one feels the natural restrictions imposed by the basic tree trunk form. Because of this, such pieces often evoke the feeling of actually being sculptured in wood. The natural restrictions of the tree trunk form are of course of fundamental importance in traditional and classic African sculpture. In Kumalo's work one finds it in the cylindrical form of the human figure; its solidity of mass; the absence, generally, of any significant outward movement from the central axis of the piece; the sturdiness and shortness of limbs arising from the fact that, in wood, these can easily become detached from the rest of the sculpture.

Together with the above, Kumalo, more than any other South African black sculptor, retained much of the canon, conventions and formal aesthetic qualities of classic African sculpture. Thus, for example, he made use of the same quality of distortion in his elongated torsos; his work contains the same monumentality and simplicity of form; there is the same, often solidified, quality of movement; in a generalized way, the faces of his sculptures are in many respects similar to an African mask; there is also the same kind of balance of subordinate masses in his sculpture, for example between left and right, front and back; there is on the whole the same absence of outward movement from the central axis of his composition, for example in his limbs; there is the same use of compositional elements found in certain classic African sculptures, such as the joining of the arms to the rest of the body; there is the same quality of bare essentials; and often there is the same feeling of restraint and control, and of command of the creative process.

These above remarks do not imply that Kumalo's sculptures are copies, or a kind of reproduction, of classic African sculpture. Far from it. As we have indicated, Kumalo developed a very personal and ingenious style, using his own renderings and innovations. He did, however, reflect a very intimate sense and understanding of classic African sculpture and its underlying principles, characteristics and values. He undoubtedly assimilated it and to a large extent innovated upon it. His sculpture is consequently permeated with the message that aesthetically he was of Africa. This heightened the excellence of his work and the way in which he successfully integrated past and present, the manifestations of contemporary 20th century art with those of ancient African art.

Kumalo was also a very able draughtsman; and he was originally a water-colourist. In 1958 he executed his first public commission for the Roman Catholic Church in Kroonstad, Orange Free State, when he painted, in tempera, a large ceiling measuring 36,57 x 3,65 meters. A commission for a Church in Orlando also consisted of a ceiling. Many of his early drawings were clearly blueprints for sculpture. Later, however, he devoted himself more to pictorial work in colour. A strong affinity with his sculpture, nevertheless, remained. In 1973 he introduced oil sketches into his work



*Philosophers*. Charcoal and Conte. 55 x 51 cm. 1976

(De Beers Centenary Art Gallery, University of Fort Hare)

and in 1977 produced very good work in mixed media. Having established himself as a fine sculptor he further enhanced his standing by also exhibiting pictorial work in Johannesburg in 1978 and 1979. His pictorial work, concerned mainly with the human figure, is often sculptural in appearance, with strong and powerful form. He made clever use of line and balance, as is to be expected of a sculptor.

We will list here only the more important exhibitions at which Kumalo's work was exhibited. Kumalo participated in a number of group shows between 1958 and 1960 and held his first one-man exhibition in 1962. This was under the aegis of Egon Guenther, as were his second and third one-man exhibitions in 1966 and 1967. In 1963 and 1964 he exhibited with the Amadlozi Group in Rome, Venice, Florence and Milan. He was a founder member of this group. His work was selected for the African Painters and Sculptors from Johannesburg Exhibition held at the Piccadilly Gallery, London, in 1965. He represented South Africa at the 1966 Venice Biennale and at the Contemporary African Art Exhibition at the Camden Arts Centre, London, in 1969. In 1967 he participated in the Sao Paulo Biennale. In 1971 and in 1981 he participated in the Republic Festival Art Exhibitions held respectively in Cape Town and Durban. His work was included in the important Black Art Today Exhibition in Soweto in 1981, sponsored by the Standard Bank. His work was also included in an exhibition of South African art that took place at the National Gallery, Gabarone, in Botswana. In 1985 he again joined the Amadlozi Group in a New York exhibition of their work. Kumalo participated in the Cape Town Triennial in 1985 and in the Alliance Française sponsored exhibition Historical Perspectives of Black Art in South Africa in 1986. One of the last important exhibitions in which he took part was the Vita Art Now Exhibition held at the Johannesburg Art Gallery in 1988.

Kumalo received many honours and awards during his successful career. In 1960 he won an award in the Artists of Fame and Promise Exhibition; in 1963, the Phillip Frame



*Friends*. Oil on paper. 1976. Private collection  
(South African Bureau of Information, Pretoria)

award at the Art South Africa Today Exhibition; in 1967, a bronze medal from the Transvaal Academy, and a travel bursary to the USA and Europe as a guest of USSALEP; and in 1981, first prize at a South African Race Relations exhibition in Durban.

Kumalo received a number of public commissions. These included: Stations of the Cross, Kroonstad Catholic Church, Orange Free State (1958); Stations of the Cross for a church in Orlando, Soweto (1959-1960); a sculpture entitled "Praying Woman" at the State Pavilion, Milner Park, Johannesburg (1960); a sculpture entitled "Eagle" for a Hotel in Kitwe, Zambia (1960); a sculpture entitled "The Blessing" at the Civic Centre in Cape Town (1980); a commission for Premier Holdings Johannesburg (1986) and for the Napac Playhouse in Durban (1987).

Kumalo's work is to be found in many private and public collections in South Africa and abroad, including the South African National Gallery (Cape Town), Johannesburg Art Gallery, Pretoria Art Museum, Durban Art Gallery, William Humphreys Art Gallery (Kimberley) and Rembrandt van Rijn Art Foundation (Stellenbosch); also in the Sanlam and Sasol art collections, and a number of university collections including those of the University of Fort Hare, the University of the Witwatersrand and the University of South Africa.

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# The role of the missions in art education in South Africa

*Elizabeth Rankin, Professor of Art History at the University of the Witwatersrand, and Dr Elza Miles analyse the important role played by the missions in educating and training South African artists.*

The increasing attention being paid to the contribution of black artists to art history in South Africa,<sup>1</sup> raises questions about the educational opportunities available to them, particularly prior to the 1970s – which saw the establishment of the first Department of Fine Arts at a black university<sup>2</sup> and a burgeoning number of urban art centres. Attention has rightly been focused on the importance of the art training offered at the Polly Street Recreation Centre in Johannesburg under Cecil Skotnes from the 1950s and at the Evangelical Lutheran Art and Craft Centre at Rorke's Drift in Natal from the 1960s, but training outside these centres for the fine arts has been little explored. It has perhaps been tacitly assumed that there were no other possibilities, and that early black artists who did not enjoy the benefits of Polly Street or Rorke's Drift must have been entirely self-taught, and, by implication, naïve in their production and their knowledge of art practices. The quality of the work of such artists as Ernest Mancoba (b 1904) and Gerard Sekoto (b 1913) demonstrates that any such assumptions are simplistic, and suggests that opportunities for a visual education of some kind must have been available, and that research in this area could prove enlightening. Of the many directions such research could take, it is the intention of this article to draw attention only to one – education in mission schools, which provided a starting point for the art careers of Mancoba and Sekoto, as for many others.

A considerable amount of enquiry has been devoted to mission schools in general, because they were the chief source of education for blacks, administered by the provinces from the time of Union, until the inauguration of the Department of Bantu Education in the 1950s and the subsequent gradual demise of mission initiative in education. It would seem, however, that relatively little attention has been given to the contribution of mission schools to the arts. Yet it has proved to be such a rich field that it is not possible within the confines of a short article to do more than outline the diversity of directions in the arts initiated by the missions, and suggest the potential of the area for further research.



Job Kekana: *Bishop's Staff*, carved with the seven sacraments, following a design by Rev Edward Paterson, 1930s.  
(Archive of the Church of the Province, University of the Witwatersrand.)

The Diocesan Teachers Training College at the Anglican mission of Grace Dieu,<sup>3</sup> founded in 1906 twenty-eight kilometres from Pietersburg, was an enclave of Christian colonial culture. The founder of the mission, Father John Latimer Fuller of the Community of the Resurrection,<sup>4</sup> and Father Woodfield, who headed the college for nearly two decades, both held MA degrees from Cambridge University.<sup>5</sup> Taking into account that the college buildings, although unpretentious, were designed by the well-known British architect Herbert Baker in 1914,<sup>6</sup> and that the belfry was embellished with a ceramic panel in the style of Della Robbia,<sup>7</sup> it is not surprising that artistic expression enjoyed priority there.

The college was fortunate in having the advice of people well-equipped in the arts – Grace Anderson, who was an Associate of the Royal College of Art, and the Reverend Edward Paterson, who had trained at London’s Central School of Arts and Crafts.<sup>8</sup> They not only advised the college in matters of art, but tangibly set a standard for good design. Paterson designed the memorial plaque for the bell-tower, for example, and Anderson the college badge.

In 1924 or 1925, Father Paterson explored the possibilities of wood carving on discarded wood from the carpentry workshop at Grace Dieu, which provided the only industrial course for Africans in the Transvaal at the time. What was started as an experiment and hobby with cheap penknives from the Pietersburg Dee Bee Bazaars was enthusiastically carried on by Sister Pauline CR. Under her guidance, though she had no art training,<sup>9</sup> wood carving developed into a separate department in 1934.

Fine wood furnishings, religious and secular, decorated with carvings, as well as independent sculptures, evolved from Grace Dieu, and were widely sold in South Africa and abroad. They were produced by many carvers whose names were not documented, but are mentioned collectively as “third year Normal students” or “carpentry students”, and also by Job Kekana (b 1916), Eric Chimwaza, Dick Makambula, Thomas Makenna and Ernest Mancoba, whom we know from the mission records and the catalogues of the South African Academy exhibitions in the Selborne Hall, Johannesburg. Most of the carvings were in wood, particularly teak, but



Ernest Mancoba: *Madonna*, yellow wood, 1920. Convent of the Order of the Holy Paracletes, Manzini, Swaziland

(Photo: Elizabeth Rankin)



Bernard Gcwensa: *Madonna of Sorrows*, Red ivory, 120 cm high, Servite Congregation Community House, Chicago.

(Photograph kindly supplied by Dina Cormick.)

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Ernest Mancoba: *Faith*. The only record of this early carving is a photograph reproduced in *The Star*, 8 June 1936.  
(Photograph reproduced by courtesy of *The Star*.)



Gerard Sekoto: *Mine Boy*, pencil on paper, 24 x 15,4 cm, 1946. The Sowetan Collection of Sekoto Drawings, housed at the University of the Witwatersrand Art Galleries.  
(Photograph supplied by the University Art Galleries.)

occasionally students worked in other materials, as did Job Kekana<sup>10</sup> and Zachariahs Sekgaphane (b 1902) who carved in soapstone.

In executing carvings for church furniture and other ecclesiastical artefacts, the students were encouraged to follow the traditional presentation of church art. Students were directed to “copy the geometric patterns from photographs of work in our English cathedrals”.<sup>11</sup> And in a panel of the priest’s prayer-desk in Christchurch, Pietersburg, for example, the pose of the Annunciate Mary echoes that of the Madonna on the ceramic panel of the belfry at Grace Dieu. Students also often followed the designs of Anderson, as in a priest’s prayer-desk, Turfloop, depicting a kneeling boy and girl, and Paterson, as in his composition of the sacraments for a bishop’s staff, carved by Job Kekana, or the tea-table top described as illustrating “work in a Bantu village”, carved by Eric Chimwaza.<sup>12</sup> Yet students also carved their own designs. Ernest Mancoba’s African Madonna (1929) for the St Mary’s Chapel at Grace Dieu (now at the Convent of the OHP Sisters,

Manzini) and Sekgaphane’s bovine study in soapstone (1929) were both done independently. Neither Anderson nor Paterson showed any concern for traditional African carving in their proposals, although they Africanized Christian iconography, incorporating scenes of African rural life and African flora and fauna to illustrate biblical texts, as in the choir stalls of St Matthew’s, Seshego. Stylistically these were rendered in a figurative manner, which may account for the naturalistic approach shown in Mancoba’s carvings prior to 1936, such as his holy figures, for example *St Augustine of Canterbury* in Belvedere, Kent, in England, as well as the secular depiction of two black children, entitled *Future of Africa*.<sup>13</sup> But Mancoba was to develop a highly stylized rendering of forms thereafter, brought about by the influence of African sculpture. In 1935/6, the sculptor Lippy Lipshitz recommended that Mancoba read the book by Paul Guillaume and Thomas Munro, *Primitive negro sculpture* (1929). The impact of this exposure was most effective. It not only changed his style, but also led to his refusal to carry out a commission for the



Mission church of the Good Shepherd, Hlabisa, KwaZulu. Built circa 1959.

(Photo: Elizabeth Rankin)

Department of Native Affairs to produce narrative carvings of “natives and animals” in a tourist vein for the 1936 Empire Exhibition.<sup>14</sup> He thus turned his back on the figurative mode in which he had been trained at Grace Dieu, and laid the foundation for the more experimental art he was to produce when he lived and worked in Europe after 1938.

Grace Anderson took a keen interest in the educational programmes of Grace Dieu until her marriage in 1940 to the well-known artist Walter Battiss. She painted water-colours of the mission on her regular visits as examiner of drawing for the Transvaal Department of Education, and lectured there on her subject.<sup>15</sup> Though Gerard Sekoto, who trained as a primary school teacher at Grace Dieu, mentions how blackboard work stimulated him to resume his drawing,<sup>16</sup> one may presume that Anderson’s lectures at the college also played a role. Anderson wrote an article on lino-printing, giving many useful and practical hints, for the *Grace Dieu Bulletin* of December 1935, accompanied by a print of her own of the college chapel and vestry. It is interesting to speculate whether the germ-cell for Mancoba’s lino-printing many years later is to be found here.<sup>17</sup>

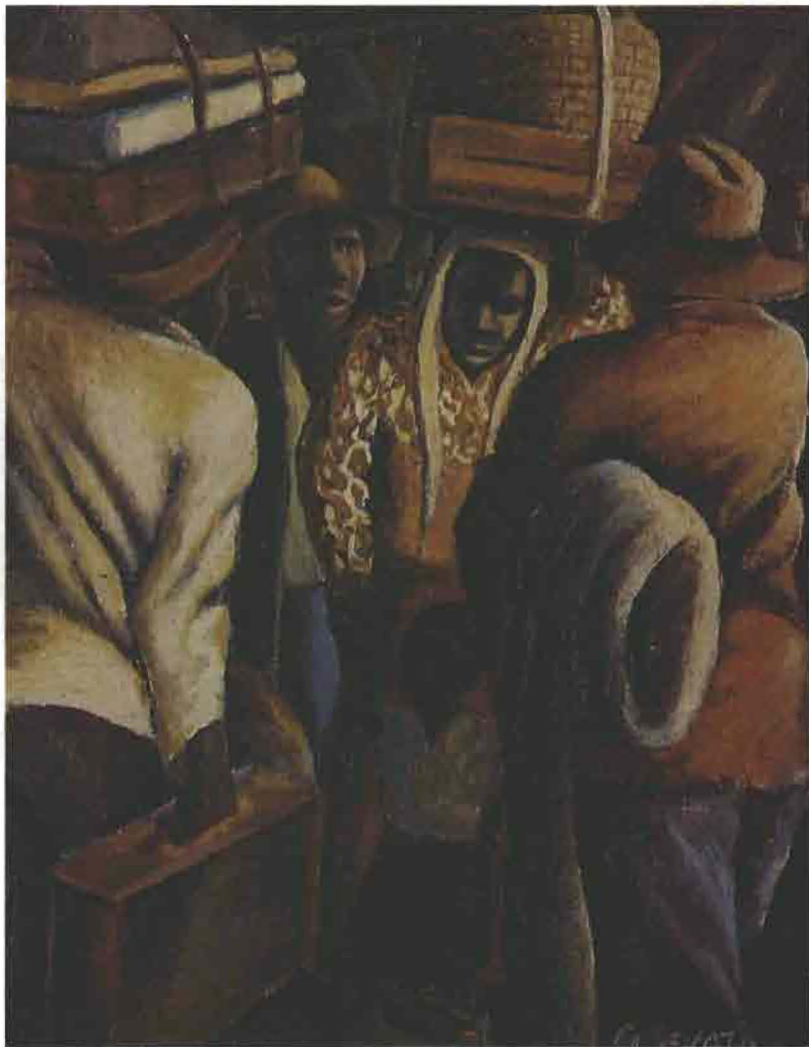
Members from other mission centres played a part at Grace Dieu from time to time, as had been the case with

Father Paterson, who was a frequent visitor as well as an honorary staff member from 1925-1926. Another visitor was Brother Roger Castle of St Peter’s Priory at Rosettenville, Johannesburg, who was occasionally invited to preach there. He conducted part-time art classes for black students interested in art in his room at the Priory.<sup>18</sup> Both Mancoba and Sekoto benefitted from his informal discussions,<sup>19</sup> and his help in marketing their work. But where Grace Dieu favoured figurative representation in ecclesiastical art, St Peter’s showed a preference for modernism. The English teacher, George Harwood, said he was “anxious to break away from the meretricious oleographs which do duty for biblical illustrations among the natives”,<sup>20</sup> and commissioned the British sculptor Leon Underwood to carve the *Black Madonna* for St Peter’s, which arrived in the country in 1936. Occasionally the chapel at St Peter’s served as an art gallery, where contemporary paintings, such as works by Preller and Sekoto, were hung.<sup>21</sup>

Grace Dieu was unique in its early establishment of a carving school, but many missions belonging to the Anglican or Catholic faith shared the same need for religious images and carved church furniture, and thus encouraged art production, at least for their own use, among those they were teaching.



**Above:** Mission church of the Good Shepherd, Hlabisa. Interior view of altar with crucifix by Bernard Gcwensa. (Photo: Elizabeth Rankin)



**Right:** Gerard Sekoto: *The Train Crowd*, oil on canvas, 45,4 x 35,5 cm, circa 1945. The South African Reserve Bank Art Collection. (Photograph supplied by the courtesy of the South African Reserve Bank.)

There are, for example, many cases in the area of Natal and KwaZulu, often associated with the efforts of an individual priest or nun, rather than a specific institution.

Father Edwin Kinch, a Servite missionary priest, came to Ingwavuma from America in 1947. He soon felt the need for holy images appropriate to his African flock, and commissioned a Dutch artist to produce a *Madonna* based on a photograph of a young Swazi woman in traditional dress. When he saw Bernard Gcwensa (1918-85) carving walking-sticks after he moved to Hlabisa in KwaZulu in 1953, he decided to ask him to carve a *Madonna* for the Legion of Mary, which was to be the first of his many religious images. Around that time, the artist Father Frans Claerhout visited the mission briefly, and encouraged Gcwensa to draw, and in the 1960s a German sculptor, Leopold Hoffner, spent some time working with him at Hlabisa.<sup>22</sup> Although Father Kinch was not trained in the arts himself, he was able to help the carvers with tools and materials because his own father had been a cabinet-maker. He also seems to have had a special ability to assist them to find their own visual language to illustrate the traditional iconography. Gcwensa's next work, for instance, a *Mother of sorrows* in red ivory, now in the Servite mother-house in Chicago, expresses grief

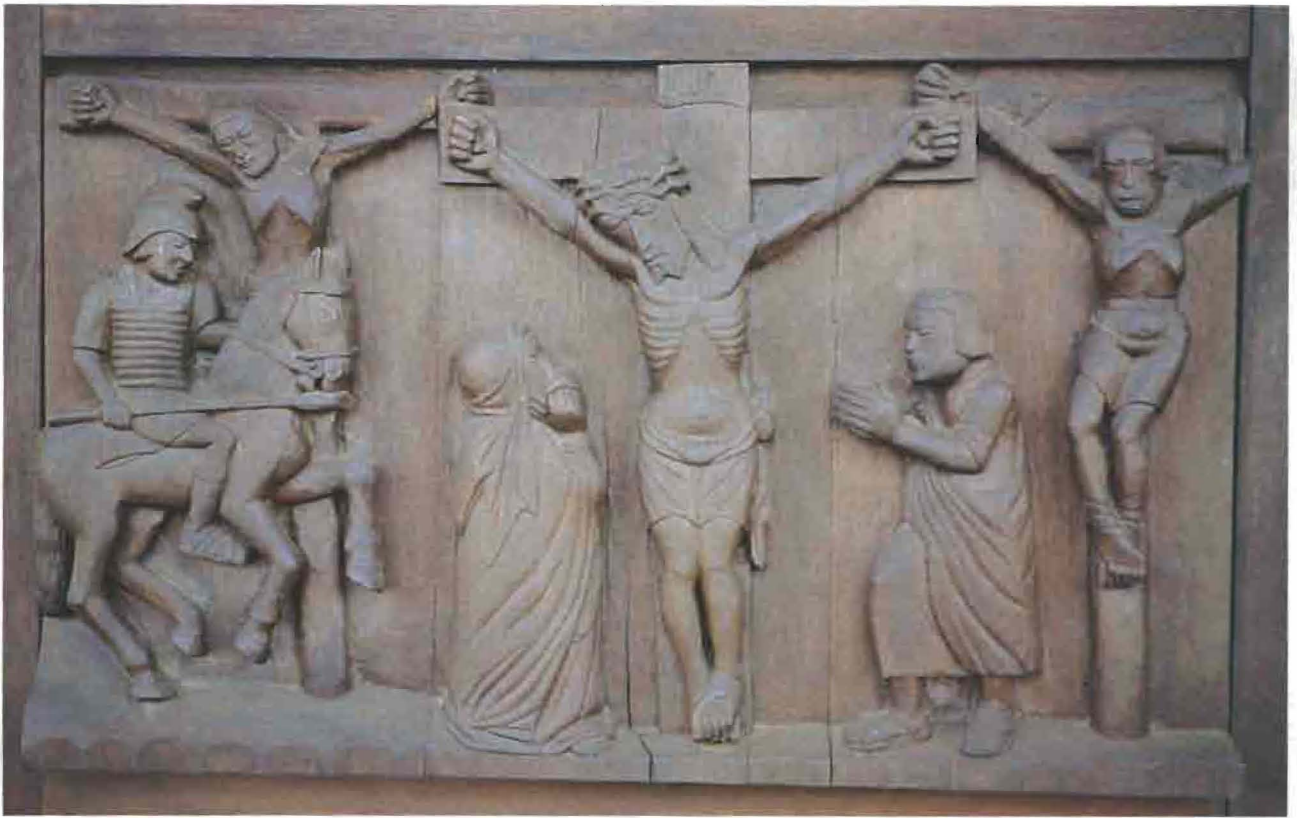
through the Zulu gesture of covering her mouth. Some of those who recognized Gcwensa's ability suggested that he should be sent abroad for training, but Jack Grossert, in his capacity as a school-inspector of arts and crafts, agreed that this would be of little advantage to a man with only a Standard Two education and little English.<sup>23</sup> Instead Father Kinch built a new chapel for the Mission of the Good Shepherd at Hlabisa in 1959 to afford Gcwensa the fullest opportunity to exercise his talents. Given the security of a steady salary as a manual worker, he was able to carve whenever other tasks were done, and his works there, ranging from the crucifix to fully carved doors, represent a remarkable ensemble of religious art.<sup>24</sup>

Gcwensa was also to play an important role as the mentor of Ruben Xulu (1942-85),<sup>25</sup> whose talent had been noticed at a very early age when he won prizes in art competitions at a nearby school. Because Xulu was deaf and could no longer be helped by his teacher, he was sent to the mission, where he worked under Gcwensa from 1961. Although at first he imitated the older man, he soon began producing works in his own right, and carved in stone as well as wood,<sup>26</sup> as at St Joseph's Church at Matshemhlophe.

Father Kinch points out that these artists worked with the

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Bernard Gcwensa: *Crucifixion*, panel from carved wooden doors at Hlabisa

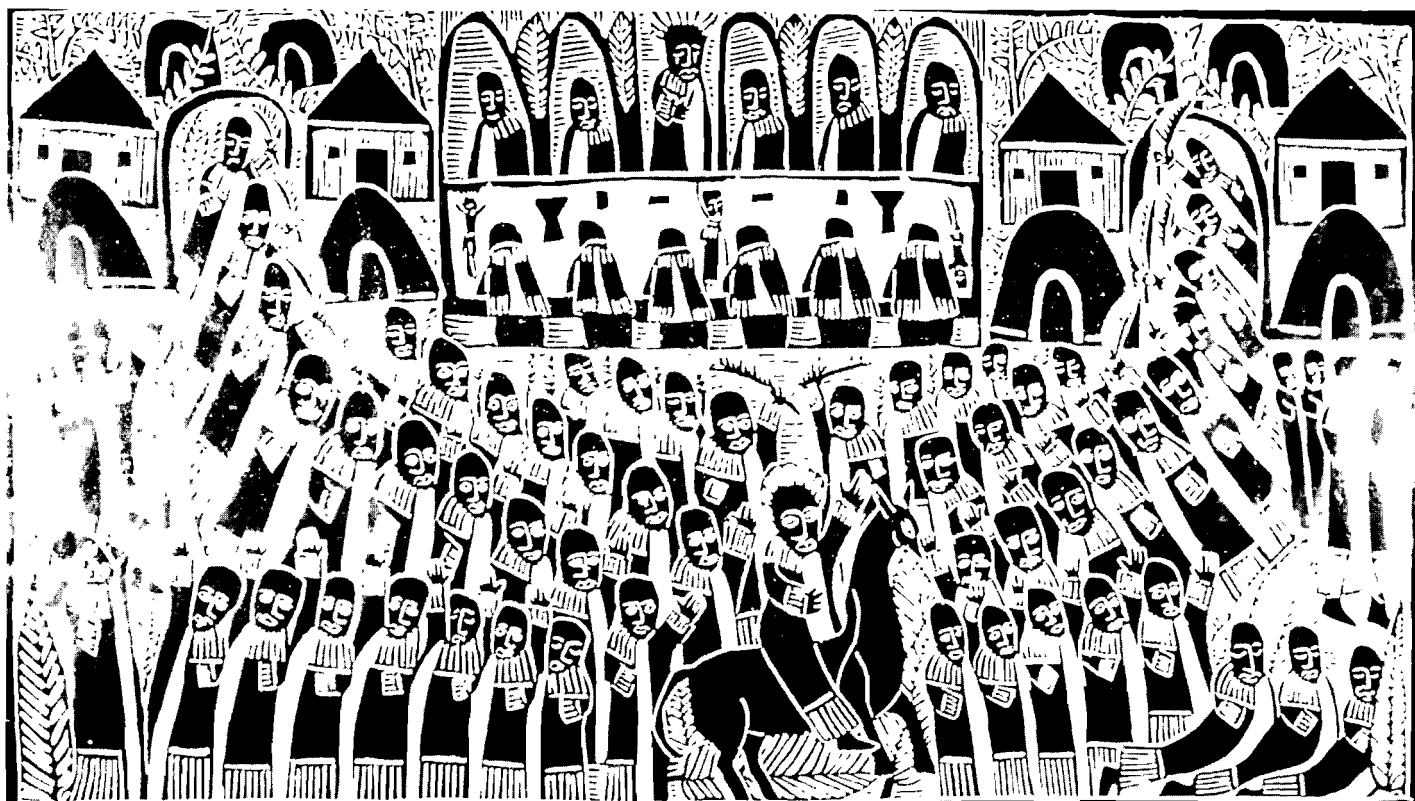
(Photo: Elizabeth Rankin)



Ruben Xulu: *Flight into Egypt*, stone carving and painted decorations of the open colonnade at the mission church, Hlabisa.

(Photo: Elizabeth Rankin)

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Azaria Mbatha: *He went into Jerusalem*, linocut, 46,1 x 62 cm, University of the Witwatersrand Art Galleries.

(Photograph supplied by the University Art Galleries.)

outside form of the wood when they carved, so that he unwittingly influenced their style, as well as the scale of their work, by supplying them with cut timber, rather than natural wood. This may certainly have contributed to the compact forms and compositions favoured by Gwensa and Xulu, but hardly seems a limitation: their individual interpretations of biblical stories have a vitality reminiscent of Romanesque religious carvings.

The history of these two carvers in relation to Edwin Kinch is paralleled by many cases of artists assisted at the Mariannhill Mission in Natal, founded in 1882. But whereas Father Kinch had been encouraging art where there was none, at this German Catholic mission there was a well established tradition of fine architecture and the production of religious imagery,<sup>27</sup> which provided a visual context for the making of art at Mariannhill. The brilliant hues of the stained glass and the painted altar-pieces, for example, drawn from European ecclesiastical traditions, seem to be reflected in the vivid colour of the tapestries produced there by African weavers.

Two members of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood, who had themselves trained in art in Europe and subsequently taken Fine Arts degrees at the University of Natal, showed a particular interest in encouraging African painters and sculptors at Mariannhill. Both were active as versatile artists in their own right, Sister M Pientia Selhorst having trained primarily as a painter<sup>28</sup> and Sister M Johanna Senn as a sculptor.<sup>29</sup> Sister Pientia qualified as a teacher and taught art at the St Francis Training College at Mariannhill

from 1942,<sup>30</sup> and established an art centre at Lumko in the Transkei in the 1950s; whereas Sister Johanna does not think of herself as a teacher although she has acted as a mentor for many artists, giving technical advice and encouragement. During the 1970s, a number of art exhibitions were arranged at Mariannhill,<sup>31</sup> and, in 1978, the Mariannhill Art Centre was established, incorporating a gallery and a studio for a resident artist.<sup>32</sup> Sister Johannes believes strongly that the work of black artists should be used in South African churches and not taken out of the country.<sup>33</sup> She is constantly seeking out appropriate artists to fulfil religious commissions, and has in this way helped many who are not usually associated with Mariannhill, such as Michael Zondi (b 1926), who began his career at the Swedish Mission Trade School at Dundee, Natal, and Vuminkosi Zulu (b 1947), who trained at Rorke's Drift.

The range of artists who have enjoyed assistance in many different forms at Mariannhill is remarkable. Joseph Dlamini, who carried out the carvings for St Gertrude's Mission, for example, only came for informal help as an older man. Duke Ketye (b 1943), on the other hand, started at Lumko as a boy, beginning his art career under Sister Pientia's instruction, but assisted with carving by Sister Johanna, and then studied for his matriculation at St Francis College. He fulfilled a number of religious commissions during his early years as an artist, such as his series of the *Stations of the Cross* for Our Lady of the Assumption at Makwane in QwaQwa. But Ketye's training also enabled him to work independently outside the mission: he has been



Bongiwe Dhlomo: *Women at Work*, linocut, 1983, private collection.

(Photo: Elizabeth Rankin)

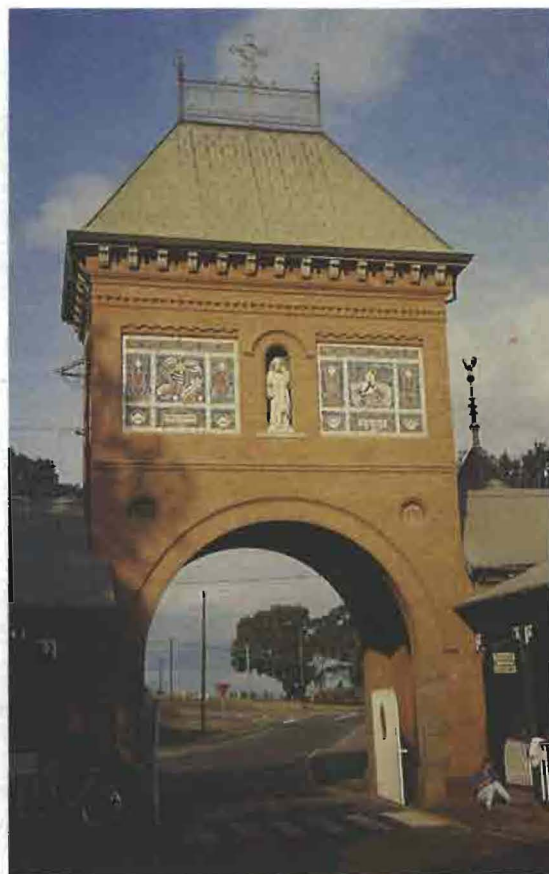
a full-time artist since 1968, producing both painting and sculpture, has worked as an illustrator and also extended his skills to include pottery and screen-printing.<sup>34</sup> Ketye's example demonstrates how readily art skills could be transferred from a religious to a secular context, particularly when artists were encouraged to develop their own visual language, rather than working within the European tradition of religious art. The variety of styles emerging from Mariannhill makes it clear that this was the case there. In contrast to the expressive distortion of Ketye's style is the detailed observation in the work of Zamokwakhe Gumede (b 1955), who came to Mariannhill as a young man, after his schooling, and took a carpentry course with Brother Florian in the 1980s. He remembers being encouraged by Sister Johanna to make carvings to illustrate Bible stories, which

provided a starting point for his career as a sculptor.<sup>35</sup> In 1988, he worked on a large commission for Oakford Priory Catholic School, calling it *God loves children and everyone*, but has also been active making sculpture for sale, sometimes religious, sometimes secular in subject matter, and has participated in the Zasha art group in Durban.

Beyond the mission environment, then, many artists from that background, such as Gumede and Ketye, produce works of a secular nature for the art market. It should be remembered, however, that the main direction of their mission training had been in the creation of religious images, a direction which is to be expected within the high church context. Yet an exception is to be found in the work of a group of artists living in the Orange Free State who came under the guidance of Father Frans Claerhout (b 1919) at the St Francis Mission



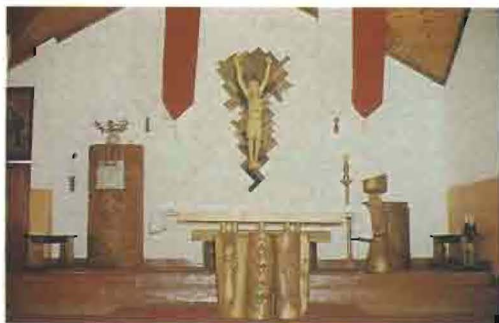
Mother and Child, tapestry woven at Mariannhill Mission. (Photo: Elizabeth Rankin)



Gatehouse of the Mariannhill Mission, Natal, circa 1905, showing incorporation of traditional Western religious imagery. (Photo: Elizabeth Rankin)

at Thaba 'Nchu, and later at the Mission of Our Lady of Sorrows at Tweespruit.<sup>36</sup> These were also Catholic institutions, but there the artists were encouraged to make works of great variety: they did on occasion carve religious images, but these seem to have occupied a place of no greater significance in their *oeuvres* than other subject matter. Perhaps the explanation lies in the fact that Father Claerhout is himself a practising artist, who has exhibited with the Bloemfontein Group and sells his paintings commercially. His work too may have religious reference, but it does not follow a traditional liturgy, rather depicting a personal iconography, coloured by his own mystical and moral reflections.

It is of interest that the artists working with Father Claerhout, such as Jacob Tladi (c 1930-85) and Joel Noosi (c 1935-77) seem to have concentrated on carving, even though his own skill lies chiefly in painting. In this case it cannot be explained in terms of the suitability of the medium for religious objects, and it is all the more noteworthy because a lack of wood in the



**Above:** Joseph Dlamini: Carvings at St Gertrude's Mission.  
(Photograph by courtesy of Sister Johanna Senn.)



**Above:** Duke Ketye: *Stations of the Cross, Our Lady of the Assumption*, Makwane, QwaQwa.  
(Photograph courtesy of Sister Johanna Senn.)

**Right:** Zamakwakhe Gumede, *God Looks After the Poor*, Wood, 50 x 29 x 29 cm, acquired 1989. Standard Bank Collection of African Art, housed at the University of the Witwatersrand Art Galleries.

(Photograph supplied by the University Art Galleries.)



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area makes it unlikely that the artists were drawing on established skills. Claerhout sells a considerable amount of the carvers' work to the many tourists who visit his mission, suggesting that, in his eyes and theirs, carving with its craft connotations, is perceived as an appropriate medium for black artists. The likelihood that this perception has influenced the selection of suitable art skills for African students at mission schools cannot be discounted.

In the case of missions of a Protestant origin, where there would be no call for images for the church, one might expect that there would be no art production. This has not been the case, although the development of art in these missions has been rather different. An important example is that of Ndaleni Training College. A Wesleyan mission had been established as early as 1847 at Ndaleni near Richmond in Natal. Like so many of the missions, Catholic and Protestant, it took on educational responsibilities in the community, and established a teacher training college. Training colleges invariably included some form

of art and craft on their syllabus for intending teachers, but Ndaleneni was to develop a special project in this direction on the initiative of Jack Grossert, who was appointed organizer of art and crafts for the Native Section of the Natal Education Department in 1948. Together with Ann Harrison, a teacher at Ndaleneni who had trained at the Slade,<sup>37</sup> he began in 1949 to plan a specialist two-year course for art teachers, to be available to those who had already completed their teaching diploma. Ann Harrison left before the programme could be inaugurated, but it was launched in 1952 under Alfred Ewan, who had a diploma in art from Dundee, Scotland.<sup>38</sup> A succession of well-qualified teachers followed him – Peter Atkins who had trained in sculpture at the Slade, Peter Bell who had a Fine Arts degree from Michaelis, and Lorna Peirson, who had both specialized in art in her teacher training and taken a BA (Fine Arts) with Honours in design at Natal University.<sup>39</sup>

Although the mission was responsible for the general organization of the college, and provided the context for the introduction of art specialization, the teachers of the Ndaleneni art course had never been missionaries; the provincial authorities had paid the salaries of secular teachers through the mission administration. But the links with the mission became even more tenuous after the introduction of Bantu Education in the mid-1950s, when Ndaleneni Training College was annexed by the government department, although the same premises were used and the students still lived in the mission hostels. Ultimately the authorities were to close Ndaleneni and move the school to the Transvaal Training College at Mabopane in 1982.

The Ndaleneni course was primarily aimed at the training of art teachers, not artists, but in the context of the 1950s it offered probably the most programmed art training available to black students, who were drawn from all over South Africa. The course was wide-ranging in its scope, including classes in art history, design, picture making, clay modelling, crafts and wood carving. It is noteworthy that, although there was no prompting through a need for religious images or church furniture in this context, carving seems to have been the strongest section of the school. It is true that carving classes were a compulsory part of the syllabus, but the students seem to have taken it up in their spare time by choice, and to have shown a great aptitude for this particular form of sculpture.

While Ndaleneni artists like Solomon Sedibane (b 1933) and George Ramagaga (b 1951) are best known for their wood sculpture, many were ultimately to make art in a wide variety of fields. Eric Ngcobo (1933-87), for example, continued carving but also painted, and Dan Rakgoathe (b 1937) is best known as a print-maker, although this direction in his work may well have been encouraged by his later training at Rorke's Drift from 1967, and at Fort Hare in the 1970s. The Ndaleneni group were to be of great importance because they provided role models for aspiring artists of the black community throughout South Africa. They were also influential because many of them held teaching posts, and were often promoted to inspector level because of their additional qualification, although these could be thankless tasks in the context of black schools where art education was – and is – severely limited.<sup>40</sup>

Equally important in the stimulation of art production in the black community were the artists who trained at the Evangelical Lutheran Art and Craft Centre, established in the



Carving in the garden, Mission of Our Lady of Sorrows, Tweespruit.  
(Photo: Elizabeth Rankin)



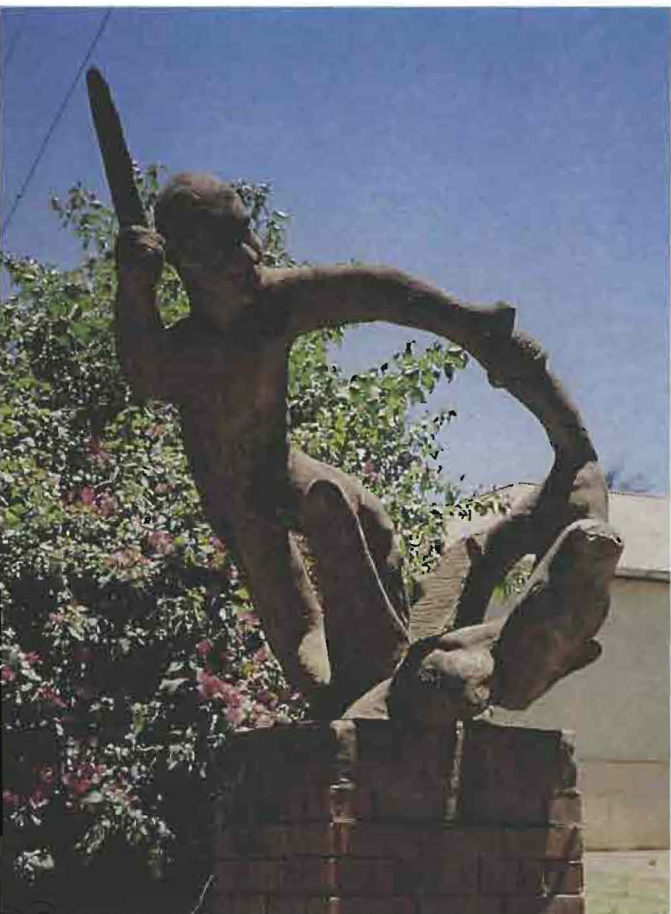
Jacob Tladi, wood carving, bottom half 673 cm high, top half 675 cm high, acquired 1988, King George VI Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth.

(Photograph supplied by the Gallery)

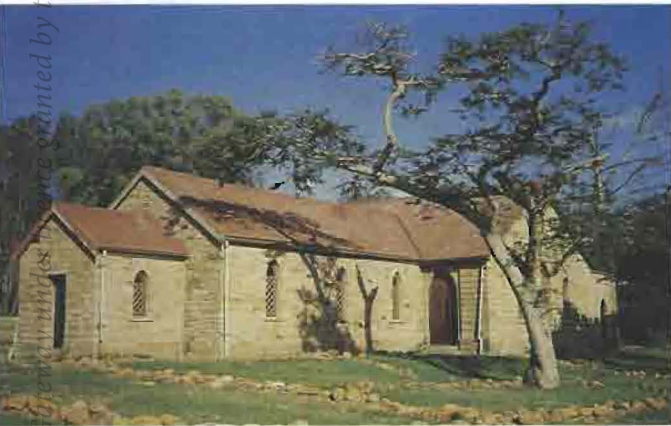
1960s at Rorke's Drift, the site of an old Swedish mission.<sup>41</sup> At this Protestant establishment the training of artists was also of a more secular nature from the start. Although the teachers were appointed and employed by the Church of the Swedish Mission, there seems to have been no proselytizing intention at Rorke's Drift. The primary aim was to nurture the artistic heritage of Africa, and art was not presented either in the service of the church or as the tool of another profession, teaching, but was conceived as an independent career. In line with the Centre's purpose to assist in raising the standard of living among African people, the attitude to art was a practical one, focusing on the training of art and craft advisers for hospitals, and on the production of saleable objects, particularly weaving and pottery. There was also a strong print-making section from an early period, represented by the linocuts of Azaria Mbatha (b 1941) and John Muafangejo (1943-87). Their graphic works do suggest a religious link with the mission background, not only in the frequent choice of biblical subject matter, but in the nature of their narrative which suggests a visual equivalent of the didactic approach of Protestantism.<sup>42</sup> This has remained a characteristic of much graphic art from Rorke's Drift, even when the subject matter is secular, as it is in the linocuts of Bongi Dhlomo (b 1956).

Fine Arts training with a formal syllabus was introduced a few years after the craft classes, but was discontinued in 1982, perhaps partly because it was not an income-earning venture.<sup>43</sup> But it seems likely too that as fine arts studies at Rorke's Drift became increasingly sought after, and attracted talent from urban centres all over South Africa, the nature of the student body and its art changed and became too experimental in form and content not to come into conflict with the mission environment. The rural situation and the religious affiliations were also becoming less appropriate. The demise of the Fine Arts Department at Rorke's Drift would seem to intimate the waning of the mission's role in art education in contemporary South Africa. In many ways, the incentive of Rorke's Drift has been taken over more aptly by urban-based art centres, but the impact of the school continues to assert itself because so many of the teachers at the centres had their training there.<sup>44</sup>

It is unnecessary to discuss Rorke's Drift and its artists in any detail, as its role in art, alone of all the mission schools, is widely recognized. But it provides yet another example of the part that missions have played in the education of the black artist in South Africa, and stresses their diversity and the many questions they raise for art historians. The links with religion need to be fully explored: some missions trained artists, just as they educated children, chiefly in the cause of Christianity, while in other cases art was pursued independently, as a teaching subject or a way of earning a living, or even for its own sake. The interaction of mission schools with Bantu Education is another issue of great importance that cannot be debated in a short article, although some of the ironies are implicit in what has been presented. Ndaleni art courses, for example, although initiated in the period of mission control, continued to flourish because government co-option was accepted, only to be closed down later anyway; while the art programme at St Francis College, Mariannhill, foundered together with teacher training that could not carry on independent of government support, but survived informally in individual

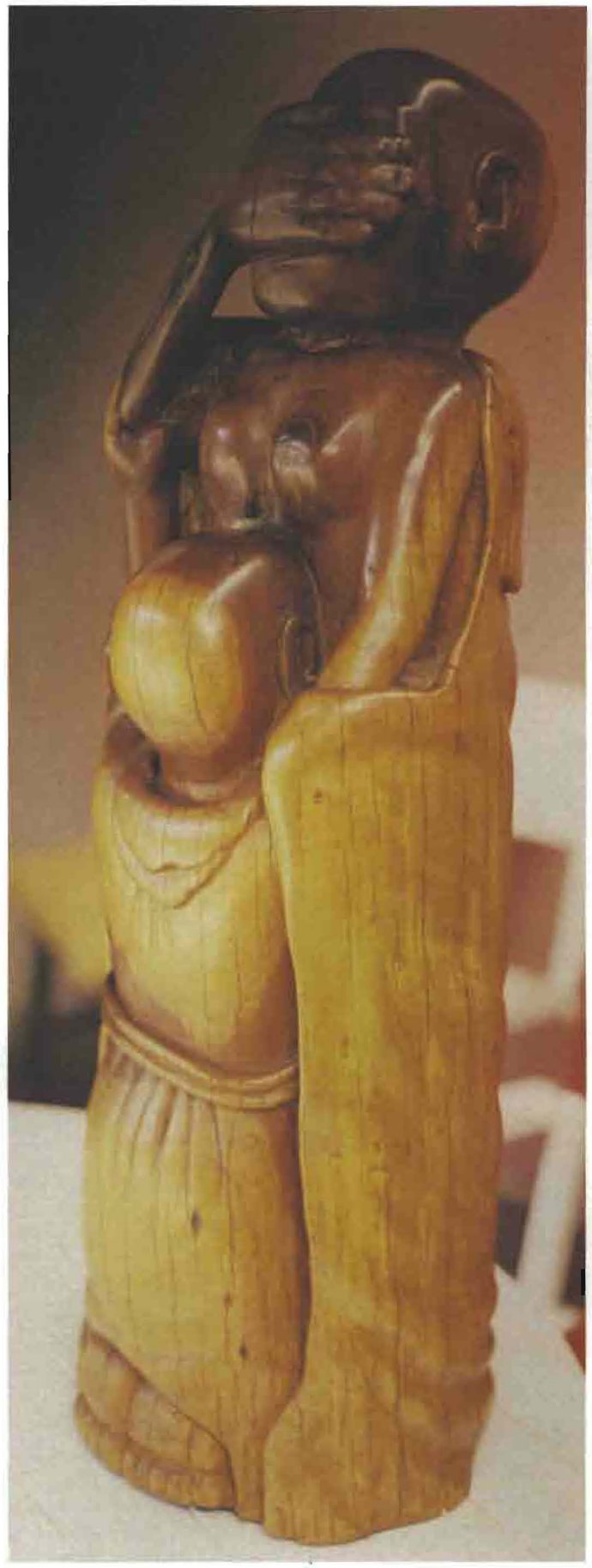


*St George and the Dragon*, modelled figures by the students at Ndaleni Mission, Natal. (Photo: Elizabeth Rankin)



**Above:** Evangelical Lutheran Mission Rorke's Drift, Natal. Stone church dating from late 19th century.

**Right:** George Ramagaga: *Grieving Sisters*, wood carving made at Ndaleni. Collection of Professor Estelle Marais. (Photos: Elizabeth Rankin)



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Weaving a tapestry: Evangelical Lutheran Art and Craft Centre, Rorke's Drift, 1990. (Photo: Elizabeth Rankin)

mentoring. Mission attitudes to art are also of interest, some perceiving European traditions as appropriate, others encouraging a more African emphasis.

Because of the adverse attitude to indigenous African arts customarily found amongst early missionaries, intent on replacing traditional religions with Christianity, missions have been assigned a predominantly negative role in the annals of South African art: this paper proposes that missions also had a positive albeit complex role to play.

## Notes and references

This article is a reworked version of a paper read at the Conference of the South African Association of Art Historians held at the University of Natal, Durban, in July 1989.

Education at the University of Fort Hare itself, the first "black" university to offer a Fine Arts degree, was inaugurated in the mission context of Lovedale: as Edgar Brookes said in 1936, Fort Hare "may not unfairly be described as the pinnacle of missionary achievement in education", E H Brookes, *A century of missions in*

*Natal and Zululand*, Durban, 1936. Art courses were not introduced, however, until long after mission control had ended, coincidentally at much the same time in the 1970s as Unisa introduced art tuition, available to black and white, but not of course to residential students.

- 3 Today Setotlwane.
- 4 Founded at Oxford in 1892, the monastic Community of the Resurrection of Our Lord aimed to reproduce the life of the early Christians as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.
- 5 Fuller's degree was actually conferred by the University of Cape Town, as he was in South Africa by the time the degree requirements were fulfilled.
- 6 The buildings of sun-dried brick and thatch were executed by the students of Grace Dieu, and inaugurated by the Governor General, Lord Buxton, in 1916.
- 7 The belfry, which is the only surviving building of the complex today, was dedicated to Cecil Mary Talbot, friend of Her Royal Highness Princess Alice, who presented the ceramic panel.
- 8 Recorded in D Walker, *Paterson of Cyrene*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1985, p 8.
- 9 Sister Pauline's teaching subjects were geography, history and music; Job Kekana told us in an interview in Johannesburg, March 1989, however, that her father had been a carpenter
- 10 A church font by Kekana in soapstone is recorded in the catalogue of the South African Academy Exhibition in Johannesburg in 1939, although this carver, still active today in a mission context at St Faith's, Rusape, in Zimbabwe, commonly prefers wood as his medium.
- 11 Undated article, *CR Annals*, St Peter's Home, Grahamstown. The wooden candlesticks presented to the Sisters of the Community of the Resurrection in Grahamstown on the occasion of their Jubilee in 1935 were carved after sixteenth-century designs (*Quarterly Letter*, 1935).
- 12 Exhibited at the South African Academy, 1935.
- 13 The whereabouts of this work, exhibited at the South African Academy in 1934, is unknown. In an interview with Elza Miles in April 1989, Mancoba's sister, Edith Ntomela, said that the piece, representing their younger brother Ronnie with a friend, was bought by Bishop Parker of Pretoria. A visual record survives in a photograph owned by the sisters of the Community of the Resurrection of Our Lord in Grahamstown.
- 14 This information was obtained when Ernest Mancoba was interviewed by Elza Miles in Paris, September 1990. There was also a change in Sekgaphane's style, as documented in the photographic collection of the Archives of the Church of the Province, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, but it was less dramatic. The principal, Father Goodall, designed the pieces for Sekgaphane while he was studying theology at St Peter's Priory, Rosettenville, in Johannesburg. (Zachariah Sekgaphane interviewed by Elza Miles at Itsoseng near Mafikeng, October 1989.)
- 15 A 750/A2, Logbook, Grace Dieu, 25 July 1933.
- 16 B Lindop, *Gerard Sekoto*, Randburg, 1988, p 16; see also L Spiro, *Gerard Sekoto: Unsevered ties*, Johannesburg Art Gallery, 1989, pp 12-13.
- 17 In 1962 Ernest Mancoba illustrated his article on the African artist, "Den Afrikanse Kunstner", for a Danish magazine *Hvedekorn* (grain of wheat) with a linocut and a pen-and-ink drawing. Contrary to Anderson's application of dark lines to depict the college chapel and yard, Mancoba uses his gouge almost automatically to evoke a dark totemic image by means of light lines.
- 18 E Berman, *Art and artists of South Africa*, Cape Town, 1970, p 268.
- 19 L Lipshitz, "Sekoto", *The African Drum*, June 1951, p 20.
- 20 *Rand Daily Mail* (Johannesburg), 18 March 1936, p 12.
- 21 L Lipshitz, *op cit*. In 1949, Father Trevor Huddleston CR became superintendent of the St Peter's Secondary School, widely referred

- to as “the black Eton of South Africa”, T Huddleston, *Naught for your comfort*, London and Glasgow: Collins, 1956. Although art does not seem to have played an important role as a school subject, it is noteworthy that such artists as David Koloane and Ephraim Ngatane count among the students who were educated there.
- 22 Father Kinch (b 1918) provided this information during a most helpful interview with Elizabeth Rankin in Hillcrest in June 1989.
  - 23 Personal communication from Jack Grossert, April 1989. Gratitude is due to Dr Grossert for much information on the topic of early art education for blacks, notably in two interviews with Elizabeth Rankin at Mariannhill in November 1988 and June 1989.
  - 24 Gcwensa was to have many more commissions of this kind, if not as extensive in nature, over the years, and examples of his *oeuvre* may be found at such places as Inkamana Abbey near Vryheid, Hammanskraal Seminary near Pretoria and the mission church of Hammansdale, near Pietermaritzburg. This information was supplied by Dina Cormick who has been researching a publication on the work of Gcwensa and Xulu. She mentions that the Hammansdale designs were not Gcwensa’s own, but given to him to follow in the manner that had been common in the early days at Grace Dieu, and at many of the missions.
  - 25 The dates recorded for Xulu in the Johannesburg Art Gallery catalogues, *The neglected tradition* and *Images of wood*, were based on incorrect information. Dina Cormick has subsequently confirmed that his birthdate was 1942, not 1952.
  - 26 Gcwensa’s asthmatic condition prevented him from working in stone, which generates fine dust during the carving process.
  - 27 See Juliette Leeb-du Toit, “Beuron and Mariannhill”, unpublished MA dissertation, University of Natal, 1984.
  - 28 Sister Pientia was born in Westphalia in 1914 and had some art training in the studios of the Benedictine Order in Holland before she came to South Africa in 1938. (F Harmsen, *The way to Easter: Stations of the Cross in South Africa*, Pretoria, 1989, pp 85-86.) The interesting career of Sister Pientia was discussed by Juliette Leeb-du Toit in a paper on her work at Mariannhill, at the same conference of the South African Association of Art Historians (University of Natal, Durban, July 1989) as this paper was originally presented, and has been published in the *Proceedings*.
  - 29 Born in the Austrian Tyrol in 1930, Sister Johanna had entered the Order of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood in 1956, and came to South Africa in 1961. (F Harmsen, *op cit*, p 86.) Sister Johanna has been most helpful in supplying information about the work of Mariannhill, during Elizabeth Rankin’s visits there in November 1988 and June 1989, as also has Sister M Adelgisa CPS on the latter visit.
  - 30 St Francis College, which had started in 1915, was ultimately to close following the inauguration of Bantu Education: as the Catholic colleges were not prepared to operate within the proposed educational paradigm, government funding was halted, and their qualifications were not officially recognized.
  - 31 Mariannhill organized art exhibitions in 1974, 1976, and 1977. In 1974, the first prize was awarded to Lucky Sibiya for his wood panel entitled *African life*, the second to Ruben Xulu’s carvings, and the third to Patience Ngogodo’s tapestries.
  - 32 Unfortunately this project, involving resident artists like Duke Ketye and Charles Nkosi, and sponsoring quite a diverse range of exhibitions, was fairly short-lived. Sister Johanna suggests that one of the reasons for its lack of success was that artists needed to be located in large towns to attract sufficient buyers for their work.
  - 33 Sister Johanna states that “through an inculturated artistic expression, the Gospel message will reach out to the hearts of the people in their own idioms and become part of their life”. (Paper delivered at the Austrian Mission Conference, September 1983.) Works sent abroad invariably take their place in mission museums, rather than churches.
  - 34 Information supplied by the artist in an interview with Elizabeth Rankin, Soweto, March 1989.
  - 35 Information supplied by the artist in an interview with Christina Jikelo when at the Durban Art Museum; she is now educational officer at the De Beers Centenary Gallery at Fort Hare. Gumede was subsequently to develop his skills at the Community Arts Workshop in Durban from 1985 to 1986.
  - 36 See L Strydom, *Frans Claerhout: Catcher of the sun*, Cape Town, 1983, and *Frans Claerhout*, Belgium, 1975. Claerhout was born in Flanders in 1919, and came to South Africa in 1946. Father Claerhout must be thanked for a useful discussion with Elizabeth Rankin at Tweespruit in January 1989.
  - 37 Ann Harrison (now Robinson) was employed at Ndaleni to teach blackboard writing and visual aids for teaching, not art as such, but had introduced some exercises, first in design and fabric printing (which produced articles that could be sold to generate funds for much needed art materials), then in narrative painting. (Private communication, January 1991.)
  - 38 Information about the early years at Ndaleni supplied by Jack Grossert in a personal communication of April 1989.
  - 39 Lorna Peirson supplied much useful information about Ndaleni in an interview with Elizabeth Rankin at Richmond in November 1988, and also brought to her attention the final, souvenir edition of *ARTTRA*, the journal of the art school, volume 40, issued in October 1980, which includes essays on the history of Ndaleni and its students.
  - 40 See *ARTTRA* 40, October 1980, for some reports from teachers who had trained at Ndaleni.
  - 41 There is, comparatively speaking, a sizable literature on Rorke’s Drift, although, as is the case with most areas of art production in South Africa, more extensive research would be valuable. See *The ELC Art and Craft Centre, Rorke’s Drift, Natal*, Pretoria Art Museum, 1970; S Henderson, “Conflict and conciliation: The story of Rorke’s Drift Mission”, *Optima* 34(4): 192-203, December 1986; S Sack, *The neglected tradition: Towards a new history of South African art 1930-1988*, Johannesburg Art Gallery, 1988. There has also recently been an MA dissertation, “Die Evangeliese Lutherse Kerk Kuns- en Handwerksentrum, Rorke’s Drift”, by Dirkie Offringa (University of Pretoria, 1988). An exhibition exploring the subsequent work of artists trained at Rorke’s Drift was organized in Cape Town in 1990. One short piece of documentary research, carried out by Elizabeth Rankin at Rorke’s Drift in January 1990, is in press for *The South African Journal of Art and Architectural History*.
  - 42 In an article in *Artlook* (October 1969, p 30), Mbatha mentioned that during his first contact with the ELC centre at Umpumulo, before the move to Rorke’s Drift, “many theological students attended this school and their arguments on theological questions deepened my artistic vision by giving me new ideas and a deeper insight”. More recent works, made since his emigration to Sweden, have a less obviously narrative quality, and demonstrate links with modern European art.
  - 43 It is noteworthy that the art qualification at Rorke’s Drift, like the teacher’s diploma at independent Catholic training colleges such as Mariannhill, was not given official recognition.
  - 44 Steven Sack cites the cases of “Lionel Davis at Community Arts Project (CAP) in Cape Town, Bongi Dhlomo at the Alex Arts Centre, Sokhaya (Charles) Nkosi at the Funda Centre, Soweto, Cyril Manganye at the Mofolo Art Centre, Soweto, Dumisani Mabaso at the Johannesburg Art Foundation, and many others” (*Neglected tradition*, p 20). One could add Tony Nkotsi at the Johannesburg Art Foundation, Vincent Baloyi at Funda in Soweto, Velile Soha and Thami Jali at the Nyanga Arts Centre in the Cape, and Ephraim Ziqubu and Bhekisani Manyoni at the Kettlehong Art Centre, as well as others who taught in government schools and training colleges, such as Dan Rakgoathe and Paul Sibisi.

# Decentralization and effective government: The case of Ghana's District Assemblies

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## Introduction

Decentralization, which one authority refers to as “the latest fashion in development administration”,<sup>1</sup> has been a topic of growing interest and debate among scholars, international agencies and governments of a number of developing countries, including Ghana. This interest and debate could be attributed to the linking of decentralization with such benefits as equity, effectiveness, responsiveness and efficiency. Rondinelli makes several claims regarding the economic benefits of decentralization. He writes:

as societies, economies and governments become more complex, central control and decision-making becomes more difficult, costly and inefficient. By reducing diseconomies of scale inherent in the over-concentration of decision-making in the national capital, decentralization can increase the number of public goods and services – and the efficiency with which they are delivered – at lower cost.<sup>2</sup>

The potential benefits to be gained from decentralization may, for convenience, be grouped into three main categories: popular participation, speed and flexibility and co-ordination. First, decentralization, it is argued, can facilitate popular participation in both planning and the implementation of development activities, thereby not only creating a more “democratic” society but also making projects and programmes more relevant to local demands and engendering local commitment and, in some cases, contributions in the form of money or manpower.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, decentralization may speed up the process of decision-making, since decisions can be made locally without reference to a higher level, and so enable administration to be efficient, effective, flexible and responsive to local needs.<sup>4</sup> Thirdly, decentralization may

encourage co-ordination between sectoral agencies at the regional or local level, thereby creating a more integrated approach to planning, because decisions are made at these levels rather than by the national headquarters of each of the agencies concerned.<sup>5</sup>

For all these reasons, decentralization can, at least in theory, result in a more effective and efficient use of resources, including not only natural resources and the government's financial and manpower resources, but also the developmental potential of the local populace.<sup>6</sup> Decentralization, then, is viewed as the key to improving the planning and implementation of rural development and facilitating popular participation in the development process. If all of the aforementioned benefits do, indeed, result from decentralization, it is no wonder that the concept is enjoying widespread support all over the world, especially in developing countries, like Ghana.

This article examines the validity of the claim that decentralization promotes effective government by using Ghana's District Assemblies (DAs) as a case study. The article assesses not only the success or failure of the DAs in the Ghanaian context, but also attempts to identify the constraints and facilitating factors which affect the operations of the DAs. Finally, the article discusses some of the conditions under which decentralization could promote effective government.

## What is decentralization?

There is a lot of confusion concerning the exact meaning of the concept of decentralization. According to Olowu it “evokes different images among policy makers, administrators, political scientists and the public”.<sup>7</sup> The confusion surrounds not only the definition of the concept but also the various forms of decentralization, which include devolution, deconcentration, delegation and privatization. This is why

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Aaron Wildavsky would prefer to use *non-centralization* to decentralization when he “wants local bodies to be independent of each other and semi-independent of the centre”.<sup>8</sup>

In general, the concept of decentralization means “reversing the concentration of administration at a single centre and conferring powers on local government”.<sup>9</sup> We may also define decentralization as the “transfer of authority to plan, make decisions and manage public functions from a higher level of government to any individual, organization or agency at a lower level”.<sup>10</sup> This definition seems to cover most of the organizational changes described as “decentralization” in Ghana and other developing countries. In view of the terminological confusion associated with decentralization it may be useful to look briefly at the main characteristics of this particular definition.

First, it focuses on “territorial” decentralization, thus excluding the transfer of functions from central to peripheral agencies at the same level (for example, from central government ministries to parastatals, which some writers refer to as “functional” decentralization.<sup>11</sup> Secondly, the definition restricts itself to the decentralization of “public functions”, that is, those activities that are most likely to be undertaken by government departments, ministries and agencies, rather than, for example, the decentralization of industry or other forms of economic activity. Thirdly, the definition implies that decentralization is a process or organizational change which occurs, at least in part, as a result of conscious action by a government. However, it does not mean that decentralization cannot be initiated by, or does not require the commitment of, individuals and organizations outside the government.<sup>12</sup>

## Forms of decentralization

Smith contends that decentralization involves the delegation of authority.<sup>13</sup> And in confining ourselves to “territorial” decentralization, such delegated authority may be broadly classified as either devolution (political decentralization) or deconcentration (bureaucratic/administrative decentralization). Devolution or political decentralization is the conferment of the necessary legal powers to discharge specified functions upon formally constituted local agencies or bodies. The determination of policies and supervision of certain functions are transferred either to political subdivisions or local bodies (normally elected by universal adult suffrage) and, within the context of a unitary state, like Ghana, control of local affairs.<sup>14</sup> The units under this form of decentralization acquire a measure of autonomy; they exercise powers which fall within their jurisdiction; they gain legitimacy from the unique local political system over which each government exercises some jurisdiction; and they normally recruit their own staff and have independent sources of revenue. However, the autonomy of devolved units is never complete.<sup>15</sup>

Deconcentration or administrative decentralization, on the other hand, refers to the delegation of responsibilities from the headquarters of a ministry or agency to the field. The discretion that the field representative of the organization/agency may be able to exercise depends on what decisions superiors in the organizational hierarchy are prepared to delegate.<sup>16</sup> The exercise of decentralized administrative authority is subject to organizational controls and influence. The legitimacy of the

authority so exercised is based on appointment (that is, bureaucratic methods of recruitment rather than the democratic methods system of government). The authority delegated to field staff is “managerial or administrative, though its political significance at the area level may be considerable”.<sup>17</sup> Deconcentration is frequently employed to reduce the forces of localism and enforce uniformity in decision-making across the country, unlike devolution which is designed to “reflect the unique characteristics, problems and needs of different regions and localities”.<sup>18</sup>

The reason for going into this detail on decentralization is not only to debunk the assertion that the District Assemblies (DAs) constitute a “concept” but also to expose the confusion surrounding the use of the concept of decentralization by the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government and its functionaries. The Report on Evolving a True Democracy by the National Commission for Democracy (NCD) – the government’s electoral body – illustrates, for instance, the confusion and linkage of DAs as a “concept”. There is a subheading in the Report, “District Assemblies: Concept and Practice”, which identifies the composition, membership and main functions of the DAs.<sup>19</sup> This is followed by another subheading, “Decentralization”, which states the following:

Integrated into the District Assembly *concept* (emphasis mine) is the policy of decentralization by which functions and responsibilities are transferred from Central Government and its agencies to the District Assemblies.<sup>20</sup>

We may define a concept as either a general notion or idea underlying a class or things or an idea that serves as a subject of philosophical enquiry. The DAs do not seem to meet this definition of a concept because their functions, composition, election and appointment of members, sources of finance and recruitment of personnel are some of the characteristics of the two forms of decentralization we have already discussed. A change in the nomenclature of decentralized units, such as from District Councils to District Assemblies (DAs), does not mean that they could be considered as a concept.

The confusion over the concept of decentralization has not only been reflected in the 1969 and 1979 Ghanaian constitutions but also the Report of the Committee of Experts on a Draft Constitution of the Fourth Republic. Apparently following precedence, Chapter 11 of the Report, entitled “Decentralization and local government”, implies that the terms “decentralization” and “local government” are different. And yet when it comes to defining decentralization, the Committee of Experts does not only see the concept as a “vexed” issue, but also, in theory, as “the transfer of functions, powers and resources from the central government to local government units”.<sup>21</sup> What then is the difference between “decentralization” and “local government”? The use of the terms “decentralization” and “local government” seems to be a tautology, which will further exacerbate the confusion surrounding decentralization in the Consultative Assembly, which will discuss the Draft Report of the Committee of Experts on the Constitution.

## The PNDC and decentralization

The Provisional National Defence Council’s (PNDC) decentralization programme started with the launching of the *Blue*

Book on district political authority and modalities for district level elections in 1987 and was then followed by the demarcation of districts in 1987/88, the holding of the District Assembly elections in 1988/89 and their inauguration during the middle of 1989.<sup>22</sup> The programme is expected to fulfil a wide range of aims and objectives. For instance, the decentralization programme is not only concerned with "bringing qualitative changes to the country's administration",<sup>23</sup> but also "administrative convenience, effective delivery of goods and facilities and the involvement of the people at the grass-roots in the decision-making".<sup>24</sup>

The District Assemblies (DAs), which were created as a result of the decentralization policy,

were to become pillars upon which the people's power would be erected, ... the focal points of development at the village and town levels ... The principle of popular participation was given meaning through the assemblies, where decisions directly affecting the lives of the people were to be taken. The objective of the elections was for a system of local government of the people by the people and for the people ... it was for a system that gave the voters power to exercise control over their own affairs.<sup>25</sup>

Also, the establishment of the DAs is seen by the PNDC as a preparatory and facilitating stage in the evolution of a representative system of government at the national level. As a means to an end, therefore, the DAs were not only the "solid foundations for participatory democracy throughout the country", but also "secure foundations at the base of our political and administrative structures" that would enable us to "take further steps towards erecting the national structure".<sup>26</sup>

Seen as the "pivot" of the PNDC's decentralization programme, the establishment of the DAs at the same time becomes an end in itself and therefore above reproach:

... it does not make sense for anyone to want to disregard the (District) Assemblies and create other institutions or structures that have no integral or organic relationship with the district political authorities. It is therefore very disappointing to say the least, to hear statements from people who are expected to know better, seeking to marginalize the authority of the people that is finding expression in the district assembly.<sup>27</sup>

To promote and enhance the policy objectives of its decentralization programme, the PNDC took some measures to strengthen the DAs. First, the number of districts was increased from 65 to 110. The rationale behind this was not only to make the districts smaller to promote participatory democracy but also to make them "viable and more homogeneous and manageable units".<sup>28</sup> This reasoning is faulty because large units of local government are no less effective and efficient than small ones, and no less democratic. The democratic merits of small units of government have often been exaggerated and romanticized, while their democratic deficiencies have been overlooked. As Newton has rightly pointed out, large units of local government are not only as economically efficient as small ones as well as having a greater functional capacity, but also do not seem to be "deficient in democratic qualities and may even be more democratic in some respects".<sup>29</sup> In this respect, therefore, there is no necessary incompatibility between the size necessary for functional effectiveness and that required for democracy.<sup>30</sup>

A second measure was to enact PNDC Law 207 of 1988, which crystallizes the decentralization policy of the PNDC, and transfers legislative competence to the DAs. The subject matter of DAs' by-laws, unlike in previous decentralization

programmes, covers planning, finance, budgeting, and security: "indeed, the whole gamut of national administration, with the notable exception of foreign affairs and the military aspect of national security".<sup>31</sup> The Secretary (Minister) for Local Government is no longer required to give express approval of by-laws, fees and charges.

A further measure was to make it possible for planning and budgeting processes to start at district level. District Assemblies were constituted into district planning authorities. This was an attempt to force ministries to actually deconcentrate their staff so as to take district composite budgeting a possibility. In March 1990 it was announced that budget, planning and treasury officials had been posted out to the districts.<sup>32</sup>

Another measure taken to enhance the decentralization programme was the enactment of Section 23 of PNDC Law 207, which provides for the establishment of District Tender Boards. Under this section the Boards are required to

advise the assembly on the award of contracts in the district which are to be exclusively financed from the district's own resources, or which have been approved by the council (PNDC) and are not in excess of such limits as may be set by the Secretary (Minister for Finance and Economic Planning) from time to time.<sup>33</sup>

By January 1991 the power to pay government contracts up to the value of 250 million cedis had been devolved to the districts. At the same time district treasuries were also set up, which were in theory to take over control of the budgets of departments formerly under the Controller and Accountant General's Department in Accra.<sup>34</sup>

The legislative instruments that established the 110 DAs also transferred 85 functions to be performed by the DAs. The instruments also allow for specific legislation to be assigned to the DAs from time to time. Examples of this are the National Weekly Lotto (Amendment) Law 1989 (PNDC Law 223) and the Control and Prevention of Bushfires Law 1990 (PNDC Law 229), which assigned the "Banker to Banker" operations as a new local tax area and the control and prevention of bushfires respectively to the DAs. To help the DAs perform their functions, 22 decentralized departments, listed in the First Schedule of Law 207, were to be established in each district (see Table 1 for a list of 22 decentralized departments). Each DA is to be responsible for the preparation, administration and control of budgetary allocations of the decentralized departments, whose staff are supposed to be employees of the DAs. However, since the DAs are in a "transitional period" the appointments of staff of the decentralized units are still made by the Head of the Civil Service and the Public Services Commission.

The financial package given the DAs seems comprehensive. In addition to traditional revenue sources of general rates, comprising basic and property rates and rates on possessions, special rates, fees, licenses and others, the PNDC has transferred or ceded seven revenue areas to the DAs. These are:

- (i) entertainment duty
- (ii) casino revenue
- (iii) betting tax
- (iv) gambling tax
- (v) income tax (registration of trade, business, profession or vocation)
- (vi) daily transport tax
- (vii) advertisement tax

The last two sources were announced by the PNDC chairman in his 1991 New Year's broadcast to Ghanaians and these were expected to yield one billion cedis for 1991. The first five sources, which were listed in the Sixth Schedule of PNDC Law 207, yielded 271,3 million cedis for the DAs in 1989. Distribution of population and an assessment of the developmental status of each district were the criteria used in allocating funds.<sup>35</sup> The distribution of ceded revenue among the DAs has been a thorny issue. Referring to the issue, the chairman of the PNDC, Flight Lieutenant Rawlings, stresses that

it is not beneficial for one district to have resources to build roads for instance when other roads leading to that district are impassable. Revenue sharing will therefore, as far as possible, be on the basis of the principle of equal and balanced development.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the financial package, fiscal decentralization is yet to be achieved. The DAs still look up to the central government to provide grants, which are not forthcoming.

A final measure that the PNDC took to buttress its decentralization policy was the strengthening of the personnel capacity of the DAs. As a "transitional" measure a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) funded project, "Training for Rural Development", was conceived with the Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment (Pamscad). The project aims at strengthening the management capacity and planning skills at the district level by providing training to district political, bureaucratic and community leaders. Under the project, ten mobile district planning teams were constituted and trained as an interim measure to facilitate district development management. A corps of twenty UN volunteers have also been deployed to train staff of the DAs in the fields of financial and municipal facilities and services, development and delivery management. As a long-term measure, however, a major five-year, seventy million US dollars local government training, multi-sectoral programme, "Urban II", was successfully negotiated with the World Bank. This programme will address the development of two local government management resources centres in Accra and Tamale and train staff adequately to assist DAs in the improvement of revenue mobilization systems, the identification of training needs and the development of appropriate training programmes of the DAs.<sup>37</sup>

These measures, although not far-reaching enough, show the PNDC to be a government that has had more commitment and determination than previous Ghanaian governments to push through a decentralization programme. And this is a credit to the PNDC since commitment and determination are *sine qua non* for effective implementation of decentralization programmes. But how does one explain this commitment and determination to the PNDC? The PNDC sees its decentralization programme as an end in itself and, at the same time, as a means to an end. As an end in itself, the decentralization programme is seen as a panacea for the social and economic ills of Ghana's poor and will alone change political and social relationships that have obstructed greater participation of the "people" in development planning and administration in the past. Thus, it is no wonder that the populist slogan of "power to the people" is the cornerstone of the government's decentralization programme. As a means to an end, the PNDC sees its decentralization programme not only as a way of securing one of its

political objectives, that is, legitimacy, but also, as we have already pointed out, the DAs are to be the foundation upon which a responsible government should be built at the national level.<sup>38</sup> Also, time has allowed the PNDC to have the commitment to implement a decentralization programme. Unlike the civilian governments of Busia (1969-1972) and Limann (1979-1981), which were in power for only 27 months before they were kicked out of office by the military, the PNDC, on the other hand, has been in power for ten years. Despite the commitment of the PNDC to promote decentralization, it is an open question whether the DAs have achieved the objectives for which they were established.

## The District Assemblies (DAs) and effective government

We have already pointed out that the decentralization programme of the PNDC, epitomized by the DAs, is an attempt to achieve effective government, that is, the ability and capacity to deliver goods and services. In this connection three questions can be asked:

- (i) To what extent have the DAs been able to improve the planning and implementation of local government programmes?
- (ii) Did the DAs improve the quality of the country's administration?
- (iii) How did the DAs speed up the process of decision-making and overcome the concentration of power in the nation's capital, Accra?

These are difficult questions to answer, especially when the DAs have been in operation for less than three years. Despite this we shall attempt to assess the operations of the DAs on the basis of their ability to promote effective government.

The NCD Report applauds the operations of the DAs. For instance, the DAs since their inception

have been able to revive the spirit of voluntarism and community effort which characterized the early years of our independence.<sup>39</sup>

Projects such as the establishment of markets, electricity extensions, the Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pitlatrines (KVIPs), provision of buildings for primary, junior and secondary schools and workshops, and the construction of boreholes, feeder roads and clinics, which have been undertaken by the DAs are indicative of this new spirit.<sup>40</sup> Thus the DAs have not only been "able to carry to their people the conviction that the development of their districts depends largely on themselves", but have also made it "possible for the ordinary people to feel part of the decision-making process".<sup>41</sup> The role of the DAs in promoting development and participatory democracy, the NCD report emphasizes,

explains the insistence by a majority of the people who attended the (recent) Regional Seminars that the District Assemblies should be maintained and strengthened in any new constitutional order.<sup>42</sup>

On the other hand, the Report of the Committee of Experts on a Draft Constitution is very cautious when it comes to deciding whether the DAs have ensured effective government. Thus, while the committee is "particularly impressed with the development orientation and potential of the District Assemblies" it is at the same time, "mindful

that, as they exist at present the District Assemblies are *not fully decentralized bodies*" (emphasis mine).<sup>43</sup> The committee therefore sees the DAs as:

essentially evolving institutions, which, unavoidably, have to pass through a transitional period towards eventual full and effective decentralization.<sup>44</sup>

Much as one appreciates the modest gains of the DAs in promoting socio-economic development in their areas, it is doubtful as to whether they have indeed enhanced effective government. The DAs are supposed to involve the "people" in the decision-making process. Evidence suggests that the deliberations of most of the DAs' meetings have been dominated mainly by either the District Secretary (Commissioner), a PNDC appointee; the presiding members (chairmen of the assemblies); and other local notables, who are appointed by the PNDC and make up one-third of the membership of the DAs. For example, on 2 July 1991 members of the Ghana Union of Traders Association (Guta) demonstrated, after closing their stores, to protest against the arbitrary increase of premises tax from 20 000 cedis to 50 000 cedis by the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (Ama), on the grounds that members of the Guta were not consulted by the Ama. As a result of the demonstration the old tax of 20 000 cedis was reverted to, while the District Secretary for the Accra Metropolitan District was asked to "proceed on leave". The rift between the Ama and Guta is a classic example of local government councillors who forget who elected them and fail to "consult the people" on crucial issues affecting them.

Again, contrary to PNDC Law 207, the District Secretary for Asunafo in the Brong Ahafo Region used the name of the Asunafo DA, without the consent of the members, to purchase 100 preset radios from Accra. The Secretary, after collecting the radios at 10 000 cedis per set, sold them at 13 000 cedis each, cash down, and 15 000 cedis on credit basis and pocketed the money. The radios were kept in the house of the District Secretary (DS) and the sales were conducted without the involvement of the staff of the District Administrative Officer (DAO) of the DA.<sup>45</sup> Assembly members have been dismissed and jailed while district secretaries had been dismissed for corruption and embezzlement of DA revenues – showing that the DAs are not free from such vices.

The bulk of the revenue collected by most DAs is spent on recurrent expenditure, mostly on the running and maintenance of official vehicles and entertainment for assembly members and district secretaries, rather than on capital expenditure. For instance, at the end of the 1990 financial year the Krachi DA in the Volta Region was informed of a deficit of 3 million cedis out of which 2 million cedis had been spent on the District Secretary's vehicle alone – as a result of "excessive journeys" to Accra.<sup>46</sup> The Upper East Regional Secretary is on record as having lamented that the development expenditure of the DAs in his regions was "very disappointing because the majority of the assemblies have not spent anything executing development projects".<sup>47</sup>

The extent to which the DAs have been able to reduce congestion and over-concentration of power in the nation's capital is also debatable. Despite "decentralization" most, if not all, district secretaries visit Accra, the nation's capital, either once a week or twice a month. The "excessive journeys" and

"frequent visits" of district secretaries to Accra, which have resulted in deficits for most of the DAs, are cases in point. It should also be noted that even with decentralization, the central bureaucracy continues to take decisions at the local level rather than the locally employed staff. The effectiveness of the DAs, for instance, depends to a large extent on the implementation of the machinery of government involving the placement, staffing and transfer of the personnel of either the civil service or the public service. The establishment of the 22 departments listed in PNDC Law 207 have not been achieved fully, let alone the "articulation of the structural and legal framework within which regional and national level institutions should relate to them".<sup>48</sup> An analysis of the ten regions shows that most of the 110 districts do not have all the decentralized departments. A further problem is that even where the departments were present there "is very poor staff quality to contend with".<sup>49</sup> What we need to remember is that if those making decisions at the local level are inexperienced, inadequately qualified or corrupt, the quality of administration may actually deteriorate rather than improve – and this is what the DAs have shown.

Another point worth noting is that the process of introducing the PNDC's decentralization programme has created problems because it was not carefully planned. The introduction of the decentralization programme not only resulted in conflicts between district secretaries and presiding members, assembly members and Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs), elected and nominated members, assembly members and chiefs, because their roles were not properly defined, but also caused some fear and resentment among civil servants. These conflicts and especially bureaucratic sabotage disrupted the normal pattern of work for a considerable period of time. The debilitating effect of bureaucratic sabotage on the work of the DAs, for instance, has been of grave concern to the PNDC:

Government is aware of the tendency of some departments to undermine the authority of the District Assemblies, claiming to report only to the head offices. There have been cases where requests by the district for vital information have been turned down because the personnel of the departments concerned still refuse to understand the new order in local government administration ... Some attitudes being displayed by the bureaucracy have tended to impede the process of grassroots participation and actions will be taken to make the bureaucracy responsible enough to work for the people, and with the people.<sup>50</sup>

The conflicts and the bureaucratic sabotage have taught us two lessons about decentralization. First, decentralization is a fundamental process and consequently a site for political struggle and conflict;<sup>51</sup> and secondly, the objectives of decentralization are seen in terms of complex management practices and structural adjustments, hierarchical control, optional allocation of responsibilities and the monitoring of system performance, which ignores the fact that such linkages have limited validity in a developing country like Ghana, where more than one agency is involved and administrative influence is not limited to regulation but involves a substantial element of politics.<sup>52</sup>

In addition, it is difficult for the DAs to achieve effective government because their objectives seem ambiguous. The objectives were expected to mobilize support for development plans, improve access to administrative agencies, reduce congestion of administration at the centre, increase

popular participation and the provision of basic amenities to the rural areas in order to curb the urban-rural drift. This is a multiple goal structure, but it is also an ambiguous one. It is unclear precisely how these goals could be realized, and there is a substantial measure of conflict between them. An emphasis on increased popular participation, for instance, might be in conflict with the practice whereby the PNDC appoints one-third of the members of the DAs, 65 per cent of whom not only became the presiding members (chairmen) of the DAs but also took active part in the deliberations of the DAs, as a result of their solid educational backgrounds. Or to take another example, improving access to administrative agencies might conflict with the goal of reducing administrative congestion at the centre. The problems of ambiguity are compounded by the problem of immeasurability. How would one measure progress towards the goal of creating "a spirit of awareness and self-reliance" or mobilizing support for development plans; and what are the reliable statistical indicators of increased popular participation?

The policy objectives of the PNDC's decentralization programme may therefore seem to be Utopian. Many of the objectives were the sincere creations of, unfortunately, wishful rather than realistic thinking.

The unprecedented allocation of 85 functions to the DAs is also a contributory factor to their inability to enhance effective government. This statutory allocation of functions to the various DAs has failed to pay due regard to the capabilities of individual DAs to carry out the allocated functions.<sup>53</sup> There is no hierarchy of functions, no clear statement that function A is more important than B, or at least that function A should be performed or achieved before embarking on function B. The ambiguity of functions presents the DAs with the clear message that everything must be done at once and that there are no priorities that can be used to orient implementation.<sup>54</sup> One wonders why the legislative instruments establishing the DAs could not list competencies under two categories – mandatory and permissive. In that way, the DAs would have basic services they would be required to provide, while others could be provided as and when funding was available.

## Conclusion

This article has examined the validity of the claim of decentralized units, such as the District Assemblies, to promote effective government. We found that although it is easy to link decentralization with effective government, in practice, however, the linkage is tenuous. The DAs became political instruments of the PNDC, being both an end in themselves and at the same time means to an end. The policy objectives of the decentralization programme, namely, popular participation, accountability, administrative effectiveness and efficiency, although only asserted, are long-term goals rather than short-term ones. They do not promise immediate rewards in terms of better standards of living or more desirable lifestyles. Furthermore, although "participation" and "accountability" were asserted motives for the programme it is not very clear whose participation the PNDC had in mind and for whose benefit accountability was intended.

It became clear that one of the main objectives of the decentralization programme, although unstated, was to strengthen the role of the national political and bureaucratic

and local élites and improve central government administration. This does not necessarily mean that the majority of local people have not benefitted from the decentralization programme. On the other hand it cannot guarantee that they will. Thus the local government performance under the PNDC represents a further advance down the long road of deconcentration of government. Whether it also represents an advance in devolution of decision making to a more democratic and locally autonomous form of government is less clear. The decentralization programme became another means by which privileged sectors of the Ghanaian society gained further political control and access to resources.

The crucial question, therefore, is under what conditions decentralization promotes effective government. Smith argues that specific responses must be made to three key factors related to service provision if decentralization is to improve access and participation.<sup>55</sup> These factors are:

- eligibility to participate in schemes and services;
- prioritizing, to determine inclusion and exclusion; and
- the services to be assigned to decentralized organizations.<sup>56</sup>

There is no denying the fact that elections, political control, resources, staffing and the composition of committees, especially at the local level, take on a new significance when viewed from an access perspective. Schemes of decentralization which fail to solve the recurrent problems of central control, financial dependency and administrative weakness will not only fail as experiments in administrative reform, but will also fail to assist the vulnerable people living in the poorer areas of the countryside.<sup>57</sup>

There is an absence of adequate information about the impact of decentralization in Ghana. The Local Government Information Digest focuses attention on the activities of the DAs and not their impact. We need to give more attention to monitoring the impact of decentralization. Monitoring is important not only in order to assess whether the decentralization programme is actually achieving its objectives, but also to identify problems and bottlenecks as they occur so that corrective action can be taken. If the monitoring process is to serve these two functions, it should be built into the implementation of the decentralization programme, rather than carried out some time later, so that problems can be identified and rectified before it is too late. This means that there should be more or less continuous monitoring during and for some time after the implementation and that information obtained about progress and problems should be fed back straight into the decision-making system in a manner which suggests what type of corrective action is required.

We should also not regard decentralization as a panacea for all evils or expect it to perform miracles overnight. The populist or emotive elements of decentralization, such as effectiveness, efficiency and popular participation are themselves complex issues for which there are no easy or obvious recipes, and which cannot be achieved by decentralization alone, whatever form it takes. Moreover, decentralization can itself create new problems. We must therefore recognize that in many situations some form of decentralization can go some way in helping to achieve certain development objectives, although it may also make it more difficult to achieve others.

Decentralization must be understood as an effort to specify who is to rule, which includes who is to have access in



decision-making and how that decision-making is to be determined. Also, decentralization is likely to be effective (to achieve the goals for which it was adopted) only when those goals and their political character are clearly specified and understood, and generally compatible with the interests of those expected to implement (and defend) it.<sup>58</sup> The generally disappointing record as far as the implementation of decentralization schemes in Ghana is concerned is that “those who recommend administrative reorganization and have to implement it, the central government politicians and civil servants, have the most to lose if access, participation and responsiveness are strengthened by decentralization”.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, the unusual incorporation of local government clauses into the Constitution of the Fourth Republic, as was the case in 1969 and 1979, give them exceptional prestige, signifying their recognition as fundamental rights. To avoid the pitfalls of the 1969 and 1979 constitutions, the local government clauses should stipulate much in the way of the functions of the structure and the all-important definition of the roles of, and relationship between the district secretary, presiding members (chairmen), assembly members, traditional authorities, decentralized departments and “organs of the revolution” like the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs), 31 December Women Movement and Mobisquads and the issues regarding finance and personnel. Failure to do these would be a costly omission in the process of local government reform.

**Table 1: List of 22 decentralized departments/organizations under the District Assemblies**

- (i) Ghana Education Service
- (ii) Ghana Library Board
- (iii) Information Services Department
- (iv) Department of Social Welfare
- (v) Department of Community Development
- (vi) Department of Town and Country Planning
- (vii) Ghana Highways Authority
- (viii) Public Works Department
- (ix) Department of Parks and Gardens
- (x) Department of Rural Housing and Cottage Industries
- (xi) Statistical Service
- (xii) Birth and Deaths Registry
- (xiii) Department of Forestry
- (xiv) Controller and Accountant General's Department
- (xv) Office of the District Medical Officer of Health
- (xvi) Department of Feeder Roads
- (xvii) Fire Service Department
- (xviii) Department of Animal Health and Production
- (xix) Department of Fisheries
- (xx) Department of Agricultural Extension Services
- (xxi) Department of Crop Services
- (xxii) Department of Agricultural Engineering

Source: Republic of Ghana, *Local Government Law of 1988* (PNDC Law 207). First Schedule, p 52.

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# National Party and state perspectives on regionalism

*Richard Humphries, Centre for Policy Studies, Human Sciences Research Council, analyses some views on the potential of regionalism in South Africa's constitutional future.\**

The ruling National Party (1991) recently released a set of policy proposals which, among other things, propose that the nine development regions be used as a basis upon which to construct a new set of strong second-tier governments in South Africa. These proposed regional governments would cut across or override the boundaries of the present provincial administrations, the self-governing homelands and the TBVC states.

This pursuance of what might broadly be termed regionalism by the National Party and agencies within the state does not represent any sudden policy change. Despite this, and the continuities it suggests, it is more important to note crucial changes in the political context against which the National Party and various state structures propagate regionalism. This article examines policy proposals presented by the National Party and various important state actors and institutions in the regionalism debate. Particular attention is paid to the views of the four provinces and the Department of Finance. This approach is followed partly on the grounds that a complete identity of interests or policies cannot be assumed automatically between the executive (or the ruling party) and the bureaucracy; similarly, different elements and structures within the South African civil service also tend to emphasize different aspects when presenting policy options on regionalism.

This analysis pays no attention to the views of political movements opposed to regional government nor to those black political groupings (based mainly in the homelands) who generally support it. National Party and state views concerning regionalism are of course mediated by these supporters and opponents; however it would extend the scope of this paper too much to examine this interaction.

\*An earlier version of this article was presented at the conference "Political transition and economic development in Transkei", organized by the Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, in November 1991.

## The National Party, nation-building and regionalism

At its federal congress held in Bloemfontein last year, the National Party (NP) released the principles that it felt ought to underpin a new constitution. An important element of these proposals was a stress on regional government – its role in the wider system of government and the structure and composition of the legislature and the executive. These can be briefly restated after which an explanation for the NP's stress on regionalism will be offered. The party proposed the following:

- Each region should have a legislative council elected on the basis of proportional representation with consideration given to the representation (by indirect nomination) of third-tier authorities or subregions within the region.
- The nine economic development regions could be used as a point of departure for negotiation about the boundaries of the regions; this would entail the abolition and fundamental restructuring of the present provinces and homelands.
- Decision-making procedures within the regional legislature should provide for the protection of minority interests and "certain circumscribed" (though unspecified) matters.
- The regional executive should be composed of representatives of political parties which achieved a predetermined minimum representation on the legislature. It would operate by consensus.
- The regions should be given equal representation in the Second House of Parliament and this representation should be distributed equally to all political parties that gained a specified level of support in regional elections. A particular role for this Upper House is envisaged on matters that concern regional interests.
- Regions should be given the option of demarcating subregions or district authorities for areas which have "particular interests and cohesion".<sup>1</sup>

These proposals have to be situated within a wider context, namely the NP's suggestions for a variety of other governmental structures and mechanisms. They must also be read against the NP's world-view or analysis of the dynamics of South African society.

Space does not allow the specifics of other NP proposals to be noted here; however Lawrie Schlemmer's apt conclusion of these proposals may be noted.

These proposals, if put into effect, would ensure that at virtually no level or in any sphere of government could a majority party impose its will or objectives on other parties. An exception to this, however, could occur at the third level of government... These proposals would deny the dream of cathartic "liberation" which has so long sustained the motivation of mass-based movements.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of regional government, among other NP proposals aimed at achieving a virtual enforced coalition, follows largely from the NP's understanding of the dynamics of South African society: in particular how the NP understands and applies the concept of nationhood or nation-building; in short its policies on the "national question".<sup>3</sup> The starting point of the analysis, as presented for example by Dr Gerrit Viljoen, Minister of Constitutional Development, follows from the NP's acceptance in 1985 that a new constitutional model would have to be negotiated "based on one nation within an undivided South Africa". This policy change meant that ethnicity and race "could no longer be seen as constitutional determinants in the New South Africa". Prior to this the definition of nation that underpinned NP policies was an ethnic and a racial one, given statutory backing, and applied through a policy of partition – thus the notion of multi-nationalism and nation-states.

Having jettisoned the multi-national approach the NP now argues that an organic South African nation does not exist, but rather a range of minorities. The South African nation has to be created on the basis of common values and ideals shared by minorities or segments defined by language, religion and culture. For the NP the challenge of nation-building is to create state structures and symbols which allow all segments or minorities with their particularist identities and symbols to gradually grow together into a nation.

However, Dr Viljoen argues that this can only happen if all actors accept the constraints of power-sharing:

Die vorming/bou van 'n nasie is 'n uiters komplekse proses waarin volks-psigologiese faktore 'n belangrike rol speel. Sou daar byvoorbeeld by 'n aantal segmente nie 'n bereidheid tot identifikasie met die nuwe politieke struktuur wees nie, kan die proses stol, en via 'n fase van interne magsoornames deur kompeterende groepe, die gemeenskaplike staat laat disintegreer en so aanleiding gee tot die ontstaan van verskillende nasies. Veral in plurale samelewings (soos in die RSA) waarin dit veelal gaan om 'n stryd ter verkryging van beheer oor die staat ten einde dit te gebruik as instrument om andere te domineer of wraak te neem oor (vermeende) onregte van die verlede, kan die vraag WIE oor WIE regeer die proses van nasiebou haas ontoonklik maak.<sup>4</sup>

Having argued this, Viljoen takes the rather logical next step of presenting a quasi-federal system, in which the "centrifugal forces of diversity" are not ignored, as the model South Africa should follow. Besides Switzerland and post-1970 Belgium, Viljoen points to India as another possible model:

We must look to those Third World states which have had a degree of success in nation-building. The Indian federal structure is one. Our nation-building model should therefore be the pluralist as opposed to the Jacobin model. We seek regional and cultural

autonomy in which a commitment and an overarching loyalty characterise the tie between individualism and state. In short we seek a broad South Africanism – a patriotism in which every citizen sees him or herself firstly as a South African but also as a Zulu, Afrikaner or Moslem.<sup>5</sup>

Regional government, it is argued, offers "smaller communities, which perhaps form a minority at national level, a greater opportunity to fulfil themselves at regional level and to be accommodated there".<sup>6</sup> It is also argued that by accommodating minority interests at the second tier, minorities will be less inclined to press for their interests to be protected at the central government level. And in a specific reference to Afrikaner interests, one NP MP argues that it "would even be possible for there to be regions in which either Afrikaans speakers or whites could play a prominent or even dominant role".<sup>7</sup> Many of these points are elaborated in greater detail by the provincial administrations, to which we now turn.

## Provincial perspectives

The four provincial administrations are probably the most enthusiastic exponents of regionalism within the state, and have been for some time. This is so for two reasons. The dominance of appointed National Party representatives on the provincial executive committees creates a direct political linkage between the provinces and the cabinet ensuring that NP policy is implemented and adhered to. In other words, there is a wide set of political interests shared by the provincial executives and the ruling party. To some extent this commitment to regionalism or federalism goes further than that by the NP's representatives on the provincial executives: the Labour Party, which enjoys representation on the executives, also expounds federalism, having done so over a much longer period than the National Party.<sup>8</sup>

The more important explanation must be sought and situated in response to the ways in which the provinces were fundamentally transformed in 1986 – when their limited legislative powers were removed and the provinces became virtual departments of state. During the second half of the 1980s, following their virtual emasculation, the provinces were eager to attempt to reclaim a greater political, financial and administrative autonomy within the wider South African state. In the wake of the 2 February speech by the State President and the approach of constitutional negotiations, the provinces have become even more committed to the regionalist cause. They sense that negotiations over a new constitution give them the opportunity to press for a fundamentally restructured second tier of government.

It should be noted though that a creeping centralization in respect of provincial functions had been at work before the 1986 changes to the status and functions of the provinces.<sup>9</sup> As a former senior provincial administrator recently put it:

...by reducing the allocated sources of revenue, the central government obtained firm control of the budget – so much so that the priorities in the provincial budget were determined by other role players than the elected members of the Provincial Council. Although this state of affairs could be tolerated in a union, it is least of all the ideal situation for strong, autonomous regional government as envisaged by our Government.<sup>10</sup>

A shared set of perspectives on broad policy parameters for a restructured form of second-tier government has been

developed over the last few years by the provinces, notably at their annual Administrators' Conference. This conference brings together provincial executives and senior officials who debate common policy problems and suggest policy changes. At their 1990 conference, held in Pietermaritzburg, the Conference appointed a working group of provincial Members of the Executive Council (MECs) and senior officials to develop proposals for a new system of regional government.

This document was subsequently submitted to the Cabinet Working Group on Regional Government; although it has not yet been released, the now retired Administrator of the Orange Free State (OFS), Mr Louis Botha, has given the clearest outline of its points of departure.<sup>11</sup> Many of these have subsequently been taken up by the National Party and reproduced in their negotiating proposals, discussed above.

The document's major proposals for the structural relationship between first- and second-tier government include the following:

- Meaningful functions should be specifically allocated to regional legislatures and administrations with a clear delimitation between the functions of central and regional governments. A concise delimitation "should prevent an unnecessary tug of war about who must do what".<sup>12</sup> After an initial period during which the functioning of the proposed new regions would be tested, their powers, functions, representation systems, financial resources and boundaries should be entrenched in the constitution. A constitutional court should be able to pronounce on disputes over competencies of governments.

Viable regions should be established with, as far as possible, constitutionally allocated sources of income accruing to them. Factors such as population distribution, economic equalization, existing infrastructure and historical considerations should be taken into account when establishing a "smaller number of larger regions rather than a large number of smaller regions".<sup>13</sup>

The stress on measures to ensure economic equalization between regions is interesting; Botha<sup>14</sup> has argued that this was necessary to prevent distinctions being drawn at a later stage between the "four large regions" or the "six rural regions". Each region should "to a large extent" be financially independent of either higher or neighbouring authorities, presumably after revenue sharing has taken place between tiers of government.

The control functions presently exercised by the Department of Finance and the Commission for Administration over the provincial administrations should not be applied to new regional governments. Besides the financial controls which the central treasury came to have over provincial budgets, the 1986 restructuring of the provinces saw their personnel corps being placed under the aegis of the Commission for Administration in Pretoria as part of a national corps of civil servants.

The major functions of the structures should include roads, public works, health and hospitals, education, local government and regional services councils, regional planning, law enforcement and licensing. Regional governments could also be involved in justice, transport and economic development.<sup>15</sup> Provincial spokesmen argue that the regional governments should have a strong

developmental role, apart from the usual political and administrative functions.

The shared concern by the NP and the provinces for strong, autonomous regional governments has been strongly opposed, especially by the ANC, on the grounds that it was proposed precisely to restrict the capacity of any future ANC-dominated government from pursuing redistributionist policies. Certainly provincial (and NP) spokesmen have, and continue to justify regionalism on the grounds that it would disperse political power away from the centre – if there was only one central government then "everyone would go for controlling the central government".<sup>16</sup> It would appear as if there is now a greater degree of flexibility, possibly ambiguity, on this issue on the part of the NP and related interests.

For example, Botha has argued that regions "cannot and may not" put their interests above those of the national interest.

The intention is not to undermine the powers of the central government either. (It) must still play an important role in the initiating of national projects, the laying down of policy guidelines, the allocating of financial resources or equalisation, the maintenance of democratic norms and values and economic, welfare and social upliftment, the co-ordinating of development projects, and so on.<sup>17</sup>

This more nuanced position over the role of central government undoubtedly reflects a reaction by the NP and the provinces to ANC criticisms. It possibly also reflects a measure of debate within the NP over the extent to which an orthodox federal structure should be striven for or not. Olaus van Zyl, a senior Transvaal MEC, has said the proposed model does not amount to a pure federal one, nor to a pure unitary one: "We support devolution within one country and one central state".<sup>18</sup> A NP MP, with an academic background in town and regional planning, has indicated that while the majority of the NP's parliamentarians favour a federal state, a number argue for a unitary state on the grounds that South Africa has historically been one.<sup>19</sup> At the December Codesa conference, the NP did sign a declaration of intention whose principles seemed to lean more towards those of a unitary state than those of an orthodox federal state.

The debate over regionalism is more than just a debate about the powers of second-tier authorities versus those of the central government: local or metropolitan authorities also stand to benefit by devolution or decentralization programmes. Thus under certain circumstances, second-tier authorities could find themselves bypassed as functions are devolved from the central government to local authorities.

The prospect of radical devolution to local authorities at the expense of regional, second-tier structures is clearly of concern to provincial authorities. For example, Peter Miller, a senior Natal MEC, in arguing for a new inter-governmental health policy framework, has argued that all levels of health provision should reside under a regional structure.

Where appropriate...even greater responsibilities can be delegated to the big cities and municipalities where the infrastructure and resources are in place. However the legal, legislative and financial relationship must be between regional or second tier government and local or third tier government. One cannot, in my view, have an efficient, successful and businesslike relationship between central and local government, as this would necessitate central government creating regional offices, thus perpetuating duplication and wastefulness.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, Len Dekker, a Deputy Director General of the Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA), has argued that

proponents of an autonomous local government system must of necessity see a strong regional government system as a partner and not as a threat.

The development (uitbou) of democratic regional governments is thus supplementary to and a prerequisite for the development (uitbou) of local government and must not be seen as a competitor or rival to local government.<sup>21</sup>

## Views held by the Department of Finance

The Department of Finance (DoF) has, for some years now, been engaged in an on-going study of the prospects of applying fiscal federalism to structure public finance in South Africa.<sup>22</sup> This examination is conducted mainly through an internal departmental think-tank committee, known as the Committee of Inquiry into Inter-governmental Fiscal Relations in South Africa. It is better known by its Afrikaans acronym of Kifsa. The essential goal of the inquiry is to match, as far as possible, the allocation of services between tiers of governments with appropriate revenue sources and powers of taxation at the various levels to fund the implementation of these services. This interest in fiscal federalism complemented the growing interest by the National Party and the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning during the mid-1980s in federalist political theory.

Although no formal public reports of the deliberations or findings of the committee have been made public (and seem unlikely to be made public), a series of recent speeches by senior departmental officials reveals the broad guidelines or state of thinking on this issue.<sup>23</sup> At the outset it should be noted that the inquiry is not limited to strictly regionalist or federalist concerns (as in more limited relations between central and second-tier authorities) but is cast in a wider framework of proposing principles of fiscal relations between all three tiers of government.

The principles enunciated so far by DoF spokesmen favour local government financing over that of regional or second-tier authority finance. Indeed Gerhard Croeser, Director General of the DoF, goes so far as to argue that while political debate is largely concerned about the virtues of federalism or a unitary state, this debate is not decisive in terms of structuring future intergovernmental relations.

What is important, however, is the degree of centralisation or decentralisation as well as the structure and nature of the various government bodies in a future public sector in South Africa.<sup>24</sup>

In his critique of apartheid's consequences for the complex division of authority, service delivery responsibilities and taxation capacities between government authorities, Croeser identifies three issues which provide the basis for prescriptions by the DoF for policy change. First he notes that many of the government authorities charged with responsibility for implementing functions "are not and never have been economically viable" and have been dependent on central government transfers; that furthermore the allocation of functions between government bodies serving different racial groups follows no consistent pattern. For example, services such as health and education are provided to blacks living outside the TBVC states by central government departments, while these functions are provided to other race groups by regional departments.

Second, differential revenue and taxation capacities exist

between both local and regional governments established to serve either whites or blacks. Apart from the financial crisis of black local government, Croeser notes that while the homelands and the TBVC states have access to various sources of income, they are not economically viable and are almost totally dependent upon grants from the central government. The only exception is Bophuthatswana, which can survive with little financial assistance.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, the provinces have the economic base to be economically viable but have access to only "a very limited range of own revenue sources".<sup>26</sup> The central exchequer provides some 85 per cent of their expenditure in the form of grant finance.

Thirdly, and as a consequence of the above two factors, the South African public sector's taxation capacity is strongly centralized. As of 1985 some 86 per cent of total tax and non-tax revenue was collected by the central government, five per cent at regional level (this includes the homelands and TBVC states) and nine per cent at the local government level.

What then of the DoF's alternative policy prescriptions? While Croeser recognizes that the centralization of functions does have certain advantages,<sup>27</sup> it is the benefits which a policy of decentralization of powers is claimed to hold that are generally more attractive to the department's policy makers. They are the following:

- in cases where the benefits of a service can be confined largely to the users of that service, decentralization allows the cost of the service to be more closely linked to the price charged for the service;<sup>28</sup>
- "appropriate services" can be provided for smaller and more homogeneous communities, thus also allowing for greater efficiency and effectiveness;
- decentralization allows a greater willingness by communities to contribute financially and in other ways to local projects; and
- decentralization allows for a relatively smaller degree of monopoly power than in the case of centralized government, which should therefore also allow for a greater efficiency in the provision of services.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that a major motive behind the choice of a decentralized decision-making and financing model is to try to limit a never-ending procession of claims by lower authorities against the central exchequer for funds for services. As Croeser<sup>29</sup> himself puts it:

An important aspect of future expenditure decisions of the different tiers of government, e.g. their remuneration, standards of services, etc., is that there should not be easy access to a higher authority to finance unaffordable policies adopted in this regard. This is necessary to ensure that one of the major advantages of decentralised government is obtained (irrespective of the degree of centralisation), i.e. greater efficiency in the delivery of public services by way of more direct links between the demand and payment for services.

Croeser's analysis<sup>30</sup> of local authority finance in which he argues that white local authorities have more spare financial capacity than they admit to, and could therefore shoulder the burdens of a single tax base with the townships, would seem to be designed to limit claims by local authorities on the central state for additional finance.

Croeser does however accept that competing policy options of either decentralization or centralization have

drawbacks which are the “mirror images of their advantages”. Thus, a pragmatic policy approach combining the advantages of both decentralization and centralization options should be followed in restructuring intergovernmental relations in South Africa. Croeser suggests that various “community directed services” (such as education, health and housing) presently performed by the central government should be devolved to regional and local governments accompanied by a reallocation of revenue sources to these lower tiers of governments; the concession to centralization would be that certain taxes could be administered collectively by a shared tax administration system and then disbursed through a revenue-sharing model.<sup>31</sup>

Central government’s primary financial responsibility would be that of economic stabilization (macro-financial and economic policy issues) and an involvement in redistributive functions, both between regions and between individuals. The allocative function should rest primarily with regional and local governments.

In terms of what Croeser calls an “extreme case scenario” allowing for a maximum devolution of so-called community functions, the DoF has calculated that this would substantially restructure the pattern of government expenditure in South Africa. Central government’s share of expenditure would decline from 59 per cent to around 34 per cent; regional government’s share would remain constant at 29 per cent while local government’s share would increase dramatically from 12 per cent to around 42 per cent.<sup>32</sup>

This model of radical devolution clearly envisages that local government would be the most important tier of government in terms of expenditure in providing services. In a major cautionary qualifier, though, the DoF accepts that should local governments not have the capacity to undertake such functions then they would resort to the regional governments.

Although Croeser admits this scenario is an extreme case these projections provide a useful corrective to the apparently dominant perception that the political linkages between first- and second-tier government structures are the primary concern of the National Party and various state actors in terms of an envisaged federal constitution.

Intergovernmental financing in South Africa has generally taken place in terms of governmental transfers from the central government to lower tiers of government, rather than in terms of statutory revenue sharing between governments. Statements by DoF officials indicate that even if a “very limited” devolution of functions to lower tiers of government was followed with the devolution of some taxes presently collected at the central government level “one can therefore safely assume” that these services could not be financed from revenue sources at their disposal. In other words the central exchequer would still be called upon to help fund services, either in terms of a revenue-sharing model or by intergovernmental transfers.

Revenue sharing involves either a constitutionally or statutorily defined allocation of central government taxation revenue between different tiers of government. In this respect Croeser has pointed to the example of India, where 85 per cent of income tax paid by individuals and 40 per cent of excise duties is passed to the states. Calculating this allocation is an obvious potential point of dispute between tiers of government; he notes that any allocation based on the regional source of revenue would contain an in-built

advantage for the richer regions. Thus regional fiscal capacity and need, judged by such factors as population, per capita income, own revenue capacity and cost disparities, could be decided upon. Any formula based on the latter would aid the redistribution of revenue and wealth between regions.

Redistribution between communities or races (and possibly even individuals) is facilitated more easily by intergovernmental transfers since, as Croeser argues, they would be linked to “the gap between the standards of services currently provided to the different population groups”. But such calculations would still have to deal with the capacity of the economy to address existing disparities and whether uniform national service standards should apply. Croeser’s own suggestion is that communities should be allowed to fund or pay for higher standards of service should they want it and be able to afford it.

One way of addressing this problem would be through the decentralisation of certain community-oriented services, e.g. education and health, but where the central government still finances these services up to a certain uniform minimum level (e.g. equal Rand per capita spending). Communities (non-racial geographical areas) can then, according to their own priorities and resources, finance a higher level of service if they so wish, thus accommodating differences in perceived needs. There are however a few provisos in this regard. One of the most important is that such transfers must be made within a non-racial government structure, and must not be ‘apartheid’ in disguise. A further proviso is that it should be limited to truly essential services that are of national importance.<sup>33</sup>

### Some other state perspectives on regionalism

Besides the provinces and the Department of Finance, a number of other state actors have an important interest in the regionalist debate. They include the recently established Department of Regional Matters and Land Affairs, the regional development advisory committees and regional services councils. To this could be added the Department of Foreign Affairs and Secosaf (as it deals with the TBVC states) and the Development Bank of Southern Africa.<sup>34</sup> Some comments and perspectives from the former group will be noted.

The establishment of a fully fledged Department of Regional Matters and Land Affairs with overall responsibility for provincial and homeland issues (excluding the TBVC states) testifies to the priority and centrality which regional government has come to play in government thinking and administration. Until its establishment various state departments were charged with different aspects of either provincial or homeland issues – a testimony to the administrative legacy of apartheid policies and the creation of a “state within a state” through the Department of Native Affairs and its various successors. The Department of Development Aid has been abolished and its functions reallocated to other departments, to create at a central government level colour-blind departments of state (with the exception of the Department of Education and Training).

The new department has responsibility for dealing with planning, urbanization, provincial and homeland matters (with the exception of their budget which remains with the Department of State Expenditure), regional development and land affairs.<sup>35</sup> In purely functional terms this reshuffle must give the Department the capacity to become almost as central to overall state policy-making as the Department of

Constitutional Development and Planning was in the P W Botha era.

For example regulating physical planning in the entire country (except for the TBVC areas) will reside with the Department, in terms of the Physical Planning Act passed during 1991. A major goal of the Act is to establish a clear hierarchy of planning responsibilities between different levels of government, particularly with regard to regional development and structure planning. Regional planning will now be able to transcend homeland/provincial boundaries in a more meaningful way than it has in the past.

In this respect the functioning of the regional development advisory committee (RDAC) system will probably be closely co-ordinated with structures to ensure regional structure planning. The RDACs already function in terms of the economic development regions and must surely see themselves as the ideal agency for such planning responsibilities. In Region H (the PWV region) the RDAC has already attempted to co-ordinate regional planning but has found little enthusiasm from the Regional Service Councils (RSCs) in its area.

The RDACs have in the past had minimal executive and administrative competence but the increasing regionalist dynamic to government policy has seen some try to carve out a more meaningful role for themselves as regional development co-ordinating agencies. Some RDACs have and are compiling regional development strategies to stimulate economic development within their regions. These investigations take place with financial assistance from the Development Bank.

It would seem that a major issue for some RDACs is a rather limited interest or involvement by the homelands (to say nothing of the TBVC states) in RDAC functioning. For example the chairman of Region H's RDAC has argued that Kangwane's involvement in the RDAC is crucial if a regional development strategy is to be developed by the region.<sup>36</sup> The central government is encouraging the RDACs to embark upon such strategy documents, partially since it is argued that this will "no doubt simplify the introduction of a new form of regional government".<sup>37</sup>

The regionalist debate has also seen the Regional Services Councils evaluate their potential place in and linkages to a restructured system. Their interest has developed from several issues. First, the RSCs are already "regional" institutions, albeit as institutions at a local government level and with an area of jurisdiction much smaller than the nine development regions. They take their claims to having created a "regional" awareness among their constituent local authorities very seriously indeed. In the Transvaal the development region boundaries almost totally provided the basis for a subdivision into smaller RSC jurisdictions.

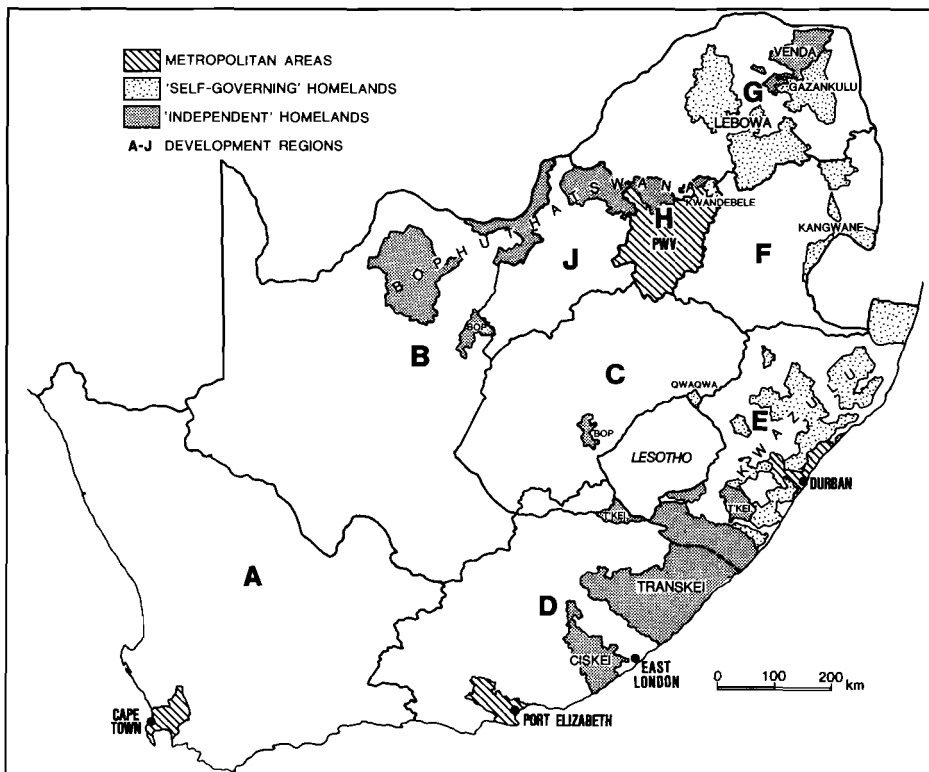
In a related issue, a programme of radical devolution would benefit local

authorities and RSCs at the expense of the provinces; one RSC chairman has pointed out that the functions that the Regional Service Council Act lists as RSC responsibilities, cover most of the major functions of the provinces.

Third, following the abolition of the provinces' legislative capacity in 1986, some RSC chairmen saw themselves as having to fill the void left by the scrapping of the provincial councillors – i.e a distinctly political role alerting the province to pressing political issues within their region.

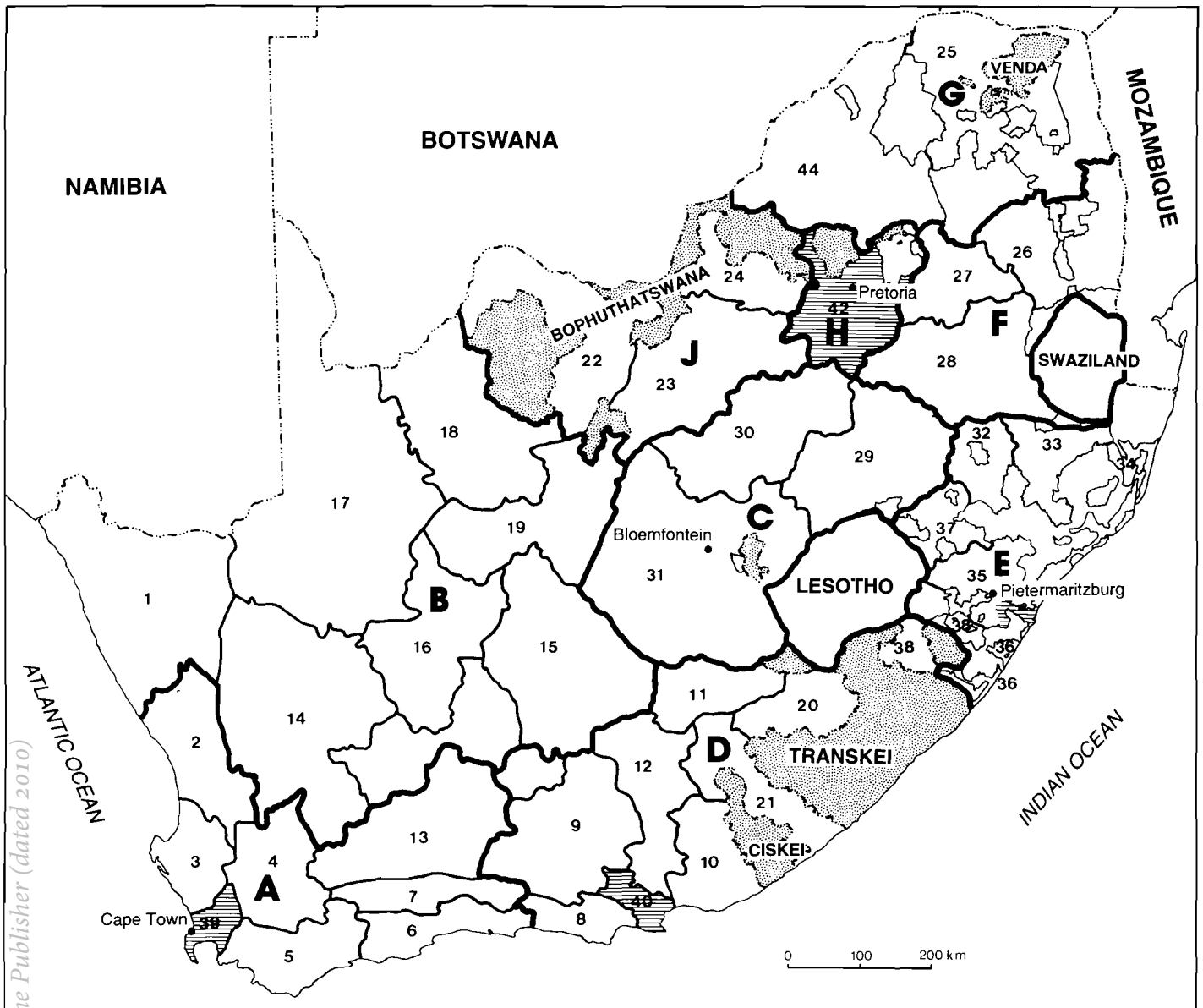
Fourth, there is a slight overlap of involvement by some RSC chairmen in RDACs in their wider region. This has happened especially in the rural Transvaal through joint chairmanships. It would seem that there is also a grey area between some of the roles of RSCs and RDACs, which allows either institution to further its own "regional" interests at the expense of the other.

Finally, some urban-based RSCs are arguing that their very likely conversion into metropolitan authorities would allow them to fulfil agency functions on behalf of regional second-tier authorities.<sup>38</sup> They go further and argue that should the boundaries of these regional authorities coincide with those of the RSCs then their RSCs could be converted into the regional structures. In other words, the smaller the jurisdiction of the regional authorities, the greater the prospects for an involvement by RSCs. Yet for all these factors, it would appear as if the RSCs have not developed a consistent position on possible relationships to a restructured second tier of government. Whatever happens though on the second-tier level, RSCs in the Cape, OFS and the Transvaal will have to follow the model of the Joint Services Boards in Natal and extend their jurisdictions into the homelands. This might be the most important effect of a new tier of regional government upon the RSCs.



Map 1





Map 2

### Some comments on regional boundaries

As shown in the preceding sections there is now a firm consensus within the state that the nine development regions could be used as a "point of departure" for planning a restructured second tier of government. However, the qualifying phrase of "point of departure" has already prompted the wide range of state actors, including homeland and TBVC interests, to suggest varying, often competing, alterations to the established boundaries. As an illustration, see the differences between the present regional boundaries (Map 1) and suggested alternative boundaries used in an important analysis by the Centre for Constitution Analysis based at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 1991) (Map 2).

The most fundamental changes are the ways in which the regions have been redrawn to facilitate the incorporation of some of the homeland and TBVC states into the proposed

regions. For example, the boundary between Regions D and E, which presently runs just north of Umtata, is shifted much further north to include the Umzimkulu region of Transkei and white farming area of East Griqualand into a much larger Eastern Cape region. It should be noted that Chief Buthelezi has already given notice that he could lay claim to Umzimkulu as being traditionally part of the Zulu kingdom.<sup>39</sup> This could well be acted upon if the HSRC map reflects dominant thinking within the state. In an additional complicating factor Umzimkulu is the biggest ANC branch in the country with 10 000 members.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly, the boundaries between Regions A, B and J are all shifted southwestwards in a move which stems from the enlargement of Region J to include all of the western areas of Bophuthatswana. The only areas of this state which fall outside this redefinition of Region J are the urban areas north of Pretoria (in Region H) and a small part in the OFS

(Region C). The result is that Region B contains no homeland (which also serves to alter the racial demographic balance in the region in obvious ways and with obvious political consequences) and that Region A becomes much smaller. Small changes also occur between Regions G and F, west of the Kruger National Park and cause the Pongola district of the Transvaal to fall into Region E.

A possible explanation for these proposed changes could relate to the rise of the notion of subregional units. This concept, which seems to have developed only during the last year (at least in official statements on regionalism), envisages that certain homeland interests might wish to retain a distinctive role for the present homelands within the wider regions. Thus subregional status would allow these areas to have a special status within the regional legislature and over certain defined topics (for example, education).

In differing ways both the Transkei and Bophutatswana authorities argue for regional distinctiveness. Transkei's General Holomisa has laid claim to a special administrative coherence for the region and a preference for a federal solution in the first few years of a post-apartheid South Africa, while President Mangope's administration has begun to develop linkages with white interests in the Western Transvaal. This probably presages an attempt to maintain a role for himself in a possible new region.<sup>41</sup>

Yet official thinking does not appear to envisage that subregional status will extend as far as the present homeland bureaucracies retaining a distinctive position within the wider region. Olaus van Zyl of the TPA has argued that these would have to be amalgamated with the relevant sections of the provincial bureaucracies to form a new regional civil service. Van Zyl argues that any concession to a separate subregional civil service would soon lead to demands for a separate governing authority for the ex-homelands or subregions.<sup>42</sup>

In the Transvaal and possibly in the Cape, the provincial bureaucracies already operate on internal subregional divisions based on the respective development regions. A wide variety of state departments also use these boundaries – a move which would surely facilitate the potential amalgamation of differing civil services. In both Natal and the OFS there is a much greater degree of overlap between development regions and provincial boundaries, which would also facilitate the establishment of new authorities.

As the debate among establishment actors and interests unfolds one can expect that suggestion and counter-suggestion, or claim and counter-claim, will be made for the boundaries of the regions. Already it seems that the OFS is keen to see the incorporation of the southern Vaal Triangle into the OFS, presumably in order to bolster the economic resources of Region C. Such a move would also dilute the economic power of Region H *vis-à-vis* the other regions. This would happen even further if Region H was divided into separate northern and southern regions based around Pretoria and Johannesburg respectively. If this was done then ten regions would be created – many official spokesmen indicate that “nine or ten” regions may be the end result.

## Conclusion

This analysis has pointed to the differing emphasis placed upon interpretations of regionalism by some of the more

important administrative agencies within the South African state. As such it suggests that, apart from the general commitment to a quasi-federalist dispensation, there are important differences of opinion over the way in which it should be structured. Part of this clearly stems from calculations of bureaucratic self-interest by contending administrative and political agencies but it also reflects the realization that decisions about the standing of regional or second-tier governments or authorities has to be situated within a wider context of the powers of the central government and local governments.

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- 3 G Viljoen, *Information for nation building*, speech to the Annual Congress of the SA Institute for Library and Information Science, Pretoria, 26 August, 1991, p 2.
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- 24 G Croeser, Intergovernmental fiscal relations in a future South Africa, *op cit*, p 1.
- 25 *Ibid*, p 2.
- 26 *Ibid*.
- 27 They are: that where the services confer wider benefits than those to the direct users, then the central government is better placed to ensure efficient allocation; that horizontal fiscal inequalities can only be meaningfully reduced by action from the central government; and that greater efficiency and economies of scale in administration can be achieved through centralization.
- 28 "This means that the services provided will have a value determined by their market, which in turn will ensure a more efficient allocation of production factors, as well as enhance the effectiveness of the service."
- 29 G Croeser, Intergovernmental fiscal relations in a future South Africa, *op cit*, p 3.
- 30 G Croeser, "Financing of local authorities", *op cit*.
- 31 G Croeser, Intergovernmental fiscal relations in a future South Africa, *op cit*, p 3.
- 32 It should be noted that these figures add up to slightly more than 100 per cent.
- 33 G Croeser, Intergovernmental fiscal relations in a future South Africa, *op cit*, p 6.
- 34 It is interesting to note that what was probably the first analysis to take the development regions seriously as boundaries for potential new second-tier institutions came from a senior Development Bank official in 1986. See the analysis by Dr F J van Eeden in Human Sciences Research Council, 1988. The Development Bank has subsequently started using the regions as the basis for various statistical information.
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# Why Ghana is not a nation-state

*Professor Peter Skalnik of the Department of Social Anthropology, Charles University, Prague, Czechoslovakia, argues that, since independence in 1957, Ghana has made little progress in its attempts at nation-building.\**

## Introduction

The main thesis of this article is that the thirty-odd years that Ghana (the former British-ruled Gold Coast) has been an independent state were not marked by any significant progress in nation-building. I argue that factors like general political instability, persisting tribalism, economic malaise and the growing gap between the pace of development in the south and the north of the country effectively prevent formation of a nation-state comparable to nation-states of the modern era elsewhere in the world. Moreover I show that the abovementioned factors created greater reliance on local resources because the independent state failed to fulfil the expectations of its citizens. People took economic and political initiatives into their own hands and filled the vacuum created by the demise of the modern state.

Politicized ethnicity reflecting local, regional and other group interests has at times overshadowed the mobilizing capacity of the state. Thus, during the years after independence, local and regional loyalties were further strengthened by the ethnic ingredient to the detriment of the common cause of building a Ghanaian nation and state. Reasons for this are to be sought in the alienation of the state in Ghana

from the broad mass of its citizens. The Ghanaian state was founded by élite politicians, who called themselves nationalists despite the fact that their nation did not exist as such, and has not come into existence since. Instead, ethnic loyalties of a local and regional nature have become stronger.

Is it really so important that a successful modern state should at the same time be what political scientists call a "nation-state"? In his lectures at the University of Cape Town in 1984, Professor Gerard Chaliand of the *École Nationale d'Administration* in Paris argued that the concept of a nation-state was, perhaps, the most important tool used to facilitate European colonial expansion and world-wide Western domination. Does this imply that the instability and vulnerability of post-colonial states can be explained by their failure to follow the European model of nation-states? Or, should one suggest rather that Africa happens to be a huge laboratory in which this negative test of the incompatibility of the imported European nation-state model with the pre-colonial, colonial and current post-colonial political processes can produce the most fascinating results?

At this point, I wish to stress that the nation-state model, by virtue of its suitability for expansion and conquest, should by no means be seen as better than other models of political organization. Nonetheless, I suggest that Chaliand's idea should be taken very seriously. In his book *The Struggle for Africa*, he writes that at the independence of African colonial territories:

... it was the *nation-state* framework that prevailed, without anyone asking whether it suited local realities. Moreover, this model is the one that was adopted in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries after the collapse of the Spanish, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires. If it was justified in the context of nations that were already formed or well on the way to being formed (China, Vietnam, Korea, Egypt, etc.), it posed a problem, at once and in the long run, wherever the state included within it significant minorities oppressed by the majority group (the opposite, although rare, exists). In Black Africa, the nation state concept is peculiarly ill-adapted – in this connection the case of Somalia, where the people are really ethnically and religiously homogenous, is an exception. Few federal mechanisms were established, and almost universally the ethnic groups, although very much alive in reality, were ignored in favour of an abstract and counterfeit nation.<sup>1</sup>

In brief, Chaliand suggests that imposing the nation-state on people who are not prepared to develop it themselves as

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My special gratitude is due to the people of Nanun and my field assistants Salisu Wumbei, Yidana Adam and Alhaji Iddi for receiving me in their country and making my stay among them a great experience.

a result of their own process of socio-political change, leads to consequences which cripple any autonomous and creative social process.

In Europe, nation-states emerged on the basis of ethnic unity which has been accompanied by the plurality of states. Empires, like the Austro-Hungarian or Ottoman (but not Russian!) gave way to ethnic statehood. Eventually, each European nation, a definite historical, cultural and often linguistic entity, had founded its own sovereign political organization – the nation-state. Thus, Norway is the nation-state of the Norwegians, France that of the French, Greece that of the Greeks. This notwithstanding that almost every such nation-state contains some minorities: the Lapps in Norway, Bretons or Basques in France and Albanians or Turks in Greece. In Africa, the modern post-colonial states almost without exception (the exceptions being Somalia, Swaziland and Lesotho) have been founded on ethnic pluralism within each state. State unity thus stands in opposition to cultural and linguistic diversity. Many African ethnic groups are cut into two or more parts by the boundaries drawn as a result of colonial conquest.

Examination of nation-building processes in Africa since the disintegration of formal colonial structures affords a variety of cases, among which the Gold Coast/Ghana, which was the vanguard of the movement towards independence, proves to be one of the most interesting. The Gold Coast was granted internal autonomy in 1951 and attained full independence from Britain in 1957. The new state adopted the symbolic name of Ghana<sup>2</sup> in commemoration of a powerful polity in the western Sudan which was uprooted by the Almoravid Muslim order in 1076. It became a republic in 1960 but remained a member state of the Commonwealth. After an army-cum-police *coup d'état* ousted Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the founder of independent Ghana and the first president, in 1966, six other regimes, both military and civilian, tried their chance before the installation on 31 December 1981 of the present army-inspired but civilian-run regime led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry J Rawlings. The history of post-colonial Ghana represents a period of over thirty years of nation-building efforts by these regimes and governments. The main reasons why they did not succeed and the possible alternative models that are based predominantly on indigenous resources require further examination.

The Gold Coast became Ghana in 1957 as a result of "nationalism", symbolized in the person of Kwame Nkrumah. The name of the new state is another symbol based on the putative connection between ancient and modern Ghana. This mythical charter supported by "evidence" supplied by European educators such as the Rev Balmer, indigenous intellectuals such as J B Danquah or amateur researchers like Mrs Meyerowitz was meant to be an entry card into the club of "established civilizations" as ancient Ghana in the time of its zenith "was in many ways the equal of the contemporary kingdoms of Western Europe".<sup>3</sup> The adoption of the historical name of Ghana legitimizes the status of the newly founded state of modern Ghana and the new nation of the same name. The boundaries which were supposed to embrace the new nation, however, were defined only as a result of colonial conquest around the year 1900. This adoption of the name Ghana, as Goody shows,

a modern state, to crystallise attitudes both within and without the community. In this way the specific myths of new states contribute to both the unity of nations and the disunity of the continent.<sup>4</sup>

There can be no doubt that Nkrumah and his supporters (but also his opponents), most of them academically trained in the West, took from their Western educators the idea that building a nation-state in Ghana was a necessity. Nkrumah was well suited to the task because he came from the rather marginal ethnic group of the Nzima, which had little or no chance of dominating the country, and he certainly could not be accused of ethnocentricism or tribalism. Nevertheless, closer to his fall Nkrumah's security guard depended disproportionately on Nzima officers, whom he trusted more than others.<sup>5</sup> Conversely, Nkrumah could not but support the nation-state idea (albeit without the presence of a nation) because as an Nzima he would not have had the slightest chance of ruling a country in which the largest and most powerful group was the Ashanti nation led by its indigenous ruler Asanthe and supported by the common belief in the might of the Golden Stool. In obvious contrast to Ashanti nationhood and statehood, Ghana as a nation, however fictitious, offered a prime opportunity to a person like Nkrumah to rise to prominence as both statesman and nation-builder.

To understand the problems of present-day Ghana as a socio-political unit one has to go back five hundred years to answer the question: "What was the Gold Coast and how did it emerge?" The coastal regions of today's Ghana were first sighted by Portuguese navigators in the fifteenth century. Because they were searching for gold and it appeared that they found it there, they gave this area the name of the Gold Coast. The Portuguese built the famous fortress Elmina in 1482, but their presence on the Gold Coast was soon superseded by more intensive trading colonialists such as the Dutch, English, and even Danes, Swedes and Brandenburgers, who in their quest for slaves and gold established themselves in various places on the coast. Today, the castles and forts along the coast remain as evidence of these efforts.<sup>6</sup> From the first third of the nineteenth century Gold Coast colonialism became increasingly a British venture, with the Dutch finally leaving Elmina in 1824.

Direct colonial administration in the coastal Colony had started by approximately 1830 and preceded British rule in "Ashanti"<sup>7</sup> by at least fifty years.<sup>8</sup> Precolonial Asante was situated in the core of the area which was later to become Ghana. It consisted of a cluster of Akan-speaking omans or chiefdoms, loosely united in the Asante federation which, although it had some imperial tendencies, did not have the means of controlling the territories that it claimed. In fact decentralization was the Ashanti model.<sup>9</sup> The Ashanti were first defeated by the British only in 1817, and it took some time before the latter were firmly in the saddle.<sup>10</sup> The Ashanti protectorate was added to the Gold Coast colony and soon became the most important cocoa-producing area, especially after the areas closer to the colony's capital, Accra, became unproductive or affected by the swollen shoot disease that attacked cocoa plants.<sup>11</sup> The north was annexed as another protectorate – called the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast – only at the beginning of the twentieth century. Because of its relative economic unimportance, the British presence there was minimal and it was ruled indirectly with the help of local chiefs.

... serves to create the nation and, by supplying a focal point, similar in kind to the flag, the anthem, and the other ritual trappings of

There are different views about the existence or non-existence of a nation in Ghana. For example, David Kimble, a political historian of Ghana, argues that pre-colonial independent states could “be credited with the title of nation” and that as a result of colonial unification it became possible to think of the “Gold Coast nation” which could then demand “the status appropriate to a modern nation-state”. Kimble, writing in the wake of the rather unexpected drive towards political independence in Africa, adds that “the rise of nationalism does not wait for a fixed, final definition of the ‘nation’”.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to Kimble, Kofi Busia, well-known Ghanaian sociologist and politician, argues against the concept of a nation “in European homogeneous fashion”. Busia believes that in Africa

it would be visionary to conceive of a nation as one people, speaking a common language, bound together by a common heritage and a shared historical experience . . . . The African situation, in its contemporary context, calls for the concept of a nation of different tribes, possessing a diversity of traditions and even cultures, inhabiting a common territory, bound together by the common desire to preserve their newly won independence and unity, and by the goals of economic, social, cultural, and political progress which they share in common, and which they see can be realised only if they stay together as a nation.<sup>13</sup>

I believe that Kimble in his enthusiasm for independent Ghana, and Africa in general, does not distinguish between the actual social processes of ethnic formation and the ideology of nationalism. In fact, African nationalism was based on the identification of the group and class interests of the educated, foreign trained élites with the fiction of the nation and nation-state. The Ghanaian nation existed only in the minds of the “nationalists”. That they were nationalists without nations did not make them less nationalistic. Their main interest was evidently the attainment of sovereign independent statehood manned by themselves. The machinery of state, founded on the claim that it was the expression of the will of a fictitious nation, could then be used for purposes arbitrarily defined by the holders of state power. Patrick Marnham expressed this very presciently:

Until Africa has achieved self-determination and stepped out of the colonial shadow which was cast at the time of independence, the real nations of Africa will never have a chance to develop. Until they do, the pseudo-nations that exist today will remain under the control of the powers which set them up and of the native rulers who act as their proxies.<sup>14</sup>

In the absence of modern nations, “tribal” identities have necessarily played an extraordinarily strong role in the state-building processes. Conflict has been primarily between the ethnic and élite class identities of the same people, not so much between the abstractions of state and tribalism. Busia does not close his eyes to the existence of ethnic associations and tribalist tendencies that flourish in Ghana and in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. But he recommends that pluralism be accepted and incorporated into the solving of problems of regional development and decentralized local government. By giving tribalism opportunity in local self-government, he believes the base of democracy and chances for the viable larger unit of the nation will be strengthened:

If the regions of a State are more evenly developed, and the people are able to share adequately in the government of their own areas, tribalism will cease to be a divisive force.<sup>15</sup>

Busia thus calls for a compromise between the conceptual oppositions of tribe and nation by pointing out that in African conditions the opposition is not as pronounced as in the European historical situation. This position seems to parallel my own argument for recognition of the inadequacy of the European concept of the “state” in dealing with indigenous African centralized polities and against opposition of “state” and “stateless” polities in Africa.<sup>16</sup>

The primary reason for the failure of nation-building in Ghana and the resulting absence of a nation-state in Ghana has been the inability of successive Ghanaian regimes to “supply the goods” as expected by the citizens at independence. The gap between the development of regions, especially the country’s north and south, not only remained but deepened. Nor were the reasons for dissidence among the Ewe, who live on both sides of the colonial and now post-colonial border between Ghana and Togo, removed. Economic malaise in Ghana has actually fuelled Ewe separatism. Finally, ethnic nationalism among the smaller groups in various parts of Ghana, such as the Nanumba and Konkomba of Nanun in the underdeveloped north, has entered a new phase in which serious conflicts are being solved without recourse to the modern state’s mediation. Ethnic identities are thus strengthened at the cost of the ideal of national unity.

Three areas of evidence for the non-existence of the nation-state in Ghana may be examined in detail:

### The underdevelopment of the north

In contrast to both the Gold Coast proper and Ashanti, the savanna territories – comprising almost half of Ghana’s territory today – were subjected to colonial administration only after 1900. It must also be noted that up to 1914, the eastern part of modern-day Ghana – almost all of its Volta Region and an important part of the present Northern Region – was under German colonial administration for thirty years. Mission schools in the coastal south were established at least sixty to eighty years earlier than in the north. Cocoa, which the Gold Coast farmers started to grow as a response to European needs, brought enormous material progress only in the Gold Coast colony and, later, Ashanti (including, to some extent, its outer territories known as Brong-Ahafo), but did not benefit farmers in the Northern Territories (NTs) where a savanna climate prevails and cocoa cannot be cultivated.

It could be argued that whereas in pre-colonial times there was a lively and equal exchange of goods between the north and the south via several major entrepôts such as Salaga or Kintampo, the colonial conquest meant severance of this trade and the imposition of new relations of trade under new terms. The coastal colony, and later Ashanti, with their cocoa, gold and timber, were effectively incorporated into the world market to the benefit of their national and spiritual development. The north was found useful only as a labour force reservoir and became a peripheral appendix of the south. Its incorporation into the world economy was only indirect.

The colonial administration divided the Gold Coast into three major parts: the Colony, Ashanti and the Northern Territories. The fourth part, administered as the mandated British Togoland, was added after 1914. This division, with the exception of Ashanti, did not reflect language

(and ethnic) divisions. The Colony was inhabited by Akan (mainly Fanti-), Ga-Adangbe- and Ewe-speakers; Togoland by Ewe- and Voltaic-speakers as well as minor language groups of autochthonous Guan origin. The Northern Territories were divided into several Voltaic polities (chiefdoms) such as Dagbon, Mamprugu, Nanun and Wa whose inhabitants spoke closely related Mole-Dagbane languages, and there was also the vast, though sparsely populated, Gonja "over-kingdom"<sup>17</sup> in which Guan languages with Mande influence were spoken.

The rest of the territory was left with its Native Authority system, which led to the conservation of fairly strong chieftaincies and the very slow advance of literacy. The exception was, quite characteristically, the Dagarti (Dagaaba) of the north-west corner of the NTs, who had traditionally no chiefs and who had been subject to the early activities of white fathers who helped to create a relatively large literate group. The Dagaaba-speakers today are very strongly represented in the civil service and other specialized professions like teaching or health care. Education in the rest of the NTs was government-sponsored and originally aimed at the creation of middle élite cadres from chiefs' sons who would act as "modern" elements of Native Administration (within the framework of "indirect rule"). Widespread literacy began with the opening of schools following Gold Coast autonomy in the 1950s. However, there was little or no economic development. Northerners' consumer needs in manufactured goods did not go beyond a few "essential" items such as sugar, soap, kerosene and matches.

Migration of the labour force from the north to the south was limited to a few ethnic groups like the "Frafra" (Gurensi); the main contingent of migrants came from the Upper Volta.<sup>18</sup> Exportation of foodstuffs like yams, or rice, and industrial raw materials like cotton, was minimal until independence, even though the British were aware that the north had high agricultural potential, as well as cattle farming/ranching prospects.

The situation at the beginning of the 1950s when the first, still colonial, Nkrumah government, came to power, was one of blatant disproportion between the south (which by then included Ashanti and partly Brong-Ahafo and Eweland) and the north in terms of economic, political and cultural development. The 1950s saw the creation of the regional system; Ghana today has ten regions. Ewusi<sup>19</sup> made computations of development levels in the then nine regions, taking the Greater Accra Region as 1. The Northern and Upper regions were rated 0,11 and 0,07 respectively, roughly ten times less than Accra, Tema and their surrounding areas; other regions were rated at approximately one-third of Accra, and thus over three times more developed than the two northern regions.

The government pledged itself to the economic development of Ghana and to the creation of a unitary nation-state. Nkrumah realized that any ethnic divisions that he had inherited must not be used for political ends other than for unity. He and his Convention People's Party (CPP) fought so-called tribalism, at least rhetorically. References to the ethnic origin of public officers were not allowed, and the formation of political parties on other than a national basis was first discouraged, and then in November 1957, strictly forbidden. Even though this measure was taken ostensibly to combat tribalism, it is likely that it was directed against

opposition to the CPP party-machine. The last census which recorded ethnic classification was taken in 1960. In effect, however, Nkrumah's industrialization policies inevitably favoured the south and it was mostly southerners who were more educated and benefited from appointments to expanding state sector jobs. The army was led by southern officers while the northerners, considered good soldiers, were to be found in the rank and file.

Nkrumah's policies perpetuated and increased the inequality between the north and the south. Such an idealistically positive project as the Volta Dam proved to be a symbol of division – the lake destroyed the infrastructure between the north and the south so that today there is only one usable link between Accra and the north – the Kintampo road. Electricity from the Akosombo and Kpong hydroelectric stations is used exclusively in the south, or sold to the foreign-owned Volta Aluminium Company (Valco), Togo and Benin. Of course, as Ladouceur<sup>20</sup> shows, belated economic, educational and political development has contributed to regionalistic, if not separatist, tendencies in the north.

Nevertheless, northern regionalism, which thrived in certain periods,<sup>21</sup> was never strong enough to warrant the development of "northernness" as a basis for political cohesion, and there has been "no north versus south patterning of political alignments".<sup>22</sup> Ladouceur is too inclined to see more regionalism in the north than there was in actual fact. Northern regionalism certainly did not lead to any serious separatist tendencies (unless we stretch the story and try to interpret the Konkomba fighting with the Nanumba and Bimoba as pro-Togo separatism). The rule of President Limann (1979-1981), a Sissala northerner from the Upper Region (now Upper West Region), did not bring any radical change in terms of northern underdevelopment and dependence, and the north was not made a protégé of the government.

The coexistence of diametrically different patterns of political organization, along with an enormous economic and indeed developmental gap between the north and the south, can be seen as the main causes of the failure of Nkrumah's government and subsequent regimes to develop Ghana as a political nation, ie as a nation-state. One must at the same time acknowledge the undisputable fact that Ghana, torn between serious economic and political crises during the last twenty years, has not disintegrated and does not seem to show serious tendencies towards disintegration. Obviously there are regions and districts in Ghana where people have understood, of late, that they cannot rely on the central distribution of "essential commodities" like foodstuffs or some manufactured goods. Thousands and perhaps millions of people in Ghana, while taking care of themselves, do not challenge the apparent incapability of successive regimes to offer them what a modern state is expected to offer its citizens. The continuing disparity in development has had surprisingly small echoes in the form of regional or ethnic political dissidence or separatism. The Ewe case is a powerful example of such a paradox.

## The Ewe and the Togoland issue

For a number of additional reasons, the Volta Region, which considers itself to be and indeed is economically the least developed within the south, has shown separatist tendencies. These tendencies have, however, been neutralized by the

differences between various factions – ethnic, local or party-political within the region, and country-wide disputes – often disguised as issues of chieftancy.

The history of the Ewe and Togoland separatism perhaps explains why even such a potentially dangerous phenomenon has not been a real threat to Ghana. As Brown<sup>23</sup> persuasively shows, the Ewe have every reason to be unhappy because their ethnic group – classified into various subgroups and chiefdoms – has been divided, for the last seventy years, between the French and British League of Nations mandates/United Nations trusteeships and, since 1960, between the independent states of Togo and Ghana. Even before 1914, during the time of the German “Musterkolonie” Togo, not all of the Ewe lived within common boundaries. The important chiefdoms of the Anlo Ewe were part of the Gold Coast colony. The partition was resented by all the Ewe, but they could never become truly united behind their cause because they could not reach any workable agreement about the goals of their dissidence or the methods of achieving such goals. The time span since partition has also played a very important role.

The appearance and disappearance of various dissident movements with the inevitable effect of narrowing their membership, the loyalties of some Ewe leaders towards the existing regimes, both colonial and post-colonial, and much vacillation, caused by external factors, have considerably weakened the movement. During the initial period of the mandate (the 1920s and 1930s), the Ewe idealized the German Togo, which comprised all the Ewe with the exception of the Anlo. Later in the 1940s and 1950s they admired the relatively liberal Gold Coast as opposed to the highly oppressive French rule in Togo. Finally, the growing prosperity in independent Togo as against the weakening economic prospects in Ghana made the Ewe on both sides of the border admirers of the Eyadema regime in Togo although the “developed” Ewe were ruled by the “backward” northerners (President Eyadema comes from the “acephalous” Kabre [Kabye] ethnic group).

Relative underdevelopment of the Volta Region where the majority of Ghanaian Ewe (13 per cent of the Ghanaian population) live is popularly connected with talk about the Ewe threat. The Ewe are supposedly over-represented at the elite level (police, army, civil service, commerce and teaching professions) owing to the high level of literacy and specialized education among them. The Ewe are believed to participate in politics on a communalistic basis, ie they are supposedly ethnically biased. However, Brown<sup>24</sup> shows at length that these are stereotypical ideas developed by other Ghanaians about the Ewe. The latter actually emerge from his research as good, loyal Ghanaians, certainly not as “inward-looking tribalists” (to paraphrase a public remark made in 1979 by an Akan politician cum industrialist and then also a presidential candidate, Mr Victor Owusu). They are people who compare favourably with the ethnic “persecution complex” or the “close-knit clannish sentiment” of the Akan. That of course explains to a large extent why they do not succeed in, or even attempt, secession. According to Brown, it was the predominantly Akan-led Ghanaian governments (1967-1979) which made ethnic scapegoats out of the Ewe. Hostility towards the Ewe was invented in an attempt to find “explanations for the failures of the governments and the economy”.<sup>25</sup>

The state, on both sides of the border, has always been strong enough to manipulate the dissidents. Today, for example, under the regimes of Eyadema and Rawlings in Togo and Ghana respectively, there is practically no opposition to the partition of the Ewe. It must be noted that this is partly because the Rawlings regime is viewed as an Ewe regime, while northern rule in Togo is over the economically prosperous Ewe. Both regimes operate to the disadvantage of politicized and economicized ethnicity.

Brown has shown that accusations of manipulation by one or another ethnic group within each post-independence regime are hardly substantiated. In 1982/3, when I spent more than seven months in two sojourns in northern Ghana (my stay overlapped with the first 13 months of the present Rawlings regime) there were many people who made use of the old-new anti-Ewe sentiment. Suddenly, Rawlings was an Ewe, surrounding himself with other Ewe, etc. When I raised this question in 1986 in Accra with a friend who was not an Ewe but quite close to Rawlings, she laughed and then said quite seriously, that: “If there were two and a half Ewes in PNDC (Provisional National Defence Council) it would be too much”. The five years of Rawlings in power gave sufficient evidence even to ordinary people, who often think in ethnic terms, that the PNDC is not ethnically based.

It is noteworthy that Price,<sup>26</sup> who presents interesting research on the relationship between the various ethnic groupings of Ghana in his examination of the Akan-Ewe relationship, found that the Ewe “are overall the most particularistic” because they expect more favourable treatment from members of their own ethnic group. In addition, Ewe civil servants and soldiers are the most feared by other ethnic groups. Price shows that the Ewe are distrusted at any rate by the Ashanti and vice versa. His conclusion is that “the most ethnic-laden cleavage in contemporary Ghana is between the Akans and the Ewes, and particularly between the Ashantis and the Ewes”.<sup>27</sup>

My observations at the time of the 1979 election when I worked in northern Ghana are conclusive on one point: that the northerners temporarily suspended their dislike of the Ewe because many of them believed that the Akan supremacy, which characterized the two previous regimes, must be dismantled by the concerted effort of all the peoples of Ghana who lived on the periphery of the Akan core. Thus, it was believed that the Nzima, Ga, Ewe and the northerners should unite against the Ashanti and other Akan-speakers. Sometimes, even the Fanti were included in this coalition of convenience. The Ewe-dominated United National Convention led by William Ofori-Atta (“Paa Willie”) concluded a kind of alliance with the People’s National Party (PNP) of Dr Hilla Limann, which in the name of Nkrumaism disguised in populist slogans, subsequently won the election. This victory was understood by many as evidence of the popular will to finish with Akan domination in Ghana. Ethnic identity can thus be conveniently manipulated for various political and other goals.

### Nanumba versus Konkomba identities

The Nanumba had inherited from the past the *naam* or chieftancy which certainly has been the focal point of their identity. Nanun as a polity is defined by the recognition of the Bimbilla paramountcy by all the surrounding village



chieftaincies and elders, professional and “stranger” groups resident on the territories of those chieftaincies. Nanumba ethnic identity was legitimized by the founding myth, Nanun being derived from *Naa* and *nuu*, meaning chief and hand, ie chief’s hand. However, the foundation myth tells about ritual solidarity between the chiefdoms of Mamprugu and Dagbon which are situated to the north of Nanun. Nanun, Dagbon and Mamprugu were believed to be founded by brothers, sons of Gbewaa, the legendary leader of the migration to present-day northern Ghana. As such, war between them was antithetical and the identities of the subjects of their respective *naams* were not exclusive. In practice this meant that if people in Nanun were asked who they were they would say either Nanumba or Dagomba without bothering much about it. Similarly, the Konkomba were divided into “sub-tribes” that spoke their own dialects and had a history of internecine warfare. Only anthropologists and politicians spoke about “Konkomba”; there was no ethnic Konkomba identity. There was, moreover, no chieftaincy, among the Konkomba that would act as a uniting principle. Only when a Konkomba educated élite started to emerge, from the 1950s onwards, and formed the Konkomba Youth Association (Koya) some notion of the oneness of the Konkomba gradually emerged.

In Nanun a specific situation of potential conflict developed because the Konkomba happened to surpass in number the Nanumba “landlords” and a minority, therefore, continued to rule the numerical majority. The Nanumba *naam* represented by the chiefs stipulated the conditions under which the Konkomba could stay in Nanun. This involved paying homage to the chiefs, supplying tribute in labour and kind and referring Konkomba judicial cases to the Nanumba chiefs’ arbitration courts. The conditions were originally accepted by the first Konkomba migrants to Nanun who, however, represented only one “sub-tribe”. The members of other “sub-tribes” that followed the first group did not necessarily recognize these agreements. The potentially explosive situation was further aggravated by the Nanumba custom whereby each alien group could supply only one representative in the capacity of a chief. This privilege was awarded to the Kanjo “sub-tribe” who first arrived in Nanun in the late 1930s. The other Konkomba “sub-tribes” also wanted to have their own chiefs, and dissatisfaction on this and other scores<sup>28</sup> culminated in the Nanumba-Konkomba war of 1981, which cost more than a thousand lives, loss of hundreds of herds of cattle, houses and other property, mostly to the disadvantage of the Nanumba.

Although the Nanumba seemed to have lost the war, their *naam* was not overthrown. The result was rather to strengthen the identities of both the Nanumba and the Konkomba. The Nanumba became aware that they were different from the Dagomba because the subjects of the paramount *naam* of Yendi (the capital of Dagbon) did not feel themselves sufficiently involved in the conflict to intervene and help their Nanumba “brothers”. The Konkomba (with the notable exception of the Kanjo “sub-tribe”) were able to unite for the war against the Nanumba and continue to demand their right to have chiefs in all the places where they enjoy a majority. The Nanumba, while rejecting this demand, also strengthened their identity *vis-à-vis* the Konkomba. The overall result is that their mutually exclusive identities now play a much more important role in their

social life than does their general Ghanaian identity. More so because the Ghanaian state did not really help either side in the conflict even though the Nanumba, “chiefly people”, hoped that the state of Ghana would act as their natural ally. In colonial times, the chiefs and the “traditional states”<sup>29</sup> were considered more state-forming than the “acephalous”, “segmentary” or “stateless” “tribes” such as the Konkomba.

Local ethnic identity, thus, is being strengthened at the cost of the “national” identity. The Ghanaian nation-state remains a dream which grows more remote with every new ethnic conflict in the country. The Nanumba-Konkomba war is not unique; the number of bloody ethnic conflicts is high and is not limited to the rule of weak governments like that of Dr Limann. There were several outbreaks of these conflicts under the Rawlings regime. The gravest so far being the Konkomba-Bomoba conflict of 1986.

## Conclusions

I think that the concrete data given above support the view of Epstein that ethnicity and identity are intimately interwoven with hierarchy, stratification and politics.<sup>30</sup> Actually, I would argue that, ethnicity should be defined as the manipulation of cultural symbols for political and socio-economic ends. When interests of a political and economic nature overlap with historico-cultural divisions and are mutually strengthened, one can speak of ethnicity in action. Obviously, economic class interests may, under certain conditions, undermine this kind of active ethnicity because they tend to divide the historically developed cultural groups. This, however, hardly obtains in Ghana.

The Gold Coast/Ghana did not manage to remove the sharp differences that existed in access to political and economic resources. These inequalities nurtured ethno-cultural differences, as is clearly shown in the cases of the Ewe, the north in general and the Nanumba-Konkomba conflict in particular. In Ghana we are faced with a peculiar stalemate: people do not deny that they are Ghanaians, but in effect what matters to them are local or regional identities. One must realize that it is in their livelihood. If the role of the state weakens as far as the material conditions of life are concerned, the national or nation-state identity loses meaning to common people because they feel they do not benefit from the existence of the state. Similarly, as long as the Ghanaian state cannot offer young people of all language groups equal access to jobs, a higher standard of living or other opportunities for balanced development, their loyalty to the Ghanaian state will assume the form of lip service. Under such conditions a nation-state can hardly emerge. The factors that would forge it are not at work. Instead it is relative deprivation experienced by different ethnic groups and regions that prevents a nation-state from being formed.

The growth of, for example, Ewe education and the subsequent prominence of the Ewe in the civil service and in the army command do not help remove the structural impediments to the formation of a nation-state. Instead they aggravate the situation. If the same were to happen in the north, similar regional or local developments would have been likely. The Nanumba-Konkomba conflict of 1981 is a micro-situation, a test-case, for what is happening at the country level (I must avoid using “national level” here!).

Such conflicts have an important effect in forging and strengthening local consciousness as against all-Ghana loyalty. With every new "tribal" war or chieftaincy dispute the idea of the nation-state is increasingly suppressed.

One could speculate about the usage of ethnicity at the country-wide level. For example, if the government of Ghana were really to exclude the Akans from access to power in favour of the northerners and the Ewe, and the Akans were to become increasingly economically disadvantaged – or deliberately underdeveloped – one could easily envisage the rise of an all-Akan ethnicity expressed either in claims to an Akan independent state or, more likely, in attempts to overthrow the country's government. It is not impossible to view the recent attempts at coups in Ghana as expressions of Akan ethnicity, ie as a political endeavour that would make it possible for the Akan-speaking élite to take part in the leadership of the country. While it is evident that Ghana, being a state based on the shared interests of the education élite and some state employees (called "workers" as against "labourers" who are manual workers in this terminology), is no nation-state because it does not rest on an existing country-wide nation. It is also evident that ethnic divisions do not bear sole responsibility for the apparent failure of nation-building in Ghana. Apter's remark about "tribalism", which he does not attribute to being the result of purely ethnic conflict but rather as a combination of "localism, class cleavage, ruralism, religious antagonism, and many other forms of conflict" dependent on the context, is in my opinion valid also for nation-building.<sup>31</sup>

Cleavages of an historical nature, translated into economic and political advantages and disadvantages acquire a powerful momentum if interpreted in ethnic terms. One can hypothesize that building a nation through the mediation of a state machine imposed on a territory and people from outside takes considerably more time and effort than founding a state on the unity of economic, cultural and historical features. A well-functioning and stable nation-state in Africa and elsewhere in non-Western conditions may, as the Ghanaian case clearly illustrates, remain to a large extent the wishful thinking of local politicians and some Western "well-wishers" for a long time yet.

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# AFRICA MONITOR



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### NORTH AFRICA

#### Algeria

The June 1991 violence (see previous *Africa monitor*) resulted in the arrest of eight of the **Islamic Salvation Front's** (FIS) principal leaders, among them the president, Abassi Madani, and vice-president, Ali Belhadj. At the end of July a **conference** was held between the government and most of the 50 opposition parties, although this was boycotted by the FIS in protest at the continued incarceration of its leaders. At the conference, which ended on 2 August, calls were made for the ending of the state of siege and for **multiparty** elections to be held before the end of the year. A second meeting was held on 22 August, dealing mostly with the planned elections. The state of siege was lifted on 29 September. In the meantime the FIS prisoners embarked on a **hunger strike**, demanding to be recognized as political prisoners; within 48 hours their supporters were claiming that their deaths were imminent. They were subsequently moved to a military hospital, the government knowing that their deaths could provoke a new round of demonstrations.

In a national address on 15 October Pres Chadli Bendjedid announced that general elections would be held on 26 December 1991. A minor cabinet reshuffle accompanied the announcement, including the co-ordination of the trade, budget and treasury ministries under Prime Minister Ghozali. The **dinar** was **devalued** by 22 per cent as a counter-inflationary measure after consultations with the IMF in September. However, parliament rejected consumer price increases, another requirement under the IMF readjustment scheme (DN 2/7, 9/7; AC 12/7; SWB 15/7, 3/8, 24/8, 24/9, 17/10; JA 16/7, 6/8; ARB 31/7, 31/10; AN 26/8; K 9/91; E 28/9).

#### Chad

On 24 September the government disclosed that 49 soldiers had been killed by forces loyal to ousted president **Habré** in the northern

Tibesti region, where support for Habré is still very high. The violence continued, at least 40 people being killed in an **attempted coup** by interior minister **Maldoum Bada Abbas** and soldiers loyal to him on 13 October. Abbas was immediately arrested (K 9/91; SWB 26/9, 30/9, 15/10; AA 4/10, 18/10; C 15/10).

On 4 October Pres Idriss Déby ratified a charter on political parties, taking a step towards **multiparty democracy**. The charter prohibited the formation of parties based on tribe, region or religion and banned paramilitary groups and foreign funding (C 7/10; SWB 10/10).

On 5 September **Libya** and Chad signed a security agreement followed by an accord on the return of Chadian nationals (SWB 7/9, 17/9).

#### Egypt

Pres Mubarak visited the **United Kingdom** from 23 July for four days at the invitation of Queen Elizabeth II, the first ever state visit to the UK by an Egyptian president. Mubarak also visited **France** for talks with Pres Mitterrand (SWB 24/7, 29/7).

Egypt and Tunisia signed an **anti-fundamentalist** agreement in July, an unprecedented undertaking to fight against fundamentalist activity in all its forms (AC 26/7; ARB 31/7).

**Amnesty International** issued a report on 23 October in which it accused the Egyptian government of systematically torturing hundreds of its citizens, not all of them political activists (S 23/10; ARB 31/10).

(Talks with Gaddafi – see Libya.)

#### Libya

On 2 July Gaddafi held further talks with Pres Mubarak of **Egypt** on the Middle East and relations between their two countries (see previous *Africa monitor*). Ties between the two leaders strengthened with continued consultations and visits, resulting in Egypt removing all border posts along its common frontier with Libya on 6 August. Immediately thousands of Egyptians flocked to Libya in search of employment. Mubarak was said to have

personally encouraged Gaddafi to stop supporting the Al Bashir regime and Libya subsequently stopped sending oil supplies to **Sudan**. On 21 August Libya and Egypt signed a security agreement (ARB 31/7; SWB 6/8, 8/8; DT 8/8; DN 20/8; AA 23/8; AC 30/8; JA 3/9)

On 30 October a French judge issued warrants for the arrest of four Libyan state officials in connection with a bomb attack on a French DC-10 that killed 170 people on 19 September 1989. One of the suspects was Gaddafi's brother-in-law Abdallah Senoussi, reputed to be the second-in-command of Libya's intelligence services. Despite this, France joined Italy, Spain, Portugal and five North African countries in urging the European Community to end sanctions imposed on Libya for sponsoring **terrorism** (WA 30/10; C 31/10; ARB 31/10).

(Security agreement – see Chad; Prison demolition – see Sudan)

#### Morocco

In spite of accusations and counter-accusations of renewed military activity by the **Polisario Front** and the Moroccan government a cease-fire came into effect on 6 September. UN military and civilian workers arrived to monitor the **cease-fire** and assist with the referendum planned for 26 January 1992. On 21 August, however, King Hassan asked the UN to postpone the **referendum**, because he wanted to add 120 000 names to the voters' roll. According to him, many Sahrawis had fled Western Sahara to Morocco in the 1950s and he considered that these families should be entitled to vote (C 8/8; DT 13/8, 9/9, 25/9; SWB 15/8, 24/8, 28/8; WA 19/8, 2/9, 6/10; AA 23/8, 20/9; AN 26/8; E 31/8; K 9/91; AC 13/9; JA 16/10).

#### Sudan

On 3 July Sudan Radio denied an **Amnesty International** report, published in June, which stated that at least 60 political prisoners still remained in custody. The denial came two days later, as part of celebrations to mark the anniversary of the 1989 coup, Libyan leader

Col Gaddafi took part in the demolition of the infamous Kobar prison in Khartoum. The prison's 1300 inmates, many of them political prisoners, were reported to have been released.

On 22 August the police arrested 10 serving and retired army officers and a number of civilians and charged them with plotting a **coup**. This was the second allegation of an attempted coup in 1991, the previous one being in April.

On 28 August three of the rebel **Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA)** field commanders announced that they had taken over the command of the SPLA and accused Col John Garang of dictatorial behaviour. According to foreign news reports the split was essentially over whether the south should secede, the dissident group favouring an independent black state. Garang and his loyalists continued to support the idea of a united, secular Sudan although former president Mengistu's flight from **Ethiopia** meant that the SPLA had lost one of its principle backers. The United States, with OAU support, proposed the establishment of a demilitarized zone around Juba in the south of Sudan and the establishment of a neutral administration there. The **split in rebel ranks** led to the postponement of the first round of talks between the Sudanese government and the SPLA, planned for the last week in October in Nigeria (K 7-9/91; ARB 31/7; DT 9/8, 25/10; SWB 25/8, 2/9; ION 31/8, 7/9; S 2/9; DN 3/9; TWR 4/9; AA 6/9; AN 9/9; AC 13/9; E 14/9; AC 16/9; NA 10/91; JA 1/10).

## Tunisia

On 7 September the government claimed to have uncovered another coup plot by the fundamentalist movement **En Nahda**. Western diplomats and many members of the population greeted the news with scepticism, saying the government was using the claims as a reason to maintain a security presence on university campuses (K 9/91; SWB 2/10).

(Anti-fundamentalist agreement – see Egypt.)

## WEST AFRICA

### Benin

On 7 July Pres Soglo announced that former president Kérékou's aides would be put on trial so that "all the money they have stolen" when they were in power, could be recovered. The Beninese newspaper *Le Soleil* commented that by speaking of the "money they had stolen", Soglo was prejudging the case and was running the risk of provoking a witch-hunt the country could well do without and that his priorities should rather be reducing the **North-South antagonism** and getting the economy going again (SWB 10/7; WA 15/7; ARB 31/7).

### Burkina Faso

Pres Blaise Compaoré continued to reject demands for a **national conference**, proposing instead a **national reconciliation forum**. In protest the opposition Co-ordinating Commit-

tee of Democratic Forces (CFD) held a rally on 30 September in Ouagadougou that ended in clashes with government supporters. Earlier, on 26 July, Compaoré had appointed a number of opposition figures to the cabinet in an attempt to win support. On 5 September Compaoré announced that **presidential elections** would be held on 1 December, adding that he would be one of the candidates. Another demonstration, on 7 October, took place peacefully. On 18 October all the opposition parties withdrew from the presidential race, leaving Compaoré as the sole candidate. The opposition still wanted a national conference and Compaoré offered to hold a referendum on the issue. Although the opposition stated they were not against the idea, they added that they would never accept a "parody of consultation" (K 9/91; SWB 7/9, 10/9; WA 23/9, 14/10; S 1/10; ANews 21/10; ARB 31/10).

### Côte d'Ivoire

**Demonstrations** continued in Côte d'Ivoire, with students and teachers protesting about poor conditions. In mid-August the teachers' union called off the strike and the university opened on 9 September (SWB 13/7; ANews 26/8).

The government, already under pressure from all sides, reported a **coup attempt** on 30 July. It appeared that disaffected soldiers made the attempt a week earlier. Rumours quickly spread that 15 soldiers might have been killed and two of the twenty arrested soldiers had died in prison, but the reports were denied by official sources. Some newspapers speculated that the army's claim that disaffected soldiers were behind the coup attempt were only efforts to discredit the opposition (K 9/91; WA 11/8; AA 23/8).

Two **journalists** of the opposition paper *Liberté*, Jaques Kacou, the editor, and Georges Koffi, author of an article in which he called Pres Houphouët-Boigny a "terrorist and tyrant", were sentenced to three months' imprisonment on 23 July. On 13 August Kacou was freed, but the appeals court ordered Koffi to serve the remainder of his sentence until 7 September (SWB 25/7, 16/8; WA 11/8, 1/9; C 14/8).

(Conference on Liberia – see Liberia.)

### The Gambia

The 14 June march by sixty soldiers (see previous *Africa monitor*) had a sequel in the dismissal of the Commander-in-Chief of the Gambian army, Col Momodou Ndow Njie. He had refused to see the soldiers to discuss their grievances, instead ordering the military police to isolate them. In their subsequent march, they had apparently called for the colonel's resignation. Following an inquiry, seven soldiers were dismissed on 10 September for their role in the protest march (WA 1/7; AC 26/7; ARB 31/7; SWB 12/9).

### Ghana

On 26 August, at the inauguration of a 260-member **Consultative Assembly**, Flt-Lt Jerry Rawlings announced a timetable for a return to constitutional rule. A national **referendum** on

a draft constitution was scheduled for February 1992, to be followed by both presidential and parliamentary **elections** late in 1992. (AC 13/9; SWB 27/9; NA 10/91).

On 4 September Rawlings opened the **Non-Aligned Movement's** tenth ministerial meeting in Accra. Delegates at the meeting decided to adopt his address as an official working document (SWB 6/9; SN 7/9; WA 8/9, 29/9).

### Guinea

On 3 September Pres Lansana Conté announced that **multiparty elections** would be held in 1992. In April of that year an "organic law" to regulate the formation of political parties would enter into operation. Presidential elections would probably take place in 1993 (SWB 5/10; WA 20/10; ARB 31/10).

### Guinea-Bissau

The minister of education, Manuel Barcelos, was dismissed in the wake of a persistent **teachers' strike**, which began on 31 May. Despite his dismissal, the strike was not called off immediately, as the teachers were still not paid the allowances they demanded. The secretary of state for youth, culture and sports, Alexandre Furtado, replaced Barcelos (SWB 10/7, 29/7; ARB 31/7).

### Liberia

Late in June Pres Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire hosted a meeting of five West African heads of state to try to resolve Liberia's political crisis. Nigeria, Togo, The Gambia and Burkina Faso were represented. On 30 June a **peace accord** was signed and the conference established a commission to organize national elections within six months. In contravention of the peace accord, **Charles Taylor**, leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), whose forces continued to control virtually the whole country outside Monrovia, refused to disarm his forces. Then on 6 August, the rival Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), led by **Prince Yormie Johnson**, announced its withdrawal from the interim government, accusing the interim president, Amos Sawyer, of favouritism. A week later, the interim vice-president, Peter Naigow, an INPFL member, announced his resignation. The INPFL's withdrawal followed severe criticism by the interim government of the execution of four INPFL members, apparently for possession of Ecomog documents.

On 7 September it was reported that a force of between 3000 and 5000 Liberian troops had invaded Liberia from **Sierra Leone** and was locked in fighting with Taylor's NPFL troops. The main Liberian group in the attacking force was understood to consist of members of the Krahn tribe of former Pres **Doë**. The group called itself the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (Ulimo). Despite this incursion, peace talks went ahead on 16 September in Yamoussoukro, involving ten African heads of state or their representatives. All the different factions agreed to be disarmed by the Ecomog force. Johnson

claimed at the end of September, however, that the INPFL would refuse to lay down arms, complaining that it had been excluded from the negotiations in Yamoussoukro. He also explained that the execution of his four colleagues was ordered because they were planning to kill him. In the mean time, fighting continued along the border with Sierra Leone.

Another round of **peace talks** began on 29 October in Yamoussoukro, again without Johnson's INPFL present. Johnson warned that he would not consider as binding any agreement reached by the delegates, as he had not been invited. On 31 October Taylor agreed to surrender control of territory held by his fighters to Ecomog (C 1/7, 29/7; DT 1/7; SWB 2/7, 26/7, 1/8, 8/8, 7/9, 18/9, 10/10; DN 2/7; AN 15/7; WA 21/7, 1/9, 29/9; S 29/7; ARB 31/7, 31/10; AR 8/91; K 8-9/91; AED 12/8, 23/9, 7/10; NA 10/91).

## Mali

On 15 July the minister of territorial administration, and personal friend of ousted Pres Traoré, Lamine Diabira, and eight army officers, attempted to overthrow the government. Troops loyal to Lt-Col Toure and his transitional government arrested them while crowds poured into the streets in a show of support for Toure (SWB 16/7, 19/7; S 16/7; ACon 19/7; ARB 31/7).

On 29 July a **national conference** on the country's future political system began in Bamako. Toure was elected chairman by the more than 1 000 delegates from 42 political parties and 100 organizations. It ended in mid-August, reporting that a multiparty constitution would be put to a **referendum**. On 26 September the transitional government announced the election timetable. The referendum on the new constitution would take place on 1 December, municipal **elections** on 19 December, the first round of legislative elections on 22 December, the first round of presidential as well as the second round of legislative elections on 5 January and the second round of presidential elections on 22 January. (K 7/91, 9/91; SWB 2/8, 3/8; AB 11/91).

Switzerland had frozen ex-president Traoré's bank accounts and agreed to help recover funds transferred into Swiss bank accounts – estimated to amount to US\$1 000 mn. The move formed part of a new policy of the Bank of Switzerland to prevent Third World leaders opening and operating numbered accounts in Switzerland (K 9/91; AA 6/9; SWB 28/9; AED 7/10; WA 20/10).

## Mauritania

A new **multiparty constitution** was approved overwhelmingly in a referendum on 12 July, amid opposition claims that the military government had manipulated the vote. The official participation rate was more than 85 per cent, but opposition group claimed, "anybody could see that few people voted". By the end of September official recognition had been extended to five political parties (K 7/91, 9/91; SWB 13/7, 15/7, 18/7, 27/8, 2/10; WA 28/7, 1/8; ARB 31/7; AED 9/9).

On 18 July, at a meeting in Bissau, the foreign ministers of **Senegal** and Mauritania agreed to reopen their common borders and resume diplomatic relations. Senegal broke off diplomatic relations with Mauritania in April 1989 after bloody clashes between farmers and pastoralists along the banks of the Senegal River. Although the two countries still dispute the exact border between them, it was hoped that the matter could be resolved diplomatically. On 15 October, after a visit to Mauritania, Malian Prime Minister Soumano Sacko, said his country would be willing to mediate in the conflict (SWB 20/7; ARB 31/7, 31/10).

**Human rights abuses** again came under the spotlight in Mauritania with the human rights group, Africa Watch, issuing a report in May, claiming that over 200 blacks had been executed or tortured to death. On 20 August, Amnesty International (AI) confirmed the claims and issued a list of 339 political prisoners reported killed in the country's prisons, military barracks or police stations between November 1990 and March 1991. AI also said the killings represented an unprecedented level of repression against black ethnic groups in the south of the country. Pres Taya had followed up a 29 July amnesty for state security and press law offenders with a further **amnesty** on 18 August, for people who had been sentenced in their absence and had been in exile for 15 years (AR7-8/91; AN 15/7, 26/8; WA 15/8; SWB 20/8, 21/8; NA 9/91; K 9/91; ACon 23/9).

## Niger

On 12 July Pres **Ali Saibou** resigned as president of the ruling party, the National Movement for a Developing Society (MNSD), to "place himself above all parties and to devote himself exclusively to his duties and responsibilities as president of the republic". The **national conference**, twice postponed from 27 May and 15 July and finally starting on 29 July, drew about 1 200 delegates representing the government, political parties, professional and labour bodies and farming and nomadic communities. The postponement of the conference was seen as a sign of government insincerity and was greeted by demonstrations in the capital, Niamey. On the second day of the conference, a declaration of sovereignty by the majority of the delegates was followed by a walk-out by government delegates; the army had refused to attend from the outset. On 8 August the national conference **suspended the constitution** and cancelled Saibou's executive powers. On 10 September it voted to dissolve the government and to replace the army chief-of-staff, Col Toumba Boubacar, and his deputy. At the end of August Boubacar threatened a coup against the conference, which he said was trying to humiliate the army. Their replacements were Major Mazou Issa and Major Djibo Tahirou. Next on the agenda was to vote on 28 September to establish a high court of justice with powers to try government officials, including Saibou. The crime and abuse committee of the conference subsequently ordered the dismissal of officials implicated in the embezzlement of

some £40 mn between 1985 and 1990. The conference also decided that Saibou would remain head of state in the interim period of fifteen months until elections, although a commission from the conference asked for his removal. On 26 October Amadou Cheiffou, a regional director of the International Civil Aviation Organization, was elected **prime minister** of the **transitional government** (K 7-9/91; SWB 13/7, 15/7, 17/7, 20/7, 1/8, 12/8, 2/9, 7/9, 14/10, 28/10; JA 23/7; ANews 29/7; ARB 31/7, 31/10; AA 23/8, 4/10; WA 29/9, 20/10, 27/10; C 28/10).

## Nigeria

On 1 July the government declared William Keeling, a freelance journalist with the *Financial Times* of London *persona non grata* and expelled him from the country. The move followed a series of critical articles, the last being a report that the government had spent more than half the windfall earnings it had received from higher oil prices during the Gulf crisis. Keeling quoted donor agency sources as saying that at least \$3 000 mn was not accounted for in the annual report of the Central Bank of Nigeria. He speculated that the money had been spent on costly commitments such as Nigeria's participation in the Ecomog, involvement in Liberia and the holding of the OAU summit in Abuja in June (K 7/91; C 1/7, S 1/7; SWB 1/7, 5/7; DT 1/7; AA 27/7).

On 10 August, after a meeting with Pres Biya, Pres Babangida announced that the long-running border dispute with **Cameroon** would be solved peacefully. Border incidents between the two countries dated back to the 1960s and the talks between the two leaders were precipitated by a set of incursions by Cameroonian forces into isolated areas of eastern Nigeria in June (K 7/91; SWB 4/7, 3/8, 13/8; WA 25/8).

Celebrating the sixth anniversary of his 1985 coup as well as his 50th birthday on 27 August, Babangida announced the creation of **nine new states** in the hope that it would defuse rising social and political tensions. Instead, the news caused protest and violent demonstrations in northern areas and especially Jigawa State, where various groups felt that their centres should have been chosen as state capital. The structural changes also led to the creation of 47 new local government councils to make a total of 500 in the federation (E 17/8; SN 24/8; SWB 25/8, 29/8, 2/9; DN 26/8; AC 30/8, 27/9; K 9/91; WA 8/9; AA 6/9; ACon 9/9; FOA 10/91).

Former Nigerian head of state, **Gen Obasanjo**, visited **South Africa** from 10 to 12 September. During his visit he called on other African leaders to drop their hardline attitude towards South Africa (S 11/9; BD 12/9; C 13/9; SWB 14/9).

**Religious riots** in northern Nigeria in mid-October between **Muslims** and **Christians** left at least 100 dead. On 14 October thousands of Muslim youths in Kano marched in protest at the tour of the area by Reinhard Bonnke, a German Christian evangelist. The demonstrators were aggrieved as the authorities had earlier banned a similar tour by a South African

Islamic scholar. The protest quickly degenerated into conflict between the two groups and shops, houses and places of worship were burnt. Babangida flew back early from the Commonwealth summit in Harare on 17 October and appealed in a broadcast for calm. The same day police managed to restore order and a curfew was partially lifted. On 23 October a thirteen-member panel was appointed to investigate the incident (SWB 16/10, 17/10, 20/10; S 17/10; AA 18/10; WA 27/10; ARB 31/10).

**Primary elections** for the two main parties (postponed from 7 September) passed off peacefully on 19 October. The elections were held to choose candidates for elections scheduled for 14 December (WA 8/9, 20/10; ARB 31/10).

## Senegal

On 20 September the national assembly adopted a **constitutional law** making a number of changes to electoral procedures. The new law lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 years and limited the maximum presidential mandate to two terms of seven years each (K 9/91; SWB 23/9).

Pres Diouf visited the **United States** from 10 to 12 September where he received red carpet treatment for his country's role in the Gulf war. Pres Bush urged Diouf to send a military contingent to Liberia, offering to finance the exercise (S 11/9; TS 17/9; AA 20/9; WA 29/9).  
(Opening of borders – see Mauritania.)

## Sierra Leone

In mid-July the minister of social services, rural development and youth, Musa Kabbia, resigned because of differences within the ruling All Peoples Congress (APC) over the new constitutional proposals (see previous Africa monitor). Later, the governing council of the APC suspended ten members of parliament, including Kabbia, "pending further investigations into their conduct". They were subsequently reinstated on 20 September. A **referendum** on the new multiparty constitution took place during the last week in August. Despite disruption by rebels, 75 per cent of the electorate participated, of which 60 per cent voted yes. On 14 September it was reported that six political parties had formed a United Front of Political Movements (Uniform). On 23 September Pres Momoh dismissed almost his entire cabinet and appointed two new vice presidents and a new finance minister (K 7/91, 9/91; WA 21/7, 4/8, 25/8, 20/10; C 3/9; S 3/9; SWB 3/9, 7/9; AA 6/9; AED 7/10; AC 25/10; NA 11/91).

## Togo

On 6 July **Gilchrist Olympio**, son of Togo's first president and a bitter opponent of Pres Eyadéma, who had killed his father in the 1963 coup, returned from exile to be greeted by thousands of supporters.

On 8 July the long-awaited **national conference** began; the 900 delegates elected Bishop Hyacinthe Kpodzro as its president. On 16 July the conference declared itself sovereign and announced the **dissolution** of the **National Assembly** and the **abrogation** of

the **1980 constitution**. For a week the government suspended its participation in the national conference's proceedings, rejoining only after it had expressed certain reservations. The army maintained a critical distance from proceedings throughout, voicing its continued loyalty to Pres Eyadéma and its distress at the conference's "slandering" attacks on its honour. On 23 August the army's stance hardened to include the threat of intervention; this followed the national conference's announcement of plans to restructure and reduce the size of the armed forces.

On 24 August the conference decided the **timetable for elections** in 1992. A **referendum** on the new constitution would be held on 9 February, followed by local, legislative and presidential elections. These announcements were made against the background of accusations that Pres Eyadéma was plotting to disrupt the whole process. Eyadéma vigorously denied the charges, but on 26 August issued a decree suspending the conference. The delegates ignored this and the following day stripped him of most of his powers and installed human rights leader **Kokou Koffigoh** as prime minister. Eyadéma recognized the new prime minister on the 28th and the national conference proceedings were brought to a close.

Koffigoh named his **transitional government** on 7 September. On 26 September he announced the formation of a Defence Council, which, with himself as chairman, met for the first time on 10 September.

On 1 October soldiers claiming loyalty to Eyadéma twice stormed the national radio and television stations in attempts to return him to effective power. Eyadéma himself successfully appealed to the troops to return to barracks. On 8 October soldiers again attempted to abort the democratization process, trying to seize Koffigoh himself. Considerable popular disturbances ensued, with looting and some loss of life. Once again Eyadéma ordered the soldiers back to barracks. The French government issued a veiled warning expressing its support for the democratic process.

On 14 October Koffigoh established the **Constitutional Commission** and two days later met representatives of the armed forces to discuss their grievances, in an attempt to resolve the simmering crisis (ARB 1/7, 1/10; SWB 10/7, 11/7, 13/7, 17/7, 18/7, 23/7, 25/7, 26/7, 25/8, 27/8, 28/8, 30/8, 31/8, 9/9, 13/9, 30/9, 2/10, 3/10, 8/10, 9/10, 10/10, 11/10, 17/10; ANews 15/7; JA 17/7, 24/7, 31/7, 7/8, 4/9, 18/9, 16/10; WA 29/7, 2/9, 21/10; K7/91, 9/91, 10/91; S 28/8, 2/10; AC 13/9; NA 10/91).

One consequence of the upheavals in Togo was the normalization of the country's relations with neighbouring **Ghana**. On 5 October the two states opened their borders and agreed to settle disputes through dialogue (ARB 1/10).

## CENTRAL AFRICA

### Cameroon

The government showed its willingness to use force to counter opposition calls for a sovereign **national conference**, with the loss of several

lives as a result. The opposition targeted July especially for a civil disobedience campaign, calling it **operation "ghost town"**, a highly successful campaign which brought business and transport to a halt from Mondays to Fridays, allowing the public to stock up with food on Saturdays. However, by the end of the month some groups accused the main opposition parties of further impoverishing Cameroonians. Pres Biya refused to meet leaders of the National Coordination of Opposition Parties and Associations (Ncopa) who planned to see him on 24 July, saying he would only meet them separately. Some groups eventually saw him on an individual basis, but the strikes and demonstrations continued on a regular basis. On 11 October Biya set 16 February 1992 as the date for legislative elections, bringing these forward from the previously planned date of 1993. He did not alter his position on a **national conference**. On 17 October Ncopa called off a planned boycott of the reopening of schools "as a show of its disposition to dialogue". It carried on with the ghost town campaign, however. On 30 October the prime minister, Sadou Hayatou, met opposition parties to discuss a proposed electoral code (AR 7/8/91; DN 2/7, 9/10; S 3/7, 17/7; C 6/7; SWB 6/7, 13/7, 17/7, 14/10, 23/10; WA 7/7, 28/7, 11/8; ANews 15/7; AA 26/7; ARB 31/7, 31/10; AED 12/8; K 10/91; AC 15/10).

(Border dispute – see Nigeria.)

### Central African Republic

After more protests and strikes (see previous Africa monitor) Pres Kolingba announced on 7 July that political parties were legal and that a **national conference** would be held in September. During the first week of July, ten trades unionists were arrested, and several union members severely wounded in a heavy-handed clampdown on trades union meetings. The government also suspended all trades union activities for four months. On 28 August the head of a co-ordinating committee set up to convene the national conference, Aristide Sokambi, was arrested for a common law offence, thereby delaying the start of the conference. His lawyers claimed that the action was only an attempt to discredit him. Kolingba, who in the mean time resigned his leadership of the ruling party, met separately with opposition leaders on 14 and 17 September, subsequently announcing that the national conference would begin on 19 February 1992. Opposition groups rejected this, accusing the government of stalling. By the end of October the number of officially recognized opposition parties had risen to nine (AC 26/7; ARB 31/7, 31/10; WA 4/8, 8/9; SWB 30/8, 31/8, 17/9; K 9-10/91).

On 6 September, in a move to mark the tenth anniversary of Kolingba's taking office, former CAR leader, **Jean-Bedel Bokassa**, had his sentence reduced from life to 20 years' hard labour. Condemned to death in 1987, his sentence had been commuted to hard labour for life in 1988 (K 9/91; SWB 9/9).

### Congo

New Prime Minister André Milongo left for a five-day official visit to **France** on 8 July, to

ask for help with Congo's severe financial difficulties. The government admitted that it was unable to pay **civil servants'** salaries for June. Meanwhile, the treasurer-general, Luc Lep-foundzou, was suspended for giving Pres Sassou-Nguesso more money than was allocated in the budget. Milongo failed to persuade France to fund the salary payments, as France wanted to see evidence of an agreed austerity programme with the international funding organizations. Despite these dire straits, the newly appointed ministers voted themselves salary increases of up to 80 per cent. Fraud investigations by the new government continued, and the president's older brother, Maurice Nguesso, was arrested for fraudulently receiving insurance premiums in his former position as head of procurement for the state petrol company. On 14 September the speaker of the parliament, Ernest Kombo, warned that **elections** scheduled for the first half of 1992 might be delayed because a national census still had to be conducted (SWB 10/7; WA 28/7; AED 12/8; SWB 17/8, 17/9; C 19/8; K 9/91).

### Equatorial Guinea

On 17 July Pres Mbasogo announced that **multi-party politics** was envisaged for the future, adding that he knew the people were not ready to accept it. He was proved wrong when, at the national congress of the sole legal party, the ruling Equatorial Guinea Democratic Party (PDGE), held from 4 to 6 August, delegates called for a revised constitution and the legalization of other parties (SWB 24/7; K 8/91).

### São Tomé and Príncipe

In mid-August the country adopted **IMF measures** involving the following changes: the currency, the dobra, was devalued, the price of petrol increased and only the prices of wheat flour and rice would be subsidized in future. The austerity measures would be evaluated in December or January 1992 when the country's debt, which stood at \$250 mn, would be renegotiated (ARB 15/9; AED 23/9).

### Zaire

Although the Zairean government agreed to opposition demands for the holding of a **national conference**, it decreed on 15 July that this would not have sovereign powers. Representatives of the three main opposition parties formed a "sacred union" and said they would not participate in a conference unless it was sovereign. On 22 July Pres Mobutu announced the appointment of one of his principal opponents, **Etienne Tshisekedi**, leader of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress, as prime minister. Protests and demonstrations followed the announcement, Tshisekedi refused the position and the outgoing prime minister, Mulumba Lukoji, was reappointed. The opposition announced that it would, after all, attend the national conference, which was supposed to start on 31 July but was immediately suspended for a week after opposition delegates com-

plained that the rural areas were inadequately represented. They suspected Mobutu of packing the conference with his own supporters. The conference was boycotted for the same reason again on 12 August, as organizers registered 3 458 delegates instead of the 20 850 supposed to take part. On the same day Isaac Kolonji Mutambay was elected as president of the national conference. On 21 August the Sacred Union presented its demands to Mutambay and a committee was established to verify each delegate's mandate. On 30 August the Sacred Union decided to end its boycott.

On 6 September the **IMF** suspended Zaire's eligibility for credit facilities, in view of its failure to pay arrears on US\$81 mn of outstanding loans. The United States suspended all financial aid to Zaire in response to human rights abuses. On 25 October France also suspended all aid to Zaire.

On 2 September an opposition demonstration which turned into **riots** took place in Kinshasa in protest at the repeated stalling of the national conference. The incident was violently suppressed by security forces and left ten people dead. Renewed rioting broke out on 23 September when soldiers occupied Kinshasa airport in protest over low pay. Thirty people died and **France** and **Belgium** decided to send troops to protect and evacuate the 4 000 French and 10 000 Belgian nationals in Zaire. The already frustrated and angry civilians joined the riots. By 25 September official sources put the death toll at 117 people with 1 500 injured, and with soldiers' looting sprees adding to the chaos. On 29 September Mobutu dismissed the army chief of staff, Gen Mayibanga and replaced him with the head of military intelligence, Gen Liyeko. On the same day Mobutu held talks with opposition leaders, after which he announced the reconvening of the conference on 1 October, following its suspension on 17 September because of a dispute between delegates. Mobutu again appointed Etienne Tshisekedi as prime minister, the latter accepting this time, vowing to his supporters that his new government would take control and depose Mobutu.

Relations between Mobutu and Tshisekedi appeared to be strained from the onset, especially over the appointment of the cabinet ministers. Eventually, on 14 October, a cabinet was announced, with the key portfolios going to four of Mobutu's supporters and the rest to opposition members. On 16 October Tshisekedi refused to recognize Mobutu's authority at the swearing-in ceremony, following which he was barred from his office by government troops. Consequently, Mobutu dismissed Tshisekedi from his post, provoking renewed protests, which turned into a few days of looting and fleeing of foreign nationals. On 22 October the Sacred Union refused to name another prime minister as requested by Mobutu, reaffirming support for Tshisekedi. Mobutu then named **Bernardin Diaka** as prime minister. Diaka, a member of the Sacred Union, was severely criticized by Union members for accepting the post and his membership was revoked. On 30 October Diaka announced a new cabinet in which he claimed 40 per cent were members of the Union (K 7-10/91; DT 4/7; AA 12/7, 4/10;

E 20/7, 7/9, 28/9; C 23/7, 24/9, 1/10; S 24/7, 26/8, 24/9, 30/9, 16/10, 21/10; SWB 24/7, 25/7, 9/8, 19/9, 16/10; AED 29/7, 12/8, 7/10, 21/10; ANews 29/7, 7/10; ARB 31/7, 31/10; ACon 5/8, 23/9; AC 9/8, 11/10; SN 17/8; WA 25/8, 1/9, 29/9, 20/10; BD 24/9, 1/10; NA 10/91; AB 10/91; TWR 9/10).

(OAU meeting – see Rwanda.)

## EAST AFRICA

### Comoros

The **IMF** approved three Structural Adjustment Facility credits worth a total of US\$4.16 mn. It was the first time the country had enjoyed recourse to an IMF credit (ION 3/8).

On 3 August the government strongly denied rumours of a **coup** in which the supreme court president, Ibrahim Ahmed Halidi, was said to have deposed Pres Djohar. A banned radio station was used to announce the coup, saying that Djohar was no longer able to perform his duties. The judge was arrested on 4 August, together with two journalists. Two days later, a group of counter-demonstrators tried to disrupt a rally in support of Djohar (SS 4/8; ST 4/8; S 5/8, 6/8; C 5/8; SWB 5/8; BD 5/8; AA 6/8; AE 9/91).

### Djibouti

**Inter-ethnic clashes** broke out in mid-July, leaving between 40 and 60 people dead. The fighting originally started between Djiboutian Issas and Ethiopian Oromos, but when some of the Oromos took shelter in the Afar quarter of Arhiba, local **Afars** became involved in the violence. Incidents of violence had been multiplying on the border between Ethiopia and Djibouti and the situation worsened with the disintegration of the Djiboutian army (ARB 31/7; AC 9/8; E 12/10).

### Ethiopia

The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) organized a national conference which was held in Addis Ababa from 1 to 5 July. In a surprisingly smooth and quick move, representatives from 25 political groups elected an 87-member **council of representatives** which would elect a president and be responsible for drafting a constitution. The conference also approved a charter which would become a blueprint for the interim period leading to elections in 1993. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) attended with observer status, although an agreement had been reached to give Ethiopia access to the sea in return for independence for **Eritrea**. On 21 July the council of representatives elected **Meles Zenawi**, EPRDF leader and acting head of state, as president. Acting prime minister, Tamirat Layne, was elected prime minister on 29 July. On 10 August Layne appointed a sixteen-member cabinet, giving the key portfolios of defence and foreign affairs to EPRDF members.

At the end of July it was reported that 7 mn Ethiopians were affected by **drought** and **famine**, over 250 000 former government sol-

diers awaited rehabilitation and 1.5 mn people had been displaced by the war. The EPLF denied reports that former government soldiers had been mistreated in Eritrea and said on 1 August that over 82 000 prisoners of war and former government officials and over 43 000 of their relatives had been repatriated because it had been impossible to feed them in the light of severe food shortages. In the meantime, the Ethiopian government gave rebels of the **Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA)** an ultimatum by which they either had to leave Ethiopia or lay down their arms and become simply refugees. According to a report published in the *New York Times* of 13 August, United States officials accused the Eritrean authorities of diverting food intended for the rest of Ethiopia. The Eritreans responded by saying that transport problems beyond its control were creating the bottlenecks of relief supplies in the port of Assab. In late August an airlift of food supplies had begun to eastern Ethiopia, in the Harar region where tribal clashes made food distribution extremely difficult. Fighting between Oromo fighters and EPRDF forces were temporarily resolved with an agreement on 27 August (K 7-9/91; SWB 2/7, 8/7, 24/7, 2/8, 14/8, 29/8; DT 3/7; WM 5/7; TWR 10/7; AC 12/7; ION 13/7, 27/7, 3/8, 7/9, 28/9; C 21/7, 12/8, 20/8; ARB 31/7, 31/10; AE 8/91).

## Kenya

Three leading opposition figures, including National Democratic Party (NDP) leader, **Oginga Odinga**, were prevented from leaving the country to attend a human rights conference in London. They called Kenya a "police state" in an interview after the incident. Later that month, on 30 July the **human rights** organization Africa Watch published a highly critical report on Kenya, stating that the government continued to use torture, to manipulate the judiciary and to harass supporters of democracy. On 17 July the high court rejected Odinga's appeal against the government's refusal to allow him to register his NDP (see previous Africa monitor). On 2 August Odinga was one of the co-founders of a new opposition organization, Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (Ford). Pressure from inside and outside on the government's human rights record and its stubborn support for single partyism intensified. The government reacted by cracking down on the opposition and demonstrators, arresting seven on 24 August and banning a rally organized by Ford for 5 October. **United Kingdom** foreign secretary Douglas Hurd arrived in Kenya on 11 September. He made a strong plea for multiparty politics, but held back on criticism for Kenya's human rights record, saying that Kenya compared favourably with other African states. (K 7/91, 9/91; DT 4/7; S 5/7, 11/9; SWB 6/7, 20/7, 13/9; WR 26/7; AA 26/7, 20/9; ARB 31/7; C 20/8, 26/8; ION 7/9; TWR 18/9; AC 27/9; E 5/10; ACon 7/10).

On the night of 13 July, 19 schoolgirls were killed at St Kizito mixed secondary school in Meru when their dormitory was stormed by angry schoolboys because the girls refused to

take part in a boycott over school-fees. Twenty-nine schoolboys were charged with manslaughter on 29 July. They pleaded not guilty (K 7/91; S 17/7, 18/7; VWB 19/7; SWB 19/7).

## Madagascar

Demonstrations and internal dissent continued in Madagascar (see previous Africa monitor) and the opposition alliance called a general strike on 8 July, which attracted wide support, with up to 400 000 demonstrators in Antananarivo. Following talks with Pres Ratsiraka, the opposition called off the strike on 15 July, but their dissatisfaction with the results prompted a resumption of the strike. On 23 July, following several attempts to install opposition "ministers" in government offices, **Ratsiraka** declared a **state of emergency** and many of the shadow ministers, including shadow prime minister, **Albert Zafy**, were arrested. On 28 July Ratsiraka announced that he had dismissed his government and would organize a referendum on a new constitution before the end of the year. He invited the opposition to participate in discussions, but they continued with their demand of Ratsiraka's resignation. He refused, and on 8 August appointed Guy Razamanasy, mayor of Antananarivo, as prime minister. Strikes and demonstrations continued and on 10 August, during a march on the presidential palace, the presidential guards opened fire, killing 31, according to the Red Cross, who also reported 20 deaths in the town of Mahajanga. An opposition daily, the *Madagascar Tribune*, claimed that 138 people had died, while the government put the figure at 12. On 12 August it was reported that the air and naval high commands had withdrawn their support for the president. At the end of August church leaders announced their willingness to mediate in the chaos that existed, with Ratsiraka suddenly announcing a **federal system**, Razamanasy appointing a new cabinet with no opposition leaders in it and the opposition announcing that they had taken over the country, demonstrating against the new cabinet. By the end of October, a strike-weary and economically ruined country heaved a sigh of relief when the government and opposition finally came to terms with each other and signed an **agreement on a transitional state**. A national conference would be held in November and a referendum on a draft constitution before end 1991, with elections after the middle of 1992. Workers went back to their work on 25 October, after more than five months of strikes. Ratsiraka, although not quite removed from the political stage, had most of his powers taken away. However, he announced his intention of again running for the presidency (K 7/91; C 1/7, 24/7; AED 1/7, 15/7; S 5/7, 18/7, 30/7, 12/8, 13/8; SWB 8/7, 19/7, 30/7, 9/8, 15/8, 29/10; BD 9/7, 22/8; TWR 24/7; WM 26/7; E 27/7, 24/8; ARB 31/7, 31/10; VWB 2/8; ION 31/8).

## Mauritius

Prime Minister Sir Anerood Jugnauth dissolved parliament in August and announced that **general elections** would take place on 15 September, a year ahead of schedule. As predicted, the ruling coalition of the *Mouvement*

*Socialiste Militant* (MSM) and the *Mouvement Militant Mauricien* (MMM) scored a landslide victory, capturing 57 of the 62 seats. The seven remaining seats were won by the Labour Party (6) and one by Sir Gaetan Duval of the PMSD. The opposition members boycotted the inaugural parliament session on 24 September, claiming that the election had been rigged (ION 20/7, 3/8, 31/8, 28/9; AED 12/8; AA 23/8; SWB 27/8, 18/9; AC 30/8; S 5/9; C 17/9).

## Rwanda

During his independence day speech on 1 July, Pres Habyarimana told Rwandans that they would celebrate 30 years of independence under "a new government freely elected by the people themselves". He also announced constitutional amendments to allow political parties, although two of the four newly-registered parties had already held meetings. At a meeting organized by the OAU in Gbadolite, Zaire, on 7 September, where Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda were represented, a call for an immediate **cease-fire** was issued. (The previous cease-fire, signed on 30 March, had been broken the following day.) Talks between the Rwandan government and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) began on 17 September, with Mobutu as chairman, although violations of the new peace efforts were reported almost daily (AE 8/91; K 9/91; SWB 2/9, 9/9; 21/9).

## Somalia

The ruling United Somali Congress (USC) held its third congress from 3 to 4 July and elected **Gen Mohammed Farah Aydid** as party chairman with a new central committee. On 20 July the central committee unanimously decided that the Koran would be the basis of the USC's constitution.

Another round of reconciliation talks was held in Djibouti from 15 to 21 July, again with all parties represented except the Somali National Congress (see previous *Africa monitor*). Two new groups attended: the Somali Democratic Alliance (SDA) and the United Somali Front (USF). The six groups confirmed **Ali Mahdi Mohammed** as interim president for two years, declared an "all-out war" on ex-president Siyad Barré and on 21 July agreed on a continued cease-fire, which was allegedly broken on 24 July, with the USC and the Somali Democratic Movement (SDM) accusing the Somali Democratic Welfare Front (SSDF) and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) of attacking them with the help from Barré's forces. In the mean time, talks between the secessionist SNM and the USC continued on a regular basis.

In what was described as an attempt by Aydid to challenge the presidency of Ali Mohammed, severe **fighting** broke out in **Mogadishu** on 5 to 7 September. According to relief agencies, up to 400 people were killed and around 1 500 wounded. On 8 September Ali Mohammed blamed the fighting on "self-styled leaders who opposed the second Djibouti conference agreements". *The Indian Ocean Newsletter* reported on 31 August that



no supporters of Aydid had been appointed in the cabinet announced in August. Sporadic fighting between the SPM and the USC around the port of Kismayu and also between the SDM and Barré supporters led to the SPM asking the OAU and the UN to intervene. The 72-member cabinet was eventually sworn in on 1 October, but was denounced by Aydid (K 7/91, 9-10/91; WR 12/7; ION 13/7, 27/7, 31/8, 19/10; SWB 20/7, 23/7, 2/8, 13/9, 16/9, 5/10; S 22/7, 20/8; ACon 29/7; ARB 31/7, 31/10; NA 8/91; AC 9/8; AE 9/91; AA 4/10).

## Tanzania

On 6 September police arrested 27 pro-democracy activists protesting against a government refusal to register a new political party, headed by James Mapalala, who went into hiding (C 7/9; SWB 7/9; ION 14/9).

(Visit by Banda – see Malawi.)

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

### Angola

On 19 July Pres Dos Santos appointed a new prime minister, Fernando Franca Van-Dunem, to head the government during the lead-up to national elections. Van-Dunem, planning minister at the time of his appointment, was also a former justice minister and deputy foreign minister. His deputy, Rafael Caseiro, was given the planning portfolio (K 7/91; SS 21/7; SWB 22/7; S 23/7; AN 29/7).

A general amnesty came into effect on 20 July with the release of the first seventeen prisoners. The amnesty covered all crimes against state security up to 31 May, when the peace accord was signed in Lisbon (BD 16/7; C 18/7; SWB 18/7, 19/7; SS 3/8).

On 11 September **Unita** announced its withdrawal from the peace commission in protest at the MPLA government's alleged failure to fully implement the peace accord. Making it clear that it was merely a protest gesture, Unita spokesperson, Noberto de Castro, said conditions for Unita's return were the speeding up of the confinement of MPLA troops at designated assembly points, ending of alleged government harassment of Unita sympathizers and fixing a timetable for elections in September 1992. The government denied the allegations and three days later Unita rejoined the commission and announced that it would take up its objections at its next meeting (S 12/9; SWB 12/9, 16/9).

Pres Dos Santos visited the **United States** from 15 September. He confirmed his government's commitment to the holding of elections in September 1992. He also visited the United Kingdom (AC 27/9; WA 29/9, 6/10).

### Lesotho

In order to restore democracy in Lesotho, Maj-Gen Ramaema announced that **elections** would be held in May 1992 and that the United Nations had been asked to send a team of observers to monitor the elections. The military junta also ordered the redrafting of the constitu-

tion, which was adopted in parliament on 4 July and submitted to public scrutiny (C 6/7; SWB 17/7, 13/8; ARB 31/7; ACon 16/9; AS 11/91).

Meanwhile, at a conference in London on 5 July, exiled **King Moshoeshoe II** launched the International Institute for the Promotion of Human Rights and Democracy in Africa. Describing itself as a think-tank on African democracy and hoping to produce a new African charter for human rights, the organization received support from Archbishop Desmond Tutu, anti-apartheid movement leader Trevor Huddleston and Frelimo's Marcelino dos Santos, among others. The king arrived in Swaziland in early September; he was expected to seek political asylum (ION 20/7; SWB 5/9; S 11/9; LT 17/10).

### Malawi

On 29 September, closing a week-long convention of his ruling Malawi Congress Party, Pres **Banda** ruled out **multiparty democracy** in his country, saying the people did not want any changes to the political system. In the preceding few months Banda freed scores of political prisoners, most held without trial. Those released included poet Jack Mapanje and Malawi's only neurosurgeon, George Mtafu. Since reports on Malawi's poor human rights record (see Africa monitor vol 21, no 1), Banda had been under pressure from aid donors to improve the situation. Also, several exiled opposition movements formed an alliance, the United Front for Multiparty Democracy (UFMD), and began stepping up calls for change in Malawi (S 6/9; DT 25/9; SWB 2/10).

From 3 to 6 October Banda paid a state visit to **Tanzania**, his first ever state visit to that country after nearly three decades of hostility. Progress was made on transport links, as Malawi made increasing use of the Dar es Salaam port in Tanzania (DT 4/10, 7/10; SWB 5/10, 9/10; AC 11/10).

### Mozambique

On 16 July the Mozambican government replaced its **political police force**, Serviço Nacional de Segurança Popular (Snasp) with a Serviço de Informação e Segurança (Sise). The functions of the new Sise were expected to be limited to intelligence and counter-espionage and would, unlike its predecessor, have no police powers, and would not be able to incarcerate suspects or have its own prisons. The dissolution of Snasp was one of Renamo's preconditions for peace talks (S 11/7, 18/7; SWB 13/7, 18/7; C 18/7; ION 20/7; InfA 20/7; K 8/91).

The seventh round of talks between the government and **Renamo**, having originally been due to start in mid-July, began on 1 August in **Rome**. On 9 August, however, the talks were suspended with the two sides agreeing to meet again in October. Apparently the talks were suspended to give Renamo time to consider proposals, but Pres Chissano accused the rebel movement of using delaying tactics. The two sides eventually signed a protocol on 18 October, agreeing on a set of mutual guarantees as a basis for a negotiated end to the war. Renamo finally recognized the authority

of the government and agreed to enter the multiparty political framework set up by the government in 1990. In exchange, the Frelimo government pledged not to legislate on any of the points under negotiation in Rome, such as the new electoral law and integration of rebels into the armed forces, until elections, planned for 1992. (SWB 23/7, 2/8, 5/8, 13/9, 9/10, 21/10; C 25/7, 1/8, 7/8, 28/9; DN 30/7; K 8/91; ARB 31/10).

### Namibia

In the wake of the "Inkathagate" funding scandal (see *South Africa*), the South African government admitted on 25 July that it had spent R100 mn in an attempt to prevent Swapo from winning the pre-independence elections in Namibia in November 1989 (AS 7/91; K 7/91; S 26/7; C 26/7; SWB 29/7; Rep 30/7; VWB 1/8).

Pres Nujoma won the Indira Gandhi Prize in July. The prize was instituted to "foster better relations among nations" and past recipients include former-president Gorbachev and former prime minister Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway (S 6/7; SN 6/7).

Britain's **Queen Elizabeth II** visited Namibia from 8 to 11 October (S 9/10, 10/10; C 9/10; SWB 10/10).

### South Africa

From 2 to 7 July the African National Conference (ANC) held its first national conference, electing **Nelson Mandela**, hitherto deputy president, as president.

United States Pres Bush repealed the 1986 Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) on 10 July, thus lifting the bulk of US trade and investment **sanctions** against South Africa. Other countries followed suit, including Finland and Japan. **Denmark**, however, decided to maintain sanctions, making it the one European Community (EC) member to oppose easing trade curbs and effectively blocking EC efforts to do so, as any EC decision to lift sanctions had to be unanimous. The **International Olympic Committee** announced that South Africa would be invited to participate in the July 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

On 16 July Mr Justice Stegmann, who sentenced **Winnie Mandela** to a six-year sentence in May for kidnapping and assault, granted her leave to appeal, saying another court might reach a different verdict.

On 19 July newspapers revealed covert police funding of Inkatha, leading to a crisis in the National Party government. Dubbed in the media "**Inkathagate**", these revelations as well as fresh allegations of police and army involvement in the conflicts between supporters of Inkatha and the ANC forced Pres de Klerk to make **cabinet changes** to restore government credibility. On 29 July Adriaan Vlok, minister of law and order, was effectively demoted to minister of correctional services and of budget, and Magnus Malan, minister of defence, to the post of minister of water affairs and forestry.

Three **Afrikaner Resistance Movement** (AWB) members were killed on 9 August in **Ventersdorp** in a clash with the police, as

members of the AWB tried to prevent Pres de Klerk from addressing a meeting.

On 15 August government, ANC and Inkatha representatives agreed upon a draft accord in an attempt to end the violence. The draft introduced a **code of conduct** for political parties, banning the use of language likely to incite violence or hatred. Strict control on the police and military was also included. The peace accord was formally signed on 14 September amid continuing violence claiming many lives, especially the week before the signing of the accord, when 23 Inkatha supporters were killed in an ambush, sparking off retaliatory attacks throughout Johannesburg's townships.

On 16 August the government agreed to a UN-brokered **amnesty for exiles**, clearing the way for as many as 40 000 exiles to return to the country.

On 4 September at a National Party federal congress, Pres de Klerk presented new **constitutional** proposals, saying these demonstrated the NP's opposition to "domination of any kind". Under the proposals the country would be divided into nine semi-autonomous regions, replacing the homeland system. The ANC rejected the plans as being specifically designed to deny power to the black majority.

On 30 September the General Sales Tax (GST) was replaced by a Value Added Tax (VAT), the VAT being applied to a wider range of goods and leading to protests throughout the country.

South African writer **Nadine Gordimer** won the \$1 mn **Nobel Prize for Literature** on 2 October.

On 12 October Nelson Mandela said the ANC was prepared to abandon its long-held policy of **nationalization** if the business community could provide an alternative that would redress the economic imbalances in the country. Two days later the ANC released a document in which it reassured foreign corporations that they would be free to take their profits out of the country under an ANC government.

On 25 October the ANC and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) acted together with 75 other organizations to form the **Patriotic Front**, an initiative to create a united front in negotiations with the government. The delegates demanded the start of all-party negotiations as soon as possible, followed by the formation of a broadly-based interim government (K7-10/91; AE 7/91; BD 5/7, 31/7; TWR 10/7, 24/7, 16/10; SS 21/7; C 23/7, 30/7; S 23/7, 30/7, 26/8, 30/8; VWB 26/7; E 27/7; NA 9/91; SAB 27/9; AC 27/9; ARB 31/10)

(Gen Obasanjo's visit - see Nigeria.)

## TBVC states

**Bophuthatswana** - Eleven Black Sash members and five overseas observers were arrested in Mmabatho on 5 October when they held a picket demonstration to protest the "excessive abuses of human rights" in Bophuthatswana. All were released on 8 October, with the Black Sash members each being fined R400. One of the human rights issues was the continued imprisonment of more than 150 men in connection with the abortive coup in 1988. Following

the Pretoria minute according to which the South African government released many political prisoners in July, more than fifty of the prisoners in Bophuthatswana embarked on a hunger strike when they were not also released. After intense international and local pressure Pres Mangope grudgingly released 19 prisoners on 12 September and a further 18 on 17 October (C 6/7, 11/7, 13/9, 7/10, 9/10; S 10/7, 16/7, 28/8, 10/9, 7/10, 18/10; WM 11/7, 13/9; SWB 18/7, 14/9; BD 7/10, 18/10).

As the sole candidate in the presidential election, **Pres Mangope** was appointed for his third seven-year term on 14 August (B 15/8; M 16/8).

## Swaziland

On 3 October the appeal court overturned the conviction and sentencing of two prominent political prisoners, Dominic Mnomezulu and Ray Russon, who were charged with attending a public political meeting. Also in October, a governmental commission to discuss with people the Tinkhundla system in Swaziland, got under way. It provided the opportunity for people to openly voice their opinions (K 10/91).

## Zambia

On 2 August a new constitution was passed, allowing for a **multiparty democracy**, after months of argument between the ruling United National Independence Party (Unip) and the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). In July a 41-year-old businessman, **Enoch Kavindele**, challenged Pres Kaunda's leadership of Unip, saying the party needed rejuvenation. More signs of Kaunda's declining popularity was an incident on 14 July when unruly soccer fans pelted his motorcade with stones on his arrival to watch the Africa Cup match between Zambia and Madagascar. On 7 August, however, Kavindele stepped down, leaving Kaunda as the party's sole presidential candidate. On 4 September Kaunda dissolved the parliament, paving the way for the elections, scheduled for 31 October.

On 11 September the **IMF** and **World Bank** suspended aid to Zambia, declaring it ineligible for further credit because of a failure to clear an estimated US\$10,8 mn in debt arrears.

Under the watchful eyes of Commonwealth, OAU and other international observers, the elections took place at the end of October without any incidents of violence or other irregularities. Zambia became the first English-speaking African country to oust the president and party that have led them since independence in 1964. **Frederick Chiluba**, a trades unionist and leader of the MMD, won the presidency in a landslide victory and the MMD took 125 places in the 150-seat parliament. The voter turn-out was about 50 per cent (C 10/7, 16/7, 5/9; BD 10/7, 1/11; S 18/7, 30/7, 1/11; SWB 22/7, 25/7, 8/8, 6/9; ARB 31/7; K 8/91, 9/91; AED 12/8; AB 9/91; FF 9/91; E 26/10; NA 11/91).

## Zimbabwe

On 8 July Pres Mugabe held a meeting with **Pres Ben Ali** in Tunis and on the same day met

PLO chairman **Yasir Arafat**. At the invitation of Pres Bush, Mugabe also visited the **United States**, where the two leaders held talks on 24 and 25 July (SWB 11/7; C 12/7; ZN 8/91).

On 16 October Mugabe opened the **Commonwealth summit** in Harare by saying that the member countries should "practise what they preached", referring to **human rights**. His remarks triggered student demonstrations which threatened to disrupt the Commonwealth proceedings. The students were violently forced to stay on the campus where they chanted "no lip service to human rights" to protest Zimbabwe's own human rights record. Another issue that tarnished Mugabe's image was the bad publicity he received for his UN address at the beginning of October where he called for sanctions against South Africa to be maintained, while it was known that Zimbabwean officials sought improved trade terms with South Africa just a month previously in Pretoria. However, as the Commonwealth conference progressed, Mugabe toned down his rhetoric against South Africa, even saying the Commonwealth should be ready to assist South Africans to create a peaceful climate conducive to normal political and social life (S 3/10, 18/10; B 3/10; C 18/10; SS 19/10).

## References

A - Afrika; AA - Africa Analysis; AB - African Business; AC - Africa Confidential; A Con - Africa Concord; AED - Africa Economic Digest; AE&M - Africa Energy & Mining; AIB - Africa Institute Bulletin; AN - Africa Newsfile; ANews - Africa News; AP - African Preview; AR - Africa Report; ARB - Africa Research Bulletin; AS - Africa South; B - Beeld; BD - Business Day; BDN - Botswana Daily News; C - Citizen; CI - Crescent International; Cr - Crescent; D - Drum; DN - Daily News; DT - Daily Times; E - The Economist; FF - Frontfile; FG - Financial Gazette; FM - Financial Mail; FOA - Focus on Africa; F&T - Financies & Tegniek; G - The Guardian; H - The Herald; I - The Independent; IMF S - IMF Survey; InfA - Informafrika; ION - Indian Ocean Newsletter; JA - Jeune Afrique; K - Keesing's Record of World Events; KT - Kenya Times; KN - Kwacha News; LT - Lesotho Today; M - The Mail; MF - Mozambiquefile; MIO - Mozambique Information Office; MNR - Mozambique News Review; MSE - Market South East; N - Namibian; NA - New African; NM - Natal Mercury; NN - New Nation; R - Rapport; Rep - Republikein; S - Star; SAB - SA Barometer; SAD - South African Digest; SAE - Southern African Economist; SAN - South African Newsletter; SAT - Southern Africa Today; So - South; SN - Swazi News; SS - Sunday Star; ST - Sunday Times; SWB - BBC Summary of World Broadcasts; T - Transvaler; TS - Times of Swaziland; TWR - Third World Reports; U - Uniform; VWB - Vrye Weekblad; WA - West Africa; WBN - World Bank News; WM - Weekly Mail; WR - Weekly Review; ZN - Zimbabwe News.

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