Africa Insight is published quarterly by the Africa Institute of South Africa, an independent study centre concerned with African affairs.

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Comment: Symbiosis of African and Western cultures

Erich Leistner,
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O ra Joubert's contribution on Afro-pean symbiosis in South African architecture in this issue of *Africa Insight* raises the broader question whether in this country we are witnessing not merely a symbiosis, that is, existential interdependence, but a growing synthesis of African and Western cultures. Such synthesis certainly will emerge in time. No one, however, can foretell its timing and nature, and the following therefore does not attempt to predict developments but rather presents a few considerations indicating the complexity of South and, more generally, sub-Saharan Africa's path towards a viable synthesis.

The circular shape in which dwellings have traditionally been built in Bantu-speaking Africa cannot simply be explained in terms of practical convenience. Many societies equally dependent on the building materials provided by nature, have preferred square, rather than circular, structures. The circular form, which is also met in African pots and other utensils, in cattle kraals, assembled councils of elders as well as often in the layout of villages, must rather be understood as the physical manifestation of the predominantly spiritual culture and the holistic worldview of Africa.

The fact that many African societies have long regarded the building of rectangular huts as a grave offence against the ancestors, often punishable with death, indicates how profoundly the circular shape is embedded in the totality of traditional life. At the same time, it gives an inkling of the profound differences distinguishing traditional African worldviews and culture from the secularized calculating rationality of a society based on science and technology.

African scholars, theologians and others frequently point to these differences, and emphasize the holistic, man-centred nature of African society as distinct from the impersonal, efficiency-oriented essence of modern society. Thus, according to Steve Biko:

> ...ours is a true man-centred society whose sacred tradition is that of sharing. We must reject the individualistic cold approach to life that is the corner stone of the Anglo Boer culture. We must seek ... to dwarf the triumph of technology over man and to reduce the materialistic element that is slowly creeping into our society.[1]

The essential oneness of traditional Africa's material and non-material existence is described by Professor John Mbiti:

> ...there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and non-religious, between the spiritual and the material areas of life. ... The invisible world presses hard upon the visible; one speaks of the other, and African peoples 'see' that invisible universe when they look at, hear or feel the visible and tangible world.[2]

Joubert's reference to Ndebele huts

illustrates one of the many patterns that a symbiosis of African and Western ways can present. Other examples are provided by Lynette Dreyer's study of the modern African elite of South Africa. Amongst others, she established that the lifestyle of the elite as indicated by their family life, role in voluntary organizations and leisure activities shows that they have fully internalized the modern Western value system. This went hand in hand with the majority of the elite – 71,7% – honouring the spirits of their forefathers, usually in the form of offerings (the remaining 28,3% denied the existence of ancestral spirits).[3]

The evolution of any culture is stimulated by contact with other cultures, and nowhere in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has the interaction between traditional and Western modes of existence been closer and more intensive than in South Africa. Western civilization here has impinged on traditional societies and changed them in innumerable ways – through armed conflict, the influence of the churches, taxation and other administrative measures, through railways, tarred roads, telecommunications and especially urbanization and participation in the cash economy.

Elsewhere in SSA substantial parts of the population for all practical purposes are still immersed in the subsistence economy. In South Africa, by contrast, all are inextricably tied to the market economy, including the inhabitants of the former homelands who could not exist without the private and public transfers from the modern sector.

All this has profoundly changed traditional modes of existence. Industrialization, urbanization and resistance to racial domination and discrimination have greatly diminished the significance of ethnic groups – though the run-up to the April 1994 elections was a reminder that ethnic factors are not yet a thing of the past.

Not only South Africa's black elites but also many among the large numbers of wage and salary earners have attained high levels of skills and sophistication.[4] Accustomed to properly functioning power and water supplies, sewerage, telephone services and transport facilities, members of these groups have often made themselves unpopular in, say, Lusaka, Dar es Salaam or Lagos by making unflattering comparisons between conditions there and those back home. (Naturally, the South African groups in question still represent a minority of the country's total population.)

The hopes elsewhere in SSA for accelerated development founded on the emergence of a democratically elected government in South Africa, presumably have no less to do with the qualities of the country's population, black as well as white, than with its natural and produced wealth. As has often been pointed out, the RSA's pressing domestic issues will, at least in the foreseeable future, limit its ability to promote SSA's progress on a major scale.

Above all, however, neither South Africa nor outside countries or agencies can "develop" Africa in any meaningful sense. External agencies can put up factories, establish plantations, construct roads, harbours, and so forth, but unless the indigenous people operate, maintain and improve these assets, the functioning thereof will continue to depend on outside agents. Until such time that the indigenous people themselves become the initiators and bearers of economic progress and social change, they have to rely on outside forces to provide them with better material living conditions. This, clearly, is neither "development" nor national independence.

The experience of SSA demonstrates that self-generated and self-sustained development does not automatically come with schools, universities and diverse training institutions, let alone so-called development aid. The crucial question, rather, is whether the people of Africa can integrate their time-honoured values, customs and practices and those associated with a technologically based and market-oriented modern economy.

This is easier said than done. Thus, traditional concepts associated with procreation have universally proved more powerful than arguments regarding the deleterious impact of high population growth rates on environment and development. In many countries, traditional views concerning the role of women still militate against education, training and personal development for half the population. Traditional values and beliefs often stand in the way of agricultural and pastoral modernization.

South Africa strikingly illustrates how the intermingling of diverse cultures can work towards a synthesis into something new. Here, centuries of a common history have produced a unique mixture of African, Western and Eastern cultures. This meeting of cultures has modified them all, none more so than that of traditional Africa. Urbanization and participation in the cash economy, but also formal education and everyday interaction with people of different cultural background have profoundly affected all aspects of individual as well as community life. Growing numbers of black professionals, academics, business tycoons and artists that can hold their own anywhere in the world, demonstrate that traditional African values and the demands of present-day global culture can be joined harmoniously.

Little can be achieved by preaching the need for changing or even abandoning traditional values, views and customs, least of all when delivered by non-Africans. African society itself has to make up its mind over these far-reaching and delicate issues. In the final instance, every people is the master of its own destiny.

Against this background the question arises as to what features of traditional society need to be modified or even discarded and what aspects of modern society are indispensable if the longing of African peoples for higher, more secure and improving levels of material existence, in short: for development, is to be fulfilled? Africa clearly is still seeking the right balance. According to Arthur Lewis, the celebrated black Nobel laureate for economic science:

We demand the abolition of poverty,

illiteracy and disease, but we cling desperately to the beliefs, habits and social arrangements which we like, even when these are the very cause of the poverty we deplore.[5]

Lewis observes that African cultures were much more readily overwhelmed by European influences than those of Asia, and that the chief legacy of modernization by foreigners is " the confusion of a love-hate relationship". According to him, the Indians are still Hindus or Moslems, wear their traditional dress, play their traditional music, and worship their traditional gods. They have taken from Europe science, technology and some political ideas, but not much else, and they do not feel that they have lost their identity in the process. Africans, on the other hand, "...have taken more and given up more, and tend to resent what they have lost without any corresponding gratitude for what they have gained – an attitude which results in some hostility towards their former teachers. The young are going through... an identity crisis."[6]

Africa has yet to reconcile the demands of the present-day world with its own essential being. While some vehemently reject all outside influences and advocate a return to traditional values, others believe that Africa will remain poor and backward unless, in the words of Njabulo Ndebele, it sets about "...destroying the old and static customs and traditions that have over the past decades made Africa the world's human zoo and museum of human evolution".[7]

To conclude. Although the foregoing raises more questions than it can answer, our discussion of certain aspects bearing on cultural symbiosis and synthesis may assist a clearer understanding of the development problems facing Africa today.

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The recent political crisis in Lesotho and the role of external forces

Khabele Matlosa, senior lecturer at the National University of Lesotho, gives a few behind-the-scenes insights into the recent government crisis in Lesotho.

During the early 1990s, Lesotho became one of the African countries undertaking a political transition to democratic rule. This transition process involves, in the main, political change away from a dictatorial single-party or military regime to multiparty democratic rule. With the benefit of hindsight it can safely be argued that this kind of political transition has been much more cumbersome in countries that have been ruled by the military than in single-party states. The cases of Ghana (1992), Nigeria (1993) and Lesotho (1993) support this observation. The experience in the abovementioned countries contrasts with the relative ease with which a country such as Zambia (1991) shifted from single-party to multiparty rule. This observation does not in any way mean that political transition in civilian-ruled countries has been unproblematic. The current political problems in Zambia and Malawi are a case in point here.

The central thesis of this article is that Lesotho's transition is basically bedevilled by the historical role of the armed forces in politics. Consequently the post-1993 elections democracy experiment has been hamstrung by these forces, whose interests are threatened by political liberalization. Coupled with the antagonistic attitude of the armed forces towards political liberalization is the fact that the BCP government failed after 1993 to effectively establish authority and control over the country owing to the absence of a proper strategic vision and clear programme of action.

It is therefore not surprising that on 17 August 1994, King Letsie III casually disposed of the democratically elected BCP government. Yet, no matter what inadequacies the government displayed, the King's move can only be seen as both unwarranted and unconstitutional.

The political crisis in Lesotho has attracted both internal and external reaction of different forms. Because the internal dynamics of Lesotho's current crisis have been discussed at length elsewhere,[1] this article focuses exclusively on the reaction of the external forces. Lesotho's crisis has attracted attention and reaction from the United Nations, the Commonwealth, the donor community, the Organization of Africa Unity, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and, of course, neighbouring states. Although the involvement of external forces in the Lesotho crisis has aroused some controversy inside the country, I will argue that most external forces played a positive role in helping to solve Lesotho's crisis. The concentration on diplomatic and political solutions rather than military intervention was a prudent strategy as it sought to avoid a Rwanda-like or Somali-like civil war in Lesotho.

But the threat of economic sanctions which surfaced in August 1994 may have far-reaching repercussions beyond the intended effect. The call for economic sanctions against Lesotho came largely from SADC and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (Comesa) and given Lesotho's geo-political location, it is clear that South Africa can play a leading role in exerting economic pressure.

The crisis unfolds

The fifteen-day armed confrontation between two factions of Lesotho's defence force (from 15 January to 1 February 1994), plunged the tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho into one of the most severe and complex political crises of its entire post-colonial history. The armed conflict within the 4 000-strong army, which left about five people dead and eleven others injured, was later followed by an overt political showdown between the army (or more precisely one faction of the army) and central government. On 14 April 1994 the then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Selometsi Baholo, was shot dead at his home at Ha Matala in Maseru by an unknown group of Lesotho soldiers. On the same day four other ministers were abducted by the army only to be set free later that day. These were the then Natural Resources Minister Monyane Moleleki (who later resigned his post and fled the country to South Africa), Justice Minister Kelebone Maope (whose whereabouts became unknown about mid-June 1994), Education Minister Pakalitha Mosisili and Trade Minister and brother of the Prime Minister, Shakhane Mokhehle. According to army officials, the soldiers' grievances with the new BCP government, which had been installed after a landslide victory in the 27 March 1993 elections, centred on poor salaries and working conditions. After a promise of salary increases the soldiers agreed to co-operate. But tension between government and its security machine continued to mount as the two parties continued to be suspicious of each other.

In May 1994 the superficial calm was shattered: the 3 000-strong Royal Lesotho Mounted Police also demanded a salary increase and embarked on a three-week strike action (from 9 May to 31 May 1994), which unleashed massive lawlessness, theft, robbery and a considerable flight of business out of Lesotho. In the course of the police strike the Information Minister and then acting Minister of Finance, Mpho Malie, was kidnapped by the striking police on 23 May 1994, but was released the following day after some "interrogation" on the country's financial situation and government's attitude towards police demands – including a 60% salary increase. After attending the World Economic Forum in Cape Town in June 1994, the Information Minister's whereabouts became a closely guarded secret.

Mr Malie is no longer acting Minister of Finance since government later installed the substantive minister, Dr Moeketsi Senaoana, by Legal Notice 70 of 1 July 1994. After resigning his post and fleeing to South Africa, Monyane Moleleki was also replaced by Tseliso Makhakhe as Natural Resources Minister by means of Legal Notice 58 of 7 June 1994. Whilst the army was given a salary increment of 66% or more, differentiated according rank, the police were given a salary increase of 42% or more. Ancillary packages such as risk allowances, etc, were also improved for both forces. These salary increases were effective from 1 April 1994 and had thus accumulated arrears by their due date. In the meantime all other public servants were given a 10% salary increase across the board. But the fact that tension between government and the security machine continued despite the salary increases, underlines one important fact: Lesotho's on-going political crisis clearly transcended the salary demands made by the armed forces.

By mid-1994 it had become fairly clear that the BCP government faced a serious crisis. Three ministers had already fled the country, allegedly in fear of their lives, as the political situa-

tion deteriorated. Judicial commissions of inquiry became the order of the day as government seemed either incapable or reluctant to take decisive action to bring the situation under control. Two of these commissions are worth commenting on: the commission of inquiry on the military scuffle; and the commission of inquiry on the dethronement of King Moshoeshoe II.

The commission of inquiry on the military fracas that occurred early in 1994 pitted the government against its own armed forces once more. The armed forces rejected the commission outright on two grounds: first, it was merely a witch-hunt against those responsible for the military uprising, and as such part of government onslaught on the military; and second, involvement of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe in the commission, particularly through their security personnel, was seen as interfering with Lesotho's security forces. The commission of inquiry on the dethronement of King Moshoeshoe II set the government on a collision course with the palace and other royalist forces. As the commission was just about to begin its work, Moshoeshoe II lodged a court interdict to prevent it from continuing. In the meantime, King Letsie III wrote to the Prime Minister, Ntsu Mokhehle, on 4 August 1994, dissociating himself, as head of state, from the commission. His main quarrel was as follows: he had not been duly consulted on the matter; the commission was bent on conducting a vendetta against King Moshoeshoe II; the composition of the commission was far from impartial; and the terms of reference of the commission were unacceptable as they were not focusing on the dethronement but rather on King Moshoeshoe II's life since Lesotho's independence in 1966.

As the armed forces and the monarchy were angered by these commissions it became easier for them to join forces against the already frail and enfeebled BCP government. This was also a political windfall for the opposition BNP who hastily joined the bandwagon. As things turned out,

a loose coalition of forces involving the armed forces, the royalist forces and the Basotho National Party (BNP) emerged and seemed determined to strike a fatal blow against the besieged BCP government.

The BNP and royalist forces jointly organized a demonstration in Maseru on 15 August 1994. During this event they submitted a petition to King Letsie III containing the following demands, among others: re-instatement of King Moshoeshoe II; dissolution of the BCP government; establishment of an interim government of national unity; and preparations for a general election based on proportional representation. The King promised the petitioners that he would address their demands.

Indeed he did exactly that on 17 August 1994 when he dissolved the democratically elected BCP government and established the so-called provisional Council of State. As the BCP supporters tried to protest this move on the same day, five people were shot dead and another 16 were injured by the armed forces. Ntsu Mokhehle also challenged the King's move as unconstitutional and ultra vires. A dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed by the commissioner of police as political tempers began to run high. On 19 August, King Letsie III appointed six members to his Council: Hae Phoofolo (Chairman); Retselisitsoe Sekhonyana (Foreign Affairs); Mamello Morrison (Information); Khauta Khasu (Agriculture); Mathabiso Mosala (Labour); Moletsane Monyake (Finance).

The Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organizations organized a successful national stay-away for 21–23 August in protest against these political developments. Various organs of civil society condemned the King's move.

In the meantime, Nobel Prize laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu of Cape Town was invited by the Lesotho Council of Churches to mediate a peace settlement between the BCP and the palace. The bishop arrived in Lesotho on 21 August, but when he left the following day the

situation had not improved. The major substantive suggestion that Tutu made was "a Codesa type of dialogue to resolve the crisis",[2] which seemed to coincide with the call by the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organizations for a broadly representative national conference to resolve Lesotho's political impasse. The United States condemned the King's move and suspended its economic assistance to the tiny mountain kingdom. Britain, Japan and the EEC also threatened suspension of aid to Lesotho if the situation did not improve.

Both King Letsie III and the ousted Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle were invited to a meeting in Pretoria at the end of August. It was convened by Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe and aimed to resolve the crisis. This meeting came after President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Nelson Mandela of South Africa had met in Cape Town on 19 August about the situation in Lesotho. It was at the Cape Town meeting that threats of military intervention and economic sanctions against Lesotho surfaced. During the subsequent Pretoria meeting on 25 August, the presidents of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe and the Secretary-General of the OAU, Salim Ahmed Salim, exhorted King Letsie III to reinstate democratic rule in Lesotho. However, the King, who was supposed to report back to the three heads of state by Friday 2 September 1994, delayed getting negotiations with the deposed government off the ground.

Another mission, involving the Foreign Ministers of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe, was dispatched to Lesotho on the same Friday and, given the slow process of preparations for negotiating the reinstatement of the deposed BCP government, the King was given yet another deadline of Monday 5 September 1994 by which to report back to the three heads of state. It was further assumed that by that time democratic rule will have been restored. It was becoming clear that the failure of the above demands would make international sanctions necessary. By early

September 1994 it seemed that sanctions would no longer be necessary because Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe declared that negotiations to reinstate the BCP government were at an advanced stage. But the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), at its national congress on 7–8 September 1994, resolved that workers should stop handling goods originating from or destined for Lesotho. Cosatu further resolved to put pressure for economic sanctions to be effected by 17 September 1994. The General Secretary, Sam Shilowa argued: "If King Letsie III does not reinstate the government that was democratically elected by September 17, we as workers will refuse to handle goods going to and from Lesotho".[3]

By early September 1994 the negotiations between the so-called provisional Council of State and the deposed BCP government seemed to have deadlocked on whether the process was meant to return the BCP to power or institute a Government of National Unity wherein other parties will participate in government. Sekhonyana (the leader of the BNP) seemed even more vocal on this issue than the King, who had engineered the coup against the BCP. (This may reflect the conflicting agendas of the King and the BNP.)

By mid-September 1994 the agreement to reinstate the deposed BCP government had not been signed, negotiations had been frustrated by the provisional council and King Letsie III seemed to be caught between pressures from within and without.

The King was also badly affected by the increasing tensions within the royal family, particularly after the death of the princess at this time. As time went by, it became increasingly clear that negotiations would not restore democracy and that internal and external pressure would have to be relied upon to resolve Lesotho's crisis.

Indeed, the international community had already begun to isolate the so-called Provisional Council of State

politically. After the dissolution of the BCP government the Tripartite Task Force convened a meeting in Gaborone and a delegation from Lesotho, comprising Sekhonyana and Morrison, was refused permission to partake in the deliberations. All they could do was to submit a letter from the King and hold a press conference in Botswana. During the Pretoria meeting, too, only the King had been allowed to attend, while his entourage comprising some members of the Council – including Sekhonyana – were sidelined. The ousted Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle, the Vice-President of the Party, Qhobela Molapo, and their delegation were allowed to attend the meeting. During the late August SADC meeting in Gaborone, Provisional Council member Moletsane Monyake was denied participation and the BCP Minister of Finance, Dr M Senaoana, was allowed to represent Lesotho. In a desperate bid to avoid the embarrassment of being isolated in international fora, whilst the BCP representatives continued to gain access and credibility at such fora, the King's provisional Council of State imposed a ban on all official international travel by early September 1994. This does not seem to have been very effective because BCP officials continued to attend international meetings on behalf of the country. The King's junta was now facing condemnation abroad and non-recognition at home. Were it not for the link between this junta to the armed forces the crisis would long since have been resolved.

Lesotho's crisis, therefore, was a deep-rooted one, characterized by:

- the historical partisan politicization of the armed forces;

- the historical intervention of the forces in politics, which reached its apex with the military coup of 1986;

- the inability of the new BCP government to gain control over Lesotho's bureaucracy, especially the armed forces, despite its landslide victory in the 1993 elections; and

- the lack of transparency and accountability demonstrated by the BCP government in seeking external intervention in this crisis before exhausting internal remedial measures.

What form has this external intervention assumed and what are its implications?

External intervention and its implications

Immediately after dissension became apparent within the army in January 1994, the Prime Minister requested assistance from the Commonwealth Secretary General, Chief Emeka Anyaoku. In that request, the Lesotho government further inquired into the possibility of a peace-keeping force being dispatched to Maseru to quell what was perceived to be a mutiny. Chief Anyaoku then advised President Mugabe to consider Lesotho's request. President Mugabe proceeded to involve other states in the region, particularly Botswana and South Africa. Pik Botha, former South African Foreign Minister was the first to visit Lesotho on 16 January 1994 at the behest of the BCP government. He assured the government that South Africa will not support any government brought about by the bullet rather than the ballot (an assurance which has been repeated by the current South African President, Nelson Mandela). In this way the BCP government's future seemed assured.

The General Secretary of the UN, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, also dispatched his Under-Secretary, Aldo Ajello, to Lesotho on 19 January 1994. Ajello consultated with government and extra-parliamentary actors with the aim of exploring various options of conflict resolution in Lesotho. Again the UN emphasized that any forceful ousting of Lesotho's democratically elected government would only have disastrous consequences.

SADC, probably having been prompted by Zimbabwe, Botswana and the Lesotho government, convened a special meeting in Gaborone on 26 January 1994. In that

meeting the Lesotho delegation of three was led by the late Selemetsi Baholo and South Africa was represented by the then President, F W de Klerk, and Nelson Mandela. This SADC meeting gave birth to a Tripartite Task Force comprising the Foreign Ministers of Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Their brief was to monitor closely, investigate and suggest possible solutions to Lesotho's crisis.

It is also important to note that both the OAU and the Commonwealth became involved in the Lesotho crisis and directly participated in the cessation of hostilities between the rival army factions on 1 February 1994.

There is nothing wrong, per se, with the involvement of external forces in such a crisis, providing that:

- the citizens of the country are duly made part of the decision that leads to such involvement;

- such involvement does not lend itself to undue interference in the internal affairs of the country in crisis;

- it does not trigger a nationalistic backlash owing to suspicions that are raised by the intentions of the external forces; and

- the option of military intervention is handled with circumspection.

It is gratifying that the option of military intervention was jettisoned in this case. In a report they submitted to the Lesotho government after their two-day visit there (11–12 February 1994), Mugabe and Masire also reinforced the point that the "Task Force decided against any form of military intervention". They reinforced the importance of a home-grown political solution.

Conclusion

After a lengthy process of negotiations an agreement reinstating the BCP government was duly signed on 14 September 1994. A number of provisions in this agreement clearly indicate that King Letsie III had managed to obtain a number of concessions.

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- the BCP government was exhorted to swiftly consult with the principal chiefs to effect the reinstatement of the former monarch, King Moshoeshoe II;

- the government committed itself to dissolving the two commissions of inquiry (referred to above) on the military fracas early in 1994 and on King Moshoeshoe II;

- all those who took part in the toppling of the BCP government were given indemnity against any form of retribution.

A further provision that is of importance is the undertaking by Lesotho's armed forces to remain loyal to the government and protect the country's constitution. But what remains to be seen is the extent to which Lesotho's democracy will withstand all the tensions and intrigues that remain beneath the surface.

After a meeting on 3 November 1994 in Pretoria (attended by the King Letsie, Prime Minister Mokhehle, President Mugabe, President Masire and Deputy President Mbeki), the chairman (Mugabe) announced that the Lesotho government was preparing legislation to restore Moshoeshoe II to the throne. Mugabe also said that the governments were deliberating on the restructuring of Lesotho's security forces.

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South Africa and the African comity of nations
From isolation to integration
by Denis Venter

South Africa's contemporary relations with the rest of Africa – marked by the development of mutually beneficial co-operation and a proliferation of South African missions to African capitals, and vice versa – have come a long way since the days when an exchange of representatives with African countries was seen as a potential threat to the apartheid state.

The interplay of forces shaping South African foreign (and domestic) policy perspectives in the course of the last two decades, culminating in today's "neo-realist" diplomacy, is the main focus of this research paper. Starting with the collapse of colonial buffer states (which sheltered South Africa from the "winds of change" blowing from the north), developments are analysed through the era of "Quixotic" responses to a perceived "total onslaught", to the final collapse of the principal obstacle to normal foreign relations – apartheid.

ISBN 0 7983 01147, A5 format, soft cover, 72 pages (March 1993).

Price per copy: R15,00 (VAT included) in South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland; elsewhere US$7,50 or equivalent.

Constraints facing the socioeconomic transformations of South Africa

*J M Luiz, lecturer in the Department of Economics at the Welkom Campus of Vista University, examines some of the constraints facing the new government in its attempt to satisfy the expectations of the disadvantaged masses.**

erhaps more than any other country, South Africa faces a future of divergent possibilities. On the one hand, it has enormous potential for success; on the other, it is a land of huge potential for disaster."[1] The present government has inherited an insidious past of economic mismanagement, racial and social oppression enormously complicated and costly bureaucratic structures, and extreme poverty and inequality. This history has not simply been undone by holding democratic elections. Democracy simply allows people to vent their immediate expectations, placing a great burden on a newly-elected government to fulfil these. This article will examine some of the major hindrances facing post-apartheid South Africa in developing an effective welfare policy which is able to undermine poverty levels.

The South African scenario

Simkins[2] estimates that in 1990 over 16 million people lived below the minimum living level (MLL) in South Africa. He demonstrates that whilst poverty has risen in absolute numbers between 1985 and 1990, it has declined relatively, with the percentage of households living below the MLL falling from 42,8% to 41,9%. However, poverty remains a very serious issue in our society; one which the new government will have

to actively address. Potential solutions suggested include redistribution, socialization, outright communism, or free markets. Many have suggested the compromise solution of a welfare state-type economy for South Africa.[3] It is argued that it is probably the only system which could balance the demands of the masses for socioeconomic justice and the need of the country for market-led growth and development. Basically, it aims at providing a minimum standard of living for all via a social safety net, including social security payments, free health care and education, and employment programmes. Whilst this may appear to be an attractive solution, one cannot simply ignore the immense constraints facing such an arrangement. The rest of this article will examine these obstacles.

Political constraints

If one looks at the international experience concerning transition from authoritarian rule, the picture which emerges is not encouraging. The Nedcor-Old Mutual scenario adopts the O'Donnell and Schmitter[4] notion that there are three stages to such transitions:

... liberalisation, where the incumbent government cedes power to, and recognises additional rights of, its citizens; democratisation, where the loser of an election cedes power to the winner while at the same time government acknowledges and respects the full rights and obligations of citizenship; and socialisation where democracy is consolidated into a way of life which has broad support among the populace.[5]

They also note that transitions are characterized by a high degree of uncertainty, with many ending up with a new form of authoritarian regime or weak democracies where income and opportunities decline. Successful transitions, they believe, require that the following criteria are met:

- stable democracy (liberalize-democratize-socialize);

- rising real incomes (earned – not borrowed);

- reasonable distribution of incomes; and

- a stable social fabric.

There have been no successful transitions without good economic performance before, during, and after the transition. New democracies have great difficulty in turning a weak economy around (for example, Argentina, Brazil and Peru). They have equally little success in coping with violence, which often inhibits the transition. Tucker and Scott[6] conclude that:

> ... no country in modern times has made a successful transition to democracy starting from a position like that of South Africa, namely, fifteen years of economic stagnation and over ten years of outright decline in per capita incomes. Indeed, no country has succeeded from a position remotely as unfavourable, especially if one notes the inequalities of income, ethnic rivalries, and the rising level of violence. The extremely rapid urbanisation in prospect with the end of apartheid is sure to exacerbate all of these problems .... The time for economic and social transformation is before the transition to democracy not after.

The question is, of course, whether

there are any cases comparable to South Africa. The answer is – probably not. Nevertheless, there remains much to be learnt from their analysis. O'Donnell and Schmitter[7] warn that founding elections are characterized by a period of high uncertainty. This was especially so in South Africa where the majority of the population had never before been part of the political process. They venture the following paradoxical observation:

> For a transition to political democracy to be viable in the long run, founding elections must be freely conducted, honestly tabulated, and openly contested, yet their results cannot be too accurate or representative of the actual distribution of voter preferences. Put in a nutshell, parties of the Right-Center and Right must be 'helped' to do well, and parties of the Left-Center and Left should not win by an overwhelming majority.[8]

In South Africa, the ANC won 62,6% of the votes, clearly not meeting these criteria.

This article is based on the assumption that South Africa will undergo a successful political transition. This need not, of course, be the case. The new political system might itself present tremendous complications. For instance, the effect of a prolonged government of national unity would probably be the delay of a comprehensive welfare policy owing to the lack of political cohesion. Such a government will most likely have to rule within very strict boundaries and will have its powers severely curtailed.

All sorts of checks and balances might hinder the long-term restructuring of the economy. The inner cabinet will presumably operate on the basis of "sufficient consensus". The multiparty negotiations have already shown how farcical such a concept can be.

Lastly, consideration must be given to the question of whether or not the state has the capacity to develop an effective socioeconomic order:

> Anticipation of the capabilities states could develop and what they could achieve with those new found capabilities ran high as Third World societies

threw off the shackles of colonialism .... Social scientists were thought to be able to unlock the secrets of social engineering ... they became avid advocates of state activism, tending to obscure failures and limitations even more .... In recent years, there has been widespread disillusionment among social scientists with the capacity of even Western states to plan and transform their societies.[9]

The state is neither omnipotent nor altruistic, and as such, is not capable of unilaterally ending underdevelopment, poverty, or any other social ills. It is only one tool in the fight against deprivation. It cannot engineer economic growth, but can facilitate it, by providing a conducive environment. South Africa must heed the disasters of economic planning.

Ethnic constraints

South Africa is a highly fragmented society. Its diversity, in terms of religions, languages, ethnic and cultural groupings, socioeconomic class structures, and general ideologies, is endless. This could be a source of great stress when the government tries to appease all these factions, each with their own interests. The government has the unenviable task of attempting to unite South Africans in a lasting nation-state. This goes against the current international trend of increasing separatism (consider Yugoslavia, the USSR and increasing tension in many other multi-ethnic states, such as Kenya, Nigeria, Canada, Belgium and Fiji). Failing to deal successfully with South Africa's ethnic diversity (or even worse, to ignore it) could result in a bloody civil war or, at a minimum, see an escalation in the current violence, which on average claims about 250 victims a month. Such a development would make restructuring in a fledgling democracy impossible.

The ethnic diversity of South Africa may increase pressures for redistribution through affirmative-type action. However, any variety of affirmative action for one group implies ethnic discrimination for another. This, in turn, may lead to conflict which will

obviously undermine growth. Wyzan[10] claims that open competition between ethnically based parties often leads those parties to attempt to outdo each other in pressing the demands of their constituencies. A case in point would be Sri Lanka, where for more than a decade violent ethnic conflict has occurred between the Sinhalese majority, and the Tamil and Muslim minorities. According to Hubbel,[11] this conflict presents a classic case study of economic discrimination following independence in a former colonial state where minorities received relatively impartial treatment. It then changes abruptly with independence if governments are selected by majority-rule voting. He argues that in a multi-ethnic society, communal conflict is restricted under the following circumstances:

- private goods and services are produced and voluntarily exchanged in an open-market economy; and
- the provision and distribution of public sector goods occur within a politically decentralized governmental framework with maximum autonomy.

Welsh[12] seems to believe that consociationalism is the most hopeful technique of securing democratic political systems in deeply divided societies. Consociationalism rests upon four principal institutional features:

- the grand coalition, meaning that government includes representatives of all the most salient groups in society;
- mutual veto, meaning that minorities can block proposed legislation by exercising their veto, thus requiring that the terms of the legislation be renegotiated;
- proportionality, meaning that all groups enjoy public office proportionately to their numbers; and
- segmental autonomy, meaning that each group possesses to the maximum possible extent the power to regulate its own internal affairs.

Consociationalism, however, tends to be both elitist and inherently conserv-

ative. It would also be difficult to create the moral and intellectual conditions that have formed the political character of, for instance, the Swiss people where consociationalism has worked successfully. South Africa does not have the long tradition of accommodationist behaviour necessary for entrenched compromise.[13] The NP appears to be in favour of such a consensual type of democracy which institutionalizes coalition government and protects minorities. The ANC, on the other hand, seeks to promote the growth of a single national identity within a unified South Africa. Whichever model is chosen, it is essential that a future constitution recognizes and makes allowance for the ethnic diversity of this country. Likewise, a South African nation can only evolve if the existing pattern of income inequality is removed. It is important that economic schisms be lessened and solidarity built, otherwise certain ideologies (be they socialist or capitalist) may derail any nation-building attempt. Welsh[14] warns that:

> Building a South African nation will not be an easy task .... Nearly 50 years ago G.H. Calpin wrote a book entitled 'There are no South Africans'. The pessimistic verdict implied by the title remains substantially true, but at least the elapse of time and the pressure of events may just have succeeded in producing a new generation of South Africans who are determined to prove the opposite.

Institutional constraints

It is erroneous to believe that the present government will be able to execute its policies efficiently without first grappling with the bureaucratic legacy of apartheid. Even if the government wishes to act in the people's interest, it may be prevented from doing so by the very institutions which are meant to carry out its orders. (Never mind the fact that it is a pretty tall order to have an altruistic government in power, in the first place!)

The ANC argues that it is in favour of a mixed economy with a significant role for the state. It justifies the need

for state intervention in the economy on the grounds of market failures. These include externalities, monopolistic abuse, the lack of success of markets in providing certain public goods, and failure in guaranteeing full employment and equity. Whilst all the above are valid, the ANC has developed a flawed picture of the state. The state is not omnipotent; this has been well indicated by public choice theory.

Public choice has drawn attention to state failure. It has been shown that the state itself has only limited capacities and that it is open to misuse by self-serving bureaucrats and politicians. Rent-seeking interest groups and bureaucrats with their own agendas can quite easily halt any progress in the restructuring of South Africa. Consider the civil service: the public sector employs 15% of the economically active population of South Africa (excluding the former TBVC states), which amounts to about 1,7 million employees. In 1992, 50% of the staff of the public sector were Africans, 36% were whites, 12% were coloureds, and 3% were Indians. According to the South African Institute of Race Relations, of the top 3 239 civil servants, only 19 (0,6%) were African. Almost a quarter of the white economically active population was employed in the public sector. The public sector is thus not representative of the population, especially in its top job categories.

White civil servants have benefited rather nicely from apartheid and will not be eager to accept reform. As is to be expected, they will fear change as it will threaten their job security and force them to radically alter their ideology. They will, in all probability, resist change with all their might and retard the execution of government policy through go-slows, bureaucratic red tape, and misinformation. It will be impossible for the government to simply fire a few hundred thousand white civil servants – it is not practical. They tend to have the skills and experience needed in this vital sector; besides, it will negatively affect race relations. The ANC is in favour of

affimative action to ensure black representation in the higher positions in the public service. About 600 potential civil service leaders are being trained in the UK so that they will be equipped to fill posts at a senior level.

The reform of the South African bureaucracy will be of paramount importance if the government wishes to be successful in its restructuring attempts. Schrire[15] lists three options in reforming the public bureaucracy:

• First, the composition of the bureaucracy should be broadened, especially in its higher echelons.

• The second opportunity is to create a mechanism for handling individuals' complaints. This could include an office of the ombudsman.

• Thirdly, the role of the citizenry in policy should be expanded and institutionalized. The legislature should consider instituting freedom of information (sunshine) laws which grant citizens the right to know how decisions were made, who participated in the process and the source of the information.

Equally important is the issue of the lack of efficient local government in South Africa:

> Legitimate and appropriately structured local bodies could ideally respond most sensitively to local conditions and immediate community needs. Such institutions could serve as focal points for inputs into decision-making processes close to the people who have to live with those decisions. However, local structures and processes in South Africa have never quite managed to perform this role. Social inequalities, racial fragmentation and uneven power relations have hindered the ability of local institutions and actors to fully explore its potential.[16]

Local government performs an indispensable role in the existence of any civil society. It is the lowest tier of government, the only tier with which everyone comes into contact regularly. Yet, at the moment, it is probably the weakest link in the government chain. In many parts of the country, local authorities are practically non-existent or powerless.

To a large extent, this has resulted from the lack of legitimacy these bodies are perceived to hold. Rent and service charge boycotts have become the order of the day. By April 1992 an amount of R1,58 billion was owed to African local authorities countrywide.[17] The absence of an effective local government will render any restructuring superficial, because it will be one way only, namely top-down. Benefits will not filter down to the community, because of the break in the chain. It is thus crucial that local government be rebuilt. This will be no easy task and will unfortunately be time-consuming. Deracializing local government means more than simply unifying townships with municipalities. This could lead to cumbersomely large local authorities. Most parties favour a two-tiered system of local government in the larger metropolitan areas – comprising the metropolitan authority at the top, followed by a number of local governments (or sub-councils) below. There is a strong case to be made for the departy-politicizing of local bodies to ensure that they remain an instrument of civil society aimed at community service and not a pawn in the wider political power-play. An in-depth study of this issue lies beyond the scope of this article – suffice it to say that it will be an obstacle in meeting the basic needs of poorer communities, unless it is successfully addressed.

Lastly, there is the issue of administrative constraints. This is especially a problem in the case of social security which is intended to improve the socioeconomic environment of the poor. Even though large amounts are spent by the state on welfare, very often much is lost in the bureaucratic chain:

> The way in which social security is administered may have major implications for its effectiveness and for its cost. Success in channelling benefits to those for whom they are intended, both avoiding payment of benefit to those not entitled and avoiding non-payment of benefit to those who are entitled, depends on the identification of potential beneficiaries and the elicitation of the correct information.[18]

Social security programmes in developing nations often face tremendously exorbitant administrative costs (as high as 35% of total expenditure). A key issue is the availability of information, particularly in the case of means testing. Lack of information in South Africa (as regards unemployment, poverty, and so on) will harm the efficient running of the welfare system and increase its cost.

Demographic constraints

The annual growth rate of the South African population was 2,5% in the period 1985–1990, which means that the population doubling time is 27,6 years. The lowest growth rate occurred in the white population sector (1,41%), followed by the Asians (1,84%), then the coloureds (1,82%), and lastly the blacks (3,08%). Projections of the late 1980s indicated that by the year 2010 the South African population would have risen to 60 million; but more recently Sadie[19] forecast that by the year 2011 the population would be substantially lower at 53,8 million. The black population is expected to comprise 79,8% of the total, or 42,9 million people. Encouragingly, annual population growth rates are projected to drop for all population groups. The white population will be approaching the zero population growth stage by the year 2011, whilst the black population growth rate will then have dropped to 1,71% (from 2,4% in 1991). Although this is reassuring, it still implies a massive increase in the size of the population with the accompanying implications in terms of the need for housing, jobs, social services, and other basic needs.

The South African population also suffers from a high degree of dependency. The dependency ratio (the ratio between the population in the age category 0–14 years and over 65 years, to the economically active category) expressed per 100 of the population, amounted to 71,5 and 6,8 respectively for a total of 78,3 in 1985. Disaggregated for the different population groups, the ratio was 49,9 for whites, 55,8 for Asians, 64,7 for col-

oured, and 88,0 for blacks.[20] This places a tremendous burden on the working population, because not only do they need to contribute to the maintenance of their own dependents but also via taxes, to enable the state to support others. Sadie,[21] however, projects a decline in the dependency ratios of all the population groups between 1991 and 2011. For instance, the black dependency ratio is expected to drop in this period from 80 to 58.

Nevertheless, in terms of absolute increases, this still implies a tremendous burden. The number of persons 65 years and older is forecast to double from 1,6 million in 1991 to 2,8 million in 2011. The cost of this, in terms of the state provision of pensions, is alarming. This is especially so because the provision of war veterans' pensions may rise as coverage is expanded to include soldiers of the liberation armies.

Another demographic problem facing South Africa is that of urbanization. The urbanization process for whites, Asians, and coloureds is more or less completed, with rates of 92%, 95% and 82% respectively. The level of urbanization for blacks stood at 13,0 million people (53%) in 1985, which is expected to increase to 33,2 million (69%) by the year 2010.[22] Trying to accommodate all these people in the towns and cities, and provide them with jobs, housing, and other necessities will be no small feat. Badenhorst[23] claims that in quantitative terms:

> The demographic constraints on future economic development and social upliftment are the sheer size of the population to be accommodated in a finite environment, a high growth rate, especially amongst the least skilled and poorest sections of the population, a high dependency ratio as well as a particularly youthful age structure and high rate of urbanization in the said sector of the population. These realities will put great strain on 'delivering the goods' in a post apartheid South Africa.

It is thus essential to introduce an effective population policy to enable the state to deal effectively with the problem of poverty.

Economic constraints

All calls for greater social investment by the state seem to lose sight of a basic macroeconomic fundament: the budget constraint. A major challenge to policy-makers will be the issue of how far and how fast to move to a more equitable model of social expenditure, reducing racial differentials and advancing social services to those who currently do not receive these benefits, whilst staying within the bounds of fiscal discipline. A report by the IMF on South Africa concludes that the scope for addressing social problems, through raising further the share of these expenditures in the budget, appears to be limited if the government is to avoid resorting to deficit financing or to increasing fiscal revenues.[24] In fact, Loots[25] maintains that South Africa has reached a ceiling by pushing its total government revenue up to about 30% of GDP in 1990. Further increases in government revenue from taxation may be difficult to introduce without allocative and growth costs, and may well be dependent on increases in per capita GDP, something which South Africa has not been able to achieve during the 1980s.

The IMF claims that the tax burden (the difference between tax payments and benefits) on whites was equal to 23,3% of their income. Asians also had a net tax burden equal to 1,77% of their income. On the other hand, coloureds had a tax credit equal to 11,1% of their income and blacks a tax credit equal to 3,4% of their income. It states that the South African tax burden and its marginal tax rates cannot be judged to be low by international standards. The tax burden on the white community appears to be relatively high, even by the standard of industrial countries. Compared with the 23,3% net tax burden borne by whites, Canadians stand at 11,1%, Britons at 10,7%, and Americans at 9,8%. The scope for using the income tax system for further redistribution thus appears to be severely limited. The IMF suggests that the solution to South Africa's problem could be to improve the efficiency and equity of the tax system, in particular by

reducing tax expenditures – that is, tax concessions – especially where they lead to greater investment in plant and machinery, instead of in labour. It proposes that South Africa broaden its tax base and change the mix between direct and indirect taxes.[26] There is growing debate about the potential for the introduction of new forms of taxation: capital gains tax, land tax, progressive property tax, comprehensive taxation of gifts and inheritances, and other types of wealth taxes. This does not alter the fact that South Africans are already overburdened and this will simply add to the load. What South Africa needs most desperately at this stage is to attract foreign investment and increase domestic confidence. The best way to do this is through relatively low tax rates for all and a minimal government deficit, which would convince prospective investors that the tax environment is indeed stable and durable. All the above serves to indicate that there is not much scope for South Africa to raise the overall tax level without hampering future economic development.

The budget is one of the most effective instruments available for redistribution and meeting basic needs, and it will thus have to bear the brunt in ensuring a smooth transition to a just socioeconomic order. The IMF believes that social spending in South Africa – net of social security payments – has risen to levels that are relatively high by international standards. It therefore calls for a reordering of priorities and a restructuring of the present social spending budget. Social services accounts for about 44% of total outlays in the 1993/94 budget. Social expenditure in relation to GDP increased by 2,4% between 1990 and 1993 to where it now stands at 15% of GDP. The shift towards social spending, largely on education and health, has been facilitated by cuts in defence spending. Nevertheless, government expenditure has soared, throwing the budget into a deficit of 8,6% of GDP in the 1992/93 financial year. This "achievement" is expected to be repeated in

the following years. There is thus a danger of successive deficits escalating out of control, sending this country into a debt trap. This happens when governments aim at the swift rejuvenation of the economy via a programme of macroeconomic populism. It will be tempting for the government to stimulate expenditure to satisfy their electorates' expectations and then to justify it as an attempt to "kick-start" the economy.

Given the point that social provision to the previously disadvantaged sectors needs to take place and that this entails the prompt equalization of racial per capita expenditure in the social services, it is clear that a compromise is required. Equalization of expenditure at current white levels is implausible, given the limited resources a relatively poor country such as South Africa has at its disposal. Van der Berg[27] has calculated that the cost of introducing parity at white benefit levels is astronomic. Social spending in only four fields, namely education, housing, health, and social pensions, would have to increase from just under 10% of GDP in 1986 to between 25 and 31% of GDP, or from less than R14 billion to more than R44 billion in 1986. This level of expenditure is clearly not attainable. Equalization will thus have to take place at a much lower level, perhaps at the coloured level. In practice, this means an increased level of services for Africans, constant levels for coloureds, and a reduction in benefits for whites and Indians. Van der Berg's[28] estimates of the implications of parity in 1986/87, taking actual government expenditure for the year as the constraint, show a necessary drop in per capita expenditures on whites from an actual value of R879 to R307, a drop of nearly 65%. He argues that although this seems severe, it is necessary that white standards decline to bring them back to realistic levels commensurate with South Africa's status as a middle-income country. Another alternative would be to improve the currently inefficient and inappropriate delivery of social services. Services should be

targeted more accurately at the poor to secure maximum benefit. Lastly, a choice must be made as regards priority in spending. Emphasis should be laid on those services which yield the highest returns, which will later be reinvested in the economy for the benefit of others.

Conclusion

The capacity of the state to effectively combat poverty through a basic needs approach is limited by various constraints, as this article has indicated. But the state is not the sole custodian of the nation's welfare: individuals, families, welfare bodies and the private sector can make immense contributions too. The key is to grasp the correct mixture of these inputs so as to deliver the most appropriate outputs. South Africa cannot be transformed overnight – in fact, it would be risky to even contemplate this. Restructuring must take place on all fronts, be they social, political, or economic. This, however, needs to be done pragmatically and in the spirit of constructive compromise. It will be impossible to meet all the expectations people may have. At times, the constraints may appear overwhelming, but it must be remembered that the aim of a welfare policy should be to assist those in need now, to enable them to support themselves in the future, when they too can contribute to the welfare of others.

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Employment creation focused on urban areas

Prof M Levin* of the Economics Department of the Port Elizabeth Campus of Vista University argues that macro-economic policies have not sufficiently increased employment growth and suggests two alternative measures.

M acro-economic policies in South Africa have not led to employment growth of the same magnitude as output growth. Table 1 shows the difference.

Table 1: Real growth of GDP and employment in South Africa

	1948–1960	1960–1970	1970–1981	1981–1990
	%	%	%	%
Real GDP	4,3	5,7	3,5	1,0
Employment	2,2	2,6	1,6	0,4

(Source: Barker[1])

The figures in table 1 show, first, a bias towards output growth and secondly, a decreasing production elasticity of employment. Fewer and fewer employment opportunities are created for every percentage point increase of economic growth. The Department of Finance[2] has calculated that during the period 1965 to 1970 the absorptive capacity of the formal sector of the economy was 73,6%, during the period 1975 to 1980 it was 35,4%, and from 1985 to 1989 it fell to only 12,5%. After 1990, real growth was negative and net employment losses occurred because of the natural erosion (through death and retirement) of the labour force.

However, towards the end of 1993 it was clear that the South African economy had already entered a new recovery phase. Both the extremely long recession, which started early in 1989, and an extensive structural decline, which started in the early 1970s, had ended. It is more than likely that the cyclical recovery will be piggy-backed by a structural recovery as the South African economy becomes reincorporated into the world economy once again.

During this forthcoming period of recovery, both cyclically and structurally, it is essential that attention be given specifically to employment creation, because in addition to the economy's normal bias in favour of production growth, surplus capacity in most sectors of the economy will cause a delay in the recovery of employment growth. Although macro-economic policies are important in creating employment growth and development, it is increasingly being realized that they are not in themselves a sufficient condition for either accelerating the pace of employment creation or generating sufficient employment to meet the supply pressures of a very fast-growing labour force[3] – particularly in the fast-growing cities of developing countries

in general and South Africa in particular. Additional measures are required to stimulate growth of employment.

Two categories of such measures exist. One category includes conventional measures which are widely used in industrialized and some developing countries. These measures focus on the supply of and the demand for labour. The other category includes unconventional measures. These measures focus on improved urban planning, administration and management, and on the work of local employment agencies.

Conventional measures

These are measures focusing on the supply of and demand for labour in general[4] and include strategies such as early retirement, youth schemes, work-sharing, short-time working, limiting migration, special employment programmes, training and retraining, employment subsidies, income tax cuts, foreign trade, and small business development.

Reducing the supply of labour

The conventional view of full employment implies that the available labour force is in gainful employment from the stage at which individuals leave full-time education to the stage at which they retire. Under conditions where work is persistently in short supply, governments may try to shorten the time span between these two stages, with a view to reducing the supply of labour.

In so far as *early retirement* serves to "cull" certain workers, and spread current income over more persons, it has an employment creation effect. The magnitude of this effect appears to be quite substantial. From studies by Hart[5] it appears that almost the entire growth in employment opportunities in the OECD countries originated from this source during the 1970s.

Under present conditions in South Africa, early retirement is a method which can have the additional advantage of creating room for affirmative

action, and for experienced persons (early pensioners) to enter the economy in an entrepreneurial capacity. Early retirement has the immediate effect of reducing the supply of labour.

Young people in developing and even industrial countries find it difficult to obtain employment and often become unemployed straight after leaving school. If youngsters could remain at school, this would not only reduce the supply of labour, but serve to improve the quality of their labour before entry into the labour market. Some governments absorb young people who leave school at an early age in various training programmes. The Youth Training Schemes, for example, of the United Kingdom government[6] are an example. These training programmes offer on-the-job and off-the-job training, as well as structured work experiences.

In South Africa, similar arrangements can make a meaningful contribution to "phase" young people into the labour force. Even the practice of job shadowing could be a worthwhile option.[7]

In addition to reducing the time span between school leaving (training) and retirement, a further approach to the problem of an oversupply of labour is to spread the available supply of work more widely, albeit more thinly. This practice takes two forms, namely, work-sharing and short-time working.

Under work-sharing the explicit aim is to reduce the individual's working week and thereby release working time to the unemployed. Apart from reducing the working week, reducing overtime has been identified as a method of creating employment. According to Metcalf[8] more than 40 million hours of overtime is worked in Britain per week. If this were converted to full time employment, the number of unemployed people could be reduced by one third. All countries in Western Europe have legal restrictions on the number of overtime hours permitted, with the exception of Britain and Denmark. The emphasis placed on

the creation of employment in most of the industrialized countries makes it probable that restrictions on overtime work will be more severely legislated in future. Already in Italy for example "... overtime is prohibited and is a criminal offence".[9] The British *job splitting* scheme[10] provides for a full-time job to be split into two part-time jobs. It meets the needs of both employees who wish to work shorter hours and of unemployed persons who consider a part-time job better than none at all.

Short-time working occurs when employers cannot offer the workforce its normal basic hours of work. It is a measure often used during cyclical slumps, and is well known and regularly applied in manufacturing and mining industries in South Africa.

Another way of reducing the supply of labour in a particular country is to *reduce immigration*. Most of the highly industrialized countries at the OECD allowed a more or less free flow of migrant workers into the regions and occupations with a shortage of indigenous labour. It was found[11] that the opportunities of substitution between foreign and indigenous manpower were rather limited, at least in the short term. Thus foreign workers continued to hold jobs spurned by local workers and to perform jobs in areas which the national market was unable to supply. A substantial reduction of new immigrants has nevertheless been realized in Europe since 1974. However, the total size of the migrant labour force has not declined.

In South Africa, migrant workers come from neighbouring countries and their numbers have fluctuated. In the mid-1980s a sizeable increase was experienced,[12] but by the beginning of the 1990s their numbers were down again. Many of these workers were employed in the mining industry. With the current over-supply of labour, a reduction in the employment of foreign workers is a potential method of creating employment for local labour. However, such policy, if implemented, may not have the desired effect, because in their

countries of origin employment opportunities are limited and they will, therefore, in any case migrate and take up employment in other industries.

Increasing the demand for labour

Demand for labour is increased, *inter alia,* by public sector spending, training and retraining, employment subsidies, income tax cuts, foreign trade, and stimulation of small and medium-size businesses.

Direct job creation in the public sector or by means of *public works programmes,* which were once widely used methods of employment creation, have led to unsatisfactory results in several countries.[13] Recently public employment objects have concentrated on:

- directly productive projects (ie irrigation works);
- physical infrastructure projects (ie roads, sewerage, drains, etc);
- social infrastructure projects (ie schools, clinics, etc); and
- services in community interest (ie cleaning, weed eradication).[14]

Such work is initiated by government (regional and local) and done by means of deliberately labour-intensive methods.

Under normal circumstances it is desirable to select special employment programmes which will result in permanent employment in the private or the public sector. However, the prevailing extraordinarily high unemployment rates in South Africa, because of the very high cost, warrant projects which are useful but which will not necessarily result in sustainable employment. In time, the manufacturing, services and other sectors of the economy will undoubtedly increase their labour absorption capacity to such an extent that special employment programmes, as temporary agencies of employment, could be reduced or phased out.

In addition to direct employment creation programmes, governments usually assume various degrees of responsibility for vocational or skills *training and retraining* of the labour force. At one extreme there is the

highly comprehensive system of apprenticeship training in a country such as Germany, and at the other extreme a system of informal on-the-job training as in the United States. Yet both these countries are similar in that they attach great importance to the involvement of the private sector.

In most countries initial training after school had been mainly the responsibility of public authorities. Further training, or adult training, had occurred on the job as part of normal career development. By the 1980s this dichotomy between public and private sector responsibilities changed.[15] Initial training is related to the diverse and changing needs of employers and for this reason firm-based initial training has become more important and practised. At the same time, adult training and retaining has become more a public responsibility, seeing that individuals lose their access to firm-based training when they lose employment. Even when they keep their employment, they may find that their employers are unable or reluctant to finance training.

Special training programmes have been in existence in South Africa since 1983.[16] Although these programmes were initially introduced to compliment special employment programmes, they were increasingly directed at self-employment.

Government can also stimulate employment creation by means of *employment subsidies* (or tax rebates) to the private sector. Employment subsidies take various forms. One form consists of "earning supplements" and "wage rate subsidies". Both of these are paid directly to workers without necessitating involvement by employers. By their nature, they are targeted at low wage workers and have an employment objective in addition to an income maintenance objective.

The most common form of employment subsidy, however, is a "wage bill subsidy". Such subsidies are paid to employers and are based on some aspect of their wage bill. Wage bill subsidies have the effect of general business subsidization and therefore

of raising profits, because they are paid on workers who would have been employed in the absence of the subsidy anyway. In addition, they also encourage employment creation, because they are paid on newly employed workers as well. To limit the general effect of the subsidy on profits and to focus on direct employment creation only, "marginal employment subsidies" may be paid.

A wage subsidy could be paid on new workers employed as opposed to the wage cost of an increment. Such a subsidy is referred to as a "recruitment subsidy". The weakness of this type of subsidy is that employers can increase labour turnover and collect the subsidy on each new labourer. This practice is known as "churning". However, the subsidy could also be paid on increments in the total number of employees to avoid this problem. Such subsidies are known as "marginal stock subsidies" or "marginal employment subsidies" because they provide for an increase in the stock of employment rather than an increase in the flow of workers passing through the business.

South Africa's 1982 Regional Industrial Development Programme provided for the payment of subsidies on employment. However, this arrangement was abolished when the revised 1991 Regional Industrial Programme (RIDP) and also in the simplified RIDP of 1992 were introduced. These programmes re-introduced subsidization of capital at the expense of employment, in spite of the capital deepening that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s.

Income tax cuts are often suggested to effect related changes in aggregate demand and output. However, the effect of income tax cuts on the actual number of workers employed is likely to lag because the productivity of any hoarded labour is bound to rise first, and only afterwards will an increase in the hours worked follow. Employers must decide whether such an increase in demand is likely to be permanent before they take on new workers. This is, of course the field of interest of

supply-side economists, who are often inclined to oversimplify the effects of tax cuts and thus to overestimate their employment creation effect.

Many countries also focus on manipulating *foreign trade* to realize employment gains. Traditional manipulations were directed at imports and exports directly[17] but a variant represented export processing zones (EPZs). The number of these zones increased steadily during the 1970s and 1980s. Their original purpose was to speed up re-exports. Goods were thus permitted to enter and leave the zone exempt from customs duties. Over the past 20 years the concept has changed and today the EPZ is a specific industrial estate offering comprehensive infrastructural services, sometimes including rental of suitable factory accommodation, and permitting duty-free access of raw materials, components, capital equipment and similar facilities for producing exports.

In South Africa the government only recently (1992) expressed a positive attitude towards the establishment of EPZs. Details have not been finalized yet. However science parks have been operating for a number of years.

Many countries have introduced methods to stimulate *small and medium-size businesses* in various ways.

Many small and medium-size businesses are hampered in their expansion and growth by a lack of equity (or risk) capital. These businesses' financial gearing is mostly obtained through loan capital which is a very inconvenient and inappropriate form of financing because of its high cost and the need to service such loans consistently. By contrast, equity capital represents debt which is serviced through the payment of dividends only when the business can afford it. It is clearly possible for no dividends to be paid to equity holders for some years, while the business gets on its feet. This kind of discretion does not exist in the case of loan capital.

In the United Kingdom a scheme known as the Business Expansion Scheme was started in the 1983/84 fiscal year as a means of inducing private investors to put up equity capital to new or expanding small and medium-size businesses in return for tax concessions. The operation of the scheme is set out in detail by Blackstone.[18] In essence, the scheme encourages private persons to invest in the eligible companies in return for tax relief on the investment and is calculated at a higher marginal rate in the year that the investment is made. Business are not allowed to participate in the scheme and private individuals may do so only for a period of five years.

This is an innovative scheme and is well worth adopting. However, certain adjustments would be necessary. In the UK the scheme is used more to provide funds for financially viable businesses than to encourage such businesses to create jobs. It therefore favours wealth creation rather than employment creation *per se*. In addition the scheme is not tied to any regional criteria.

It is believed that such a scheme has much potential to activate the latent employment creation abilities locked up in small and medium-size businesses, and it is strongly recommended that a similar scheme be introduced in South Africa. In general, small and medium-size businesses play a vital role in economies that are successful in generating employment opportunities. They are considered to be by far the most effective job creators in any economy. In South Africa the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) was established as a joint venture of the government and the private sector. By 1993, eleven years after its establishment, it has created or preserved 340 000 jobs. However, its operation is seriously hampered by irregular contributions from the budget.

Unconventional measures

Unconventional measures are designed to enhance the economic productivity of urban areas in particular and to support and reinforce macro-economic growth and development policies in general. Just as economic growth and employment creation depend on macro-economic policies, so does the performance of the urban economy affect macro-economic performance of growth, price stability, exchange rate stability and full employment.[19] Urban authorities' policies are therefore very important in strengthening the basic fabric which would result in the enhancement of employment growth and income generation.

Urban planning, administration and management

Urbanization in South Africa has started to show the same characteristics as that of other developing countries. There is increasing evidence of informal and squatter settlements with a lack of basic services, infrastructure and shelter, and increasing levels of unemployment and poverty. Although poverty among South Africans shows the typical rural/urban split observed in many developing countries,[20] an increase in urban poverty has been more conspicuous since the middle of the 1970s.[21] It is estimated that approximately 44% (16 million people) of the total South African population was living in poverty in 1989. Simkins estimated[22] that 32% of black households in the RSA's metropolitan areas, and 51% in homeland metropolitan areas, were living on an income which was below the minimum living standard.

It is therefore essential and urgent that urban planning and management in South Africa go beyond physical planning only.[23] Urban authorities should design plans and implement policies which will not only stimulate employment creation and generate income for households that will enable them to afford basic essentials, but will also generate income for the urban authorities themselves to that they are able provide the infrastructural services essential for a meaningful process of urbanization.

Policies and programmes that will strengthen the ability of the economy to create more employment, to generate income and to create better living

conditions for urban dwellers, and specifically black urban dwellers in South Africa, are related to the improvement of the economic base of the urban area, the supply of appropriate infrastructure, and the adoption of modern management approaches.

The *economic base* of urban areas is expressed by the presence and relative size of primary, secondary and tertiary sector activities in the urban and regional environment, together with the manifestation of the urban and rural informal sectors. The economic base of a city very often resides not only in the city itself, but also in the city's physical environment. It is therefore not sufficient to base urban planning for employment creation and income generation merely on the urban manufacturing, services and construction sectors. It is very essential also to include the primary sector (agricultural and mining) of the rural hinterlands because their economic involvement can form the basis for designing a strategy for the development of the overall regional economy.[24] The processing, upgrading and distribution of the products of the primary sector in the urban areas provides opportunities for employment creation and income generation and it is therefore imperative that they are duly considered and incorporated in town and development planning. Rural and urban development are interdependent and complementary.

The employment growth characteristics of the secondary and tertiary sectors dictate specific approaches to their incorporation in development planning.

The relatively low employment growth characteristics of *manufacturing* emphasizes a capital intensive bias. In South Africa manufacturing's share in total employment increased from 12,4% in 1948 to 19,1% in 1990,[25] which is not spectacular. In fact from 1980 to 1990, employment growth in the manufacturing sector virtually stagnated at a rate of 0,3% per year. In spite of this, growth in production serves as a basic stimulant for employment growth in the services sector.

The share of the services sector in total employment increased form 45,1% in 1948 to 55,3% in 1990.[26] Horn,[27] however, showed that employment in the services sector in South Africa increased twice as fast as in the manufacturing sector from 1980 to 1989. However, in spite of the difference in employment growth, Horn[28] emphasizes the interdependent relationship through backward and forward linkages between the manufacturing and the services sectors. He comes to the conclusion that a vibrant manufacturing sector is imperative for employment growth in the services sector.

Modern manufacturing no longer requires huge isolated and decentralized locations. Small industrial islands integrated into urban areas, near the labour force, supplied with all the essential infrastructural services will stimulate labour intensiveness and enhance productivity. In South Africa the existing urban area "gaps" in the form of buffers and open spaces are ideally suited to light industries that do not cause air and environmental pollution. This view fits in with the cities-within-cities concept.[29] Cities-within-cities are described as relatively self-contained areas with a diversified land use mix.

The *services sector* is labour intensive and therefore dictates spatial designs which blend it into the immediate living environment of households supplying its labour force and making use of its services. For many decades in South Africa, the location of only some segments of the labour force were considered important in city design and zoning.

Black townships were developed into dormitories with households even today still making little use of the services of banks, building societies and insurance companies, while also supplying a negligent portion of the labour force of these and similar institutions. The objectives of employment creation and income generation would be well served if service institutions were situated nearer to both their labour supply and their markets. The cities-in-cities concept and the

"mixed use activity" concept,[30] which emphasizes the mixed usage of corridors between dispersed parts of cities, are of importance here. These corridors can serve as seams tying together the dispersed urban parts. Utilizing such corridors/seams would enhance productivity of capital and labour.

Imaginative urban planning is essential to ensure that maximum use is made of existing urban investment in infrastructure and especially transport. *Transport* is an important focus of forward linkage. A densification of urban areas of South African cities can contribute substantially to more intensive use of such and other infrastructures, thereby reducing unit cost and creating a basis for better urban productivity.

Urban economic activity depends heavily on *infrastructure* facilities such as power supply, street lighting, roads and suitable accesses, water, sanitation, household waste water disposal, storm-water drainage, and drained land upon which dwellings can be constructed.[31] Inadequate provision and maintenance of infrastructures in less developed urban areas in South Africa hampers the sustained development of such areas. On the other hand, there is a relative underutilization of infrastructures in most areas because of the sprawling nature of South African cities. Planners should endeavour to optimize the use of existing infrastructures through balancing current patterns of over-provision and under-utilization against those of under-provision and over-utilization.

The *informal sector* accounts for a high percentage of employment in some countries. In South Africa it is estimated that 2,8 million blacks, Asians and coloureds were involved in informal sector activities outside the TBVC states in 1990.[32] The importance of the informal sector lies in the fact that it addresses the problem of economic inactivity. The income earned in this sector is usually very low and the employment conditions are far from ideal. Although the informal sector, to some extent, helps to solve unemployment, it does not satisfactorily

address the problem of poverty. It remains, nevertheless, important because it also often serves as an entry point to the formal business sector and to self-employment.

A *densification programme* for South African cities together with appropriate planning and design standards would go a long way to serving the interests of the informal sector. This sector is largely supply-driven and proximity to people is its life-blood. Infrastructural services, such as electricity, communication, water, toilets and proper roads are vital for the livelihood of this sector. The "mixed use activity corridor" concept is a very applicable kind of physical development to serve the unique requirements of the informal sector and should be pursued where possible. In general only a minimum of safety, health and nuisance standards should be enforced and then only on a differentiated basis in different areas. Urban authorities should also endeavour to encourage developmental relationships between the informal sector, smaller businesses, and business enterprises in general.

For the informal sector to operate properly and to be successful it requires a generally deregulated environment with emphasis on promoting and supporting emerging entrepreneurs rather than inhibiting and constraining them; the adoption of appropriate planning and design approaches and standards which facilitate rather than control development; and an appropriate supportive infrastructure.

The *construction industry* in many instances has been mentioned as a potential lead sector for economic growth and employment creation. The importance of the construction industry in South Africa has been emphasized in connection with housing by what was called "inward industrialization".[33] Construction has strong indirect stimulation effects through backward and forward linkages.[34] Backwards it is linked to the building material industries such as stone, cement, bricks, iron and

steel, processed wood, and glass. Forward it is linked to transport, electricity, communication, furniture and other fixtures.

It is possible to elevate construction as a new lead industry in South Africa in urban development and employment growth. A densification programme of South African cities to promote more compact cities is essential for various reasons. In achieving this objective the construction sector would benefit. In many areas higher densities should be allowed by relaxing strict regulations on coverage and subdivision. In other areas the upgrading of squatter housing, self-service housing, sites and services, prevention of urban decay and the implementation of urban renewal programmes all could stimulate the construction industry.

If *urban housing* can provide the point of departure for the stimulation of inward industrialization, then urban planners must ensure that there is land available and that all sections of the community have access to such land; that both formal and informal housing are provided for and tenure is secured; and that regulations and standards are appropriate and according to the income of the communities.

High levels of services are unlikely to be sustainable in low-income urban areas in South Africa, and success will depend upon addressing the key issues of affordability and maintenance. The complex interaction between technical and social factors should also be considered. It is more effective to provide only the most basic level of service (primary level infrastructure) at the outset, and then subsequently upgrade it. Primary level infrastructures can be provided without cost recovery, but subsequent improvements must be funded through loans to individuals and/or societies.

South African cities must, to a certain extent, be replanned and restructured. Their urban economies suffer from inefficiencies because of the apartheid policies of the past.[35] Firstly, there are parcels of unused land that are located in central areas

and which might be released to contribute to compact urban growth. Secondly, there are land-use mismatches as a result of the rigid sectoral structuring of residential areas. This has led to expensive commuting patters between home and work. Thirdly, distorted residential property markets have been developed. An over-supply of white living units and an under-supply of black living units has been created. Fourthly, distorted commercial markets have been produced. This has led to a mismatch of optimal trading locations. Fifthly, skewed industrial land development occurred because it was restricted in some urban areas and subsidized in others. Sixthly, public sector inefficiencies were created because of the duplication of certain services and amenities.

Restructuring of the physical urban contents must be accompanied by the assumption of management in addition to administrative responsibilities. To follow international trends, urban management will have to: establish development departments which can focus on development planning; improve financial management and accountability; and reorientate their urban planners to follow a coordinated physical, economic and development approach. Urban management in South Africa will have to follow a development planning approach which is not only aimed at restructuring South African cities into fundamentally different physical forms, but also to create cities which will utilize their economic bases in such a manner that income for restructuring is produced, that employment is created, and that poverty is effectively reduced.

The role does not consist of a passive administration of ordinances and by-laws, but consists of creative thinking, innovative planning, imaginative fiscal actions and skilful financial management. To prepare themselves adequately for the new role as developers of their urban economies, urban managements will have to establish offices/departments of competent people to specialize in

development planning. Such offices should identify strong and weak aspects in the economic base, identify strategies to exploit or overcome them and, through aggressive marketing, ensure that self-sustained urban economies with significant revenue bases are created. Preparing feasibility studies which include various elements of subsidizing industrial location[36] and the untiring search for suitable industries should become daily routine. They should also engage in researching methods to better integrate the formal and informal sectors, to identify ways to accelerate the provision and upgrading of basic services, institute skills training programmes, develop urban market information systems, and attend to social infrastructure needs and preferences.

Local employment agencies

The persistent and high levels of unemployment in most countries of the world during the 1970s and the 1980s, have forced individuals and societies to depart from their traditional faith in external powers to provide employment. A philosophy has developed that it is preferable rather to encourage enterprise and self-help by utilizing the resources, energy and imagination inherent in a community itself than to rely upon external forces for the creation of new employment opportunities.

This has led to many independent initiatives to provide employment and to create new sustainable businesses. This movement has become known as "local initiatives", or "local enterprise agencies", or "local employment agencies" and is well described in various sources.[37]

Local employment agencies can be divided into two groups, namely those that encourage self-employment and support the establishment and development of enterprises (eg intermediary organizations), and those that are in fact part of a specific producing enterprise.

Intermediary organizations usually aim at one or more of the following: identification of economic development and employment creation opportunities in an area, and the motivation of local individuals and groups to exploit them; the marshalling of resources and support services for proposed or existing production initiatives in an area, including assistance with feasibility studies and financial planning; the provision of technical and managerial assistance, including accounting and financial control services and marketing; and providing training courses and, occasionally, specialized staff on secondment.[38]

Local employment agencies (as intermediary organizations) can specifically focus on:

- Placement and counselling services. Where the public sector renders such services, it can be supplemented and its workforce can be strengthened by volunteers.

- Training and retraining. One problem of long-term unemployment is the eroding effect that it has on the skills and knowledge of the unemployed. It has been found that the long-term unemployed are significantly under-represented on what might be described as conventional skills-training programmes, since these tend to have entrance requirements which the long-term unemployed never had, or no longer have. These agencies can apply themselves in assisting such persons.

- Public works schemes. These have to be designed and the money negotiated.

- Promoting self-employment. Assistance can be given to people in various ways to enable them to become self-employed ie, accommodation, financing, administrative support, and marketing, etc.

Local employment agencies, operating as production units, which employ labour, can be divided into three categories:[39]

The first category consists of community companies or cooperatives that have the objectives of employment creation, employment preservation and/or the production and marketing of goods and services. Secondly, there are local individuals and groups, such as local governments, associations, churches and voluntary organizations, chambers of commerce, labour unions and women's organizations that feel a need to respond to the challenge of unemployment or the lack of development in a particular area.

They establish a business to attend to these problems. Thirdly, initiatives are focused on the absorption of unprivileged groups into the labour force.[40]

Community business ventures are established to provide employment, work experience and training to groups such as the physically and mentally handicapped and unemployment-prone whose features – age, sex, ethnic origin, health, location, qualifications – are in the opinion of employers a hindrance to their integration into the labour force.

Summary

Macro-economic policies in South Africa have not led to employment growth of the same magnitude as output growth. A bias has been shown for output growth, and in addition decreasing labour absorption has been experienced.

Although macroeconomic policies are important in creating employment growth, it is increasingly being realized that they are not in themselves sufficient to accelerate the pace, or increase the magnitude, of employment growth.

Additional measures are required to stimulate growth of employment. Two categories of such measures exist. One category includes conventional measures which are widely used in industrialized and developing countries. They focus on the supply of and demand for labour.

The other category includes unconventional measures. These measures focus on improved urban planning, administration and management, and on the work of local employment agencies.

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Forthcoming:
Africa at a glance, 1995
compiled by Pieter Esterhuysen

A comprehensive but concise compendium of useful data about Africa, easy-to-use and attractively presented in tables, maps and graphs (some in colour).

The tables and figures refer to Africa's 53 independent countries and island states, covering topics such as population, urbanization, languages, cultures, independence dates, names of political leaders, change of political systems and leadership, geo-economic regions and economic groupings of countries, as well as a variety of economic and social data, including GNP figures, foreign debt indicators, development aid, external trade, agricultural and mineral production, physical infrastructure, education and literacy, list of universities, life expectancy, infant mortality and human development ratings.

Economic realities and prospects for trade, investment and growth in Southern Africa

Stephen R Lewis, Jr, President of and Professor of Economics at Carleton College in Minnesota, presents a US perspective of economic prospects in Southern Africa.
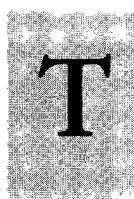
The prospects for economic development, as well as the opportunities for trade and investment, in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) are dominated by conditions in Southern Africa. Southern Africa is the home of 130 million of the region's 530 million people, but it produces about 45% of SSA's gross domestic product (GDP). In the 1980s, real per capita income in SSA fell on the average by 1% per year. Only three countries with populations of greater than 1 million (Botswana, Mauritius and Chad – the world's ninth-poorest country) achieved growth rates of over 2% per year – a rate that would permit per capita income to double in 36 years. Thus, rapidly growing economies don't present any obvious opportunities in SSA. The search for a focus and a strategy must be based on other criteria.

The two largest economies in SSA are South Africa and Nigeria. South Africa's economy is three times the size of Nigeria's. Nigeria's economy is dominated by petroleum exports. It has been mismanaged for at least two decades; and, apart from labour migration, it is not well integrated into the rest of the region's economies. South Africa, on the other hand, is extensively interconnected with the older economies of Southern Africa. And, despite the history of economic isolation and sanctions, South Africa has fairly extensive trade links with the rest of SSA as well. There is also a marked contrast between South Africa's highly diversified economy and its exceptionally modern service sectors and the widely known difficulties of doing business in or with Nigeria. I believe there is no question that South Africa and its subregion provide the best prospects on the continent for focused attention of the private sector, as well as the greatest promise for enabling and supporting activities of the United States Government and other bilateral and multilateral development agencies.

Some artifacts

In the past decade, the world increasingly realized that over 130 million people in Southern Africa depended on the political and economic developments in South Africa, which itself has less than 30% of the subregion's total population. Nearly 100 million people outside South Africa were directly and adversely affected by the policies of the apartheid government, and they now anticipate the positive prospects of economic reform and economic development in South Africa itself. For over a decade, the emphasis in the region was on the "destabilization" by South Africa of the ten members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC): Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe. Since

1989–1990 the attention has shifted toward transition, reconstruction, and how new strategies in South Africa can affect Southern Africa – SADC plus South Africa – in a positive, rather than a negative, fashion.

The reason for focusing on South Africa is easily seen from the information in table 1, which presents some recent artifacts about population, size, and income levels in the 11 Southern African states. South Africa, with less than 30% of the population, has more than three-quarters of the GDP originating in the region and even higher shares of such measures as manufacturing GDP, manufacturing exports, commercial energy production and consumption, transportation infrastructure, etc.

Looking farther afield, South Africa dominates the rest of sub-Saharan Africa as well, accounting for over a third of the continent's merchandise exports, over 40% of its manufacturing

GDP and manufacturing exports, and over 50% of its commercial energy consumption.

It may be useful to put Southern Africa in context with other developing countries. In terms of population, the region is slightly smaller than Brazil or the Russian Federation, each of which has approximately 150 million people. In per capita income, however, Southern Africa as a whole is at a level comparable to Kenya, Nigeria or China. While South Africa itself has an income level comparable to upper middle-income countries such as Venezuela or Argentina, the region as a whole is more like the low-income developing countries.

Finally, and of major importance for discussion of future policy and strategy, it is important to note that South Africa runs a substantial foreign trade surplus both with its SADC neighbours and with the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, a factor which is

critical to both South Africa and its trading partners.

Some economic history

The integration of South Africa with the rest of the region has a long history, stretching well back into the colonial era. The migrant labour system not only dominated South African economics, politics, and society, but also had major effects on countries as far north as Malawi; it has been in place for more than a century, beginning with the discovery of diamonds in the 1860s and gold in the 1880s. Issues related to the regional transportation system, and the political struggles related to transport routes, were a factor in the conflict between Paul Kruger of the Transvaal Republic and Cecil John Rhodes. Mining investments from the mining finance houses in South Africa have been involved in countries as far north as Tanzania for 50 to 75 years. And, the network of trading and merchandise links, with South Africa as a supplier to the region, was developed over decades prior to the independence of the countries of Southern Africa, which began in the early 1960s.

The economic integration of the region, with transportation links as a key, was a critical factor in the struggles in Southern Africa as South Africa attempted to isolate itself from the rest of the world beginning as early as the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Southern Rhodesia. As a result of political, economic, and military action, both overt and covert, South Africa and its proxies succeeded in disrupting alternative transport routes out of Southern Africa, and diverted 60–70% or more, of SADC trade through the South African transportation system – ports, roads and railroads. As the pressure for sanctions on South Africa increased in the mid-1980s, South Africa emphasized the "dependence" of the other countries in the region on South Africa, for economic relationships and for transportation.

Throughout history, however, the relationship has been one of interdependence, not dependence. For many

Table 1: Southern African artifacts – 1991

	Area ('000 km2)	Population (Millions)	GDP (Billion US$)	GDP per capita (US$)
Angola [est]	1 247	10,0	3,5	350
Botswana	600	1,3	3,6	2 530
Lesotho	30	1,8	0,6	580
Malawi	118	8,8	2,0	230
Mozambique	802	16,1	1,2	80
Namibia	827	1,5	2,0	1 460
Swaziland	17	0,8	0,8	1 050
Tanzania	945	25,2	2,2	100
Zambia	753	8,3	3,8	450
Zimbabwe	391	10,1	5,5	650
SADC Subtotal	5 727	93,9	25,2	285
South Africa	1 221	38,9	90,2	2 560
Southern Africa	6 948	132,8	116,4	950
Sub-Saharan Africa including South Africa	24 287	527,8	255,5	350
South Africa as %				
of Southern Africa	18%	29%	78%	2,7 times
Sub-Saharan Africa	7%	5%	35%	7,3 times

NB: South Africa's share of sub-Saharan Africa is

    35–40% of Merchandise Exports
    40–45% of Manufacturing GDP
    55–60% of Commercial Energy Consumption

Source: The World Bank, *World Development Report,* 1993, and earlier World Bank Reports on sub-Saharan Africa.

years in the late 1980s, the balance of trade surplus that South Africa ran with its SADC neighbours amounted to over $1,5 billion per year, which was a critical factor in South Africa's economic survival since the early 1980s. Other important links involved South African investment of significant size in at least seven of the ten SADC countries, even at the height of the sanctions era. More than 300 000 foreigners from Southern Africa worked legally in South Africa; and it is estimated that one million or more illegal or seasonal workers from the SADC countries are employed in South Africa. Since the relaxation of political tensions began in 1990, there has been further migration of African nationals to South Africa to take advantage of the increasing economic opportunities available to blacks as the institutions of apartheid were dismantled.

Even during the sanctions era, trade with SADC, and with the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, was important, since it provided South Africa with substantial balance of trade surpluses with both regions. Following the end of the sanctions era there has been more rapid growth of trade with South Africa. The importance of the four small countries that are members with South Africa in the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) should be particularly highlighted. Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland (BLNS) have been critically important to South Africa's economic performance in the last decade. It is important to realize, and not just for statistical aficionados, that the published statistics about South African trade exclude trade with the BLNS countries, since South Africa reports international trade on behalf of the entire Customs Union, not South Africa by itself. The omission is stunningly important. By 1992, for example, South Africa was running an overall balance of trade surplus with BLNS of R8 billion, the equivalent that year of $2,8 billion. This was twice the overall current account surplus of South Africa in that year. South African exports to the BLNS countries

in 1992 were the equivalent to 70% of South Africa's net gold exports that year. And, BLNS accounted for twice the level of exports of South Africa as the total to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa – the later figure, is the one reported by South African Customs as "trade with Africa". Since 1985, when the commercial banks closed down their lending to South Africa, the increased exports from South Africa to the BLNS countries contributed more than a third of South Africa's increased GDP, more than a third of its total export growth, and financed more than 20% of South Africa's increased imports. And, since the beginning of the political changes in South Africa, exports to the rest of Africa (ie, non-BLNS exports) have grown very rapidly, often at more than 10% per year in real terms.

Thus, it is important to recognize that a substantial amount of economic interdependence – trade, investment, movement of persons, marketing links, transportation – already exists between South Africa and the SADC countries, as well as with other countries of sub-Saharan Africa. South African exporters succeeded in busting sanctions to maintain trade with virtually every country in sub-Saharan Africa, even at the height of sanctions. They are clearly prepared to do business more effectively now that trade is legal.

The South African economy

Before looking at the prospects of economic progress and economic strategy in the development of South and Southern Africa, it is important to examine the situation of South Africa itself: it is the key player in the region. It is well known that since 1980, economic performance in the South African economy has been dismal. Per capita income has dropped by at least 15% in real terms, there has been no growth in total employment in the past 12 to 15 years, unemployment rates among the economically active black population exceed 50% on the average and are higher in some areas, there is an enormous educational deficit in the black population

(especially among younger black adults and late teens), ratios of both investment and saving to national income fell dramatically over the last few years (they had been maintained at around 25% of national income for many years, a very comfortable rate for a middle-income country, but are now well under 20% of national income), and there have been substantial capital outflows every year since 1985 (through a combination of capital flight and debt repayment). Further, urban migration has put terrific pressure on housing and related infrastructure; the protection levels to manufacturing industry are among the highest in the world, and the tariff and import control systems are among the most complex of any member of GATT; there have been budget deficits ranging from 3 to 5 to 7% of GDP on a regular basis; the productivity of new investment has been falling in virtually every five-year period since the mid-1960s (owing to a combination of inefficient protection, investment in "strategic" industries which the government deemed to be important to combat sanctions, and the other costs of maintaining the apartheid system). In short, the economy is coming out of a period of disastrous economic performance.

However, there are some extremely important positive features in the economic situation facing the new government in South Africa, as well as its trading partners in the region. Having been shut out of international capital markets for nearly a decade, South Africa's debt ratio is now low by international standards, which means its capacity to borrow is substantial. Inflation, which had been endemic for more than a decade, has been coming down steadily in the last couple of years.

Transportation and related infrastructure investments are extensive. Export trade has improved throughout the past decade, particularly in manufacturing, and particularly with the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. And, not least, the ecological and mineral resources of the country are enormous.

Development strategy in South and Southern Africa

The new government's· economic policy seems most encouraging. There appears to be a fairly substantial consensus across the political and economic spectrum on the diagnosis of South Africa's problems, and also on the basic strategic goals for the future: an emphasis on real economic growth and on the employment that would be generated by such growth; a realization that domestic investment is critical, though foreign investment can play an important marginal role; a shared view on the importance of reducing levels of tariff protection and quantitative import restrictions, and especially on the need to look outward to export markets if economic growth and employment growth are to be sustained; a recognition in government, union, and business sectors – strained now that so many union leaders are now in the new government of national unity – that the relationships between wages, productivity, and the exchange rate between the rand and other currencies is of key importance in determining the productivity of new investment and the potential for sustained growth in real incomes; the need to reduce the domestic budget deficit for the government sectors; and, of most importance, the conclusion that the redistribution of wealth and income that is so critical to long-term stability will have to take place largely from growing incomes and from growing opportunities, not from a simple static redistribution of the existing pie.

The details of how a development strategy will be worked out are still under discussion. However, the extended period of consultation prior to the April elections, a process engaged in by virtually all the major political parties as well as the business sector and the trade unions, helped to forge a broad understanding of South Africa's problems and options – a breadth of understanding that would be the envy of finance ministers in virtually every African country. There is still a long way to go, too, in estab-

lishing the stable policy environment that will provide reassurance to investors that they can make capital investment decisions. And, there is the nearly overwhelming task of providing education, reasonable housing, and a variety of social services to the majority of the population. Nonetheless, my own reading is that South Africa has its eye on the right ball, and that with some good luck and some good management, some assistance from donor countries and multilateral agencies, and a reasonable flow of foreign capital and technology, one can be more than modestly optimistic.

South Africa and a regional strategy

Because of its size and its existing links, the prospects for regional growth in Southern Africa, and to some extent in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, are intimately linked to the prospects and future developments in South Africa itself. A critically important question is how protectionistic, or how outwardly aggressive, or how mercantilistic, the new government in South Africa will be. The experience in Zimbabwe in the years after independence does not give one cause for optimism. Zimbabwe abrogated agreements with its neighbours, dumped Zimbabwean goods in regional markets, and prevented exports from regional trading partners into Zimbabwe.

Given the relative size of South Africa compared with Zimbabwe, a similar set of aggressive and short-sighted policies followed by South Africa would be a disaster for the countries in the region. However, a South Africa that is looking outward by liberalizing its import regime, one that is managing its foreign exchange rate and productivity in its domestic industries in ways that permitted a flow of growing imports as it exported to the region, could be of enormous importance to the countries in the region, while still maintaining a sizable, and even growing, balance of trade surplus with the region. Indeed, given its relative financial strength (only Botswana in the region is

stronger financially than South Africa, and Botswana is too small to be an engine of growth for the region), South Africa is in a position to borrow long term in international markets, to permit or encourage long-term private capital inflow, and to use some portion of such long-term capital to finance trade within SADC, as well as within sub-Saharan Africa. This could provide finance for growing trade, and therefore growing incomes, not only in South Africa, but also in the other countries of the region.

In order to accommodate this kind of a regional strategy, there will need to be a series of substantial modifications in regional trading arrangements. The Southern African Customs Union, which has been in existence since 1910, provides the most stable set of trading arrangements, and covers by far the largest volume of trade, in the region. It is highly likely that the Customs Union Agreement will be renegotiated between South Africa and its BLNS partners because of the financial arrangements now imbedded in the agreement. These result in substantial payment of tax revenues from South Africa to its partners (payments fully justified by the fact that South Africa is net supplier of highly protected goods to the BLNS markets, but nonetheless hard on the South African treasury). The Preferential Trade Agreement for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA) includes most of the SADC countries as well as countries farther north in sub-Saharan Africa. It provides limited trade preferences, but it does not deal effectively with the issue of restrictions on international payment for goods. It has been of limited effectiveness in promoting trade among the PTA countries, and, in my view, the PTA does not provide a particularly attractive vehicle for establishing a trading framework in Southern Africa. SADC itself has focused primarily on coordination of infrastructure and certain other important development functions. It is not a vehicle that, I believe, could provide a means for establishing a new trading regime for the region. Based on 19 years of

personal experience in the region, I would lean strongly toward the development of a modified SACU arrangement for other countries in Southern Africa, aimed at progressively bringing the entire region into a broader common market and, perhaps ultimately, toward a broader economic community.

A variety of other factors in South African economic strategy will have an effect on the other countries in the region. To the extent that the new government restricts migrant labour, several of the SADC countries could face returning unemployed mine and other workers. If the new South African government chooses to restrict the outward investment by South African multinationals, it could have an adverse effect on the private sector development in several of the SADC countries. As mentioned, the danger of a "Zimbabwe solution" could make

the new South Africa a different kind of rogue elephant, one focused on mercantilistic rather than militaristic aggression.

On the other hand, there is the strong possibility that South Africa could emerge as an engine of growth within the region, if it follows an outward-looking strategy and uses its access to international capital markets to finance not only its own growth but also a sustainable growth of trade-led development within the entire region. In some ways, there are substantial parallels to the development of Western Europe after World War II.

Foreign finance in the Marshall Plan was linked centrally to the adoption of more liberal payments, and ultimately, more liberal trade regimes among the West European countries. Those policies, not the capital inflows alone, led to a long, unprecedented and sustained period of growth in Western

Europe in which every country shared. It was not easy to put together that package of policies in Western Europe – policies that linked cooperation in trade and payments with the flow of public sector funds. But the new era in Southern Africa presents a unique opportunity to look at regional solutions and to consider the prospects for overcoming the decades of discrimination, neglect, and destruction, which are the legacy of the apartheid system. The unique configuration of historical links, of trading patterns, of debt levels, of the prospects for external capital, and, perhaps most importantly, of the political and economic optimism in the region, will never come again. We stand at a time that can and must be seized by South Africa, by its Southern African neighbours, and by the friends of, and potential investors in, this richly diverse and remarkable region.

Local government in the Third World

The experience of decentralization in Tropical Africa
Second edition
Edited by Philip Mawhood

Local government is a peculiar theme, always recognized in Africa as important yet seldom comprehensively written about or understood. This book is about political decentralization and the devolution of political power, written by authors who have worked close to the real situations. Its readership will range from those who are engaged in the work of government (including constitution-making) to teachers and researchers in the field of development and local administration.

Philip Mawhood and Nelson Kasfir's introductory chapters deal with the concept of decentralization/devolution and how that concept has fared in Africa since independence. There is a brief discussion of the enormous challenge facing South Africa in creating post-apartheid local authorities and the vital need for that country to take note of the experience in the rest of the continent. First published in 1983, this revised second edition also presents case studies: one French-speaking and seven English-speaking countries (Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan and Tanzania).

ISBN 0 7983 01155, A5 format, soft cover, 268 pages (June 1993).

Price per copy: R60,00 (VAT included) in South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland; elsewhere US$30,00 or equivalent.

Afro-pean symbiosis

'Ora Joubert, architect and lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, reflects on some aspects of architectural expression in South Africa.

Cape Dutch homestead, Stellenbosch, circa 1720

Interior of a Zulu beehive hut, Empangeni, Natal
(Photo by H Kammeyer)

The Republic of South Africa was for decades known predominantly for its official racial policy of apartheid. The emotive response to the stubborn domination by the European minority is well known and resulted in years of global isolation to enforce a change of heart. The monumental changes implemented since 1990 and the subsequent first-ever democratic elections herald the prospect of a prosperous future for all South Africans.

The incessant focus on South Africa's turbulent past, however, distracts from an unprecedented abundance of cross-cultural artistic and architectural achievement. Contrary to expectation and despite the tragedy of severe social and political polarization, artistic and architectural endeavour did not suffer visual segregation: South Africa's aesthetic heritage is testimony to the country's diversified ethnic fabric and reflects, moreover, an extraordinary synthesis of association and assimilation. The numerous examples of a so-called interculturalism confirm this unique symbiotic phenomenon.

Architectural expression serves as a powerful vehicle to trace the historical development of any country. In this regard, the evolution of South African architecture is closely related to the priorities and aspirations of the country's diversified ethnic composi-tion, reinforcing the complexity of the country as well as its cultural wealth. In addition, the omnipresent, though diversified, African landscape similarly adds to the architectural kaleidoscope of the country.

The Dutch settlers, having arrived during the course of the seventeenth century, introduced the European baroque tradition to the African conti-nent. Taking advantage of the moderate climate and expansive space, a classically elegant architecture known as Cape Dutch evolved: an architec-ture which compliments the breath-taking landscape through sensuous lime-washed curves and sweeping thatched roofs.

Ethnic identity is exemplified not only through different dress, customs and rituals but also through architec-tural format and artistic adornment. Over the course of centuries, the indigenous African nations responded pragmatically to the imminent need to create shelter and the making of place through rudimentary yet innovative means.

The beehive homesteads of the Zulu kingdom rank among the finest examples of vernacular architecture, exploring the inherent nature of the applied building material to its fullest potential. The abode and reed *rondawel* structures, associated with the other Nguni-speaking tribes, display a similar sensitivity in the creation of an ecologically responsible architecture of enduring beauty.

1. Renovated Victoriana, Florida road, Durban, 1850 circa 1850 (renovated by Brian Kearney and Associates, 1990)

2. Cape Dutch gable-end, Paarl

3. Ndebele homestead entrance, Bronkhorst-spruit, circa 1950

4. Squatter settlement, Katlehong

5. Contemporary township home, Mamelodi

6. Formalizing the informal - informal market, Isando, designed by author, 1988

7. House Stofberg, Bantry Bay, Cape Town (architect: Clara Da Cruz Almeida - a former assistant of renowned American architect, Michael Graves). Photo by F Swanepoel

8. Innovative renovation, Florida Road, Durban (architect: Luis Ferreira da Silva, 1988)

9. Detail, Greenwood House, The Willows, Pretoria (architect: Norman Eaton)

10. Exterior, House Kammeyer (architect: Heinrich Kammeyer, 1985) Photo by M Naude
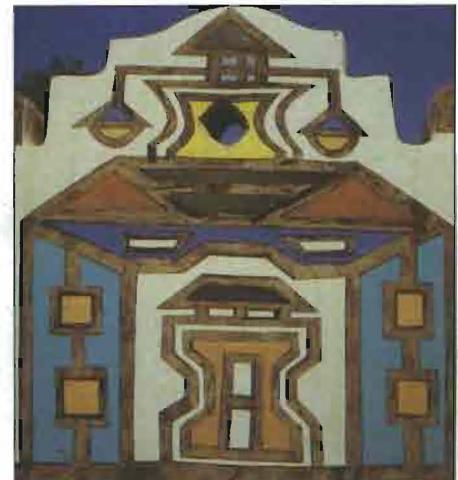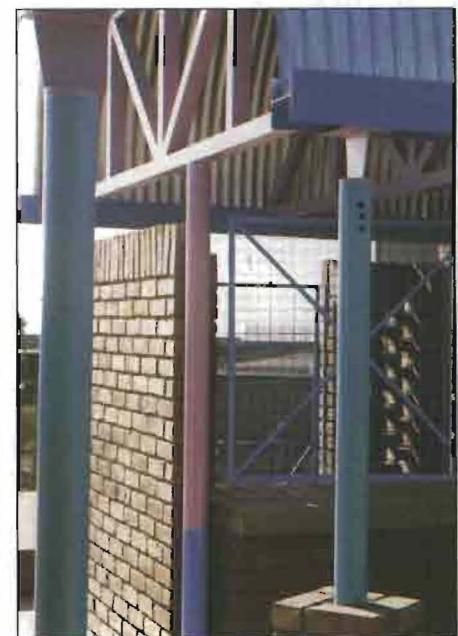
(Photos not credited are by the author)

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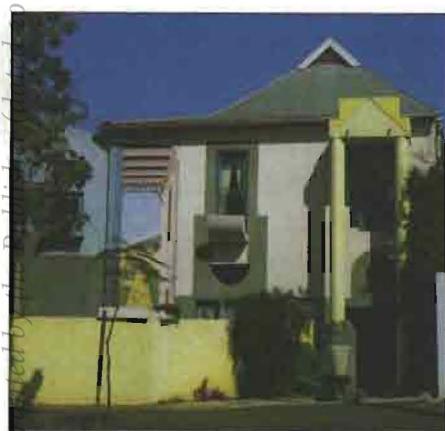
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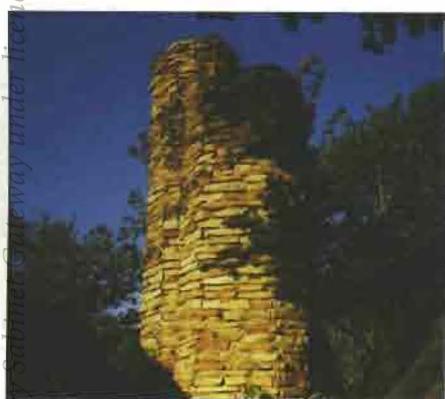
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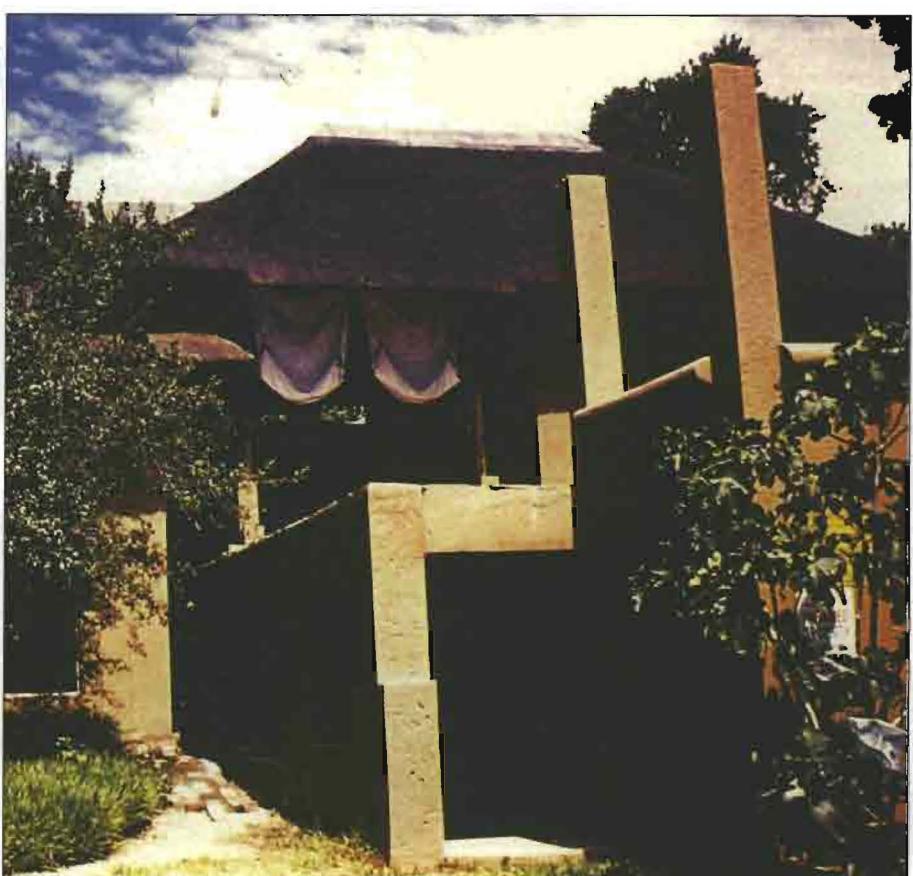
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The arrival of the British settlers in 1820 introduced Victorian and Gothic revival styles. The additional introduction of the concept of prefabrication – consisting of timber frame structures clad with corrugated sheeting – was to be applied extensively in order to satisfy the demand for instant settlement caused by the discovery of diamonds and gold towards the latter half of the nineteenth century. The lean-to verandah, also constructed with corrugated sheeting, became a standard addition to existing thatched homesteads but soon evolved into a distinct verandah style, synonymous with the subtropical climate of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

In time, Malay slaves, as well as a large contingency of imported Indian labourers, introduced the architecture of the Islam and Hindu religions – modified, however, to the circumstances of the newly adopted fatherland. The fine craftmanship of Malay carpenters contributed substantially to the execution of the elegance of Cape Dutch furniture.

Following the official annexation of the Cape and Natal provinces by Britain in 1836, the Afrikaner exodus, known as the Great Trek, took place. During this period the descendants of Dutch, French and German origin were forced to adapt to the harsh conditions of the hinterland. Lacking the luxuriousness and frivolity of the classical precedent, the Boer pioneer homesteads bear testimony to a pragmatic yet elegant simplicity.

The architecture of the Ndebele warrants special attention. Following numerous skirmishes with the Afrikaner settlers in the Transvaal province, the Ndebele evolved a most intriguing architectural identity as recently as the beginning of this century. Visual contact with the stylistic imagery of Cape Dutch architecture – more than a thousand miles away but accessible through calenders and cake tins – inspired the Ndebele to borrow certain structural features from these examples, yet uniquely transformed to celebrate modest settlements. Devoid of the originally intended function, these unselfconscious transformations allow for tremendous symbolic interpretation – analogous to the more deliberate intentions of the Pop artists of the 1960s – and signify the interaction between opposing cultures which successfully culminate in a unique cross-cultural – Afro-pean, if you wish – symbiosis. The women, the traditional artists, adorn the adobe walls with bold and colourful murals in a further attempt to establish a cultural identity as well as to create a sense of place. Again, this vernacular example respects the environment in its appropriate response to climate and place and succeeds in creating a comfortable micro-cosmos through the application of building materials found in the immediate vicinity.

The cycle of cultural symbiosis is furthered with the more self-conscious creations of the architect and academic, Peter Rich. In the design of his own house, the distinctive use of colour, spatial organization as well as formal inspiration are drawn from the Ndebele, whom Rich greatly admires and researches extensively. Referring to himself as an African working in an African context, Rich's design *ouvre* endorses the cycle of three hundred years of cultural interaction.[1]

The notion of an Afro-pean symbiosis is epitomized in the creative endeavours of one of South Africa's most gifted artists the late Walter Wahl Battiss.[2] Fascinated by the creative impulse of the pre-historic Khoisan people, Battiss meticulously recorded their rock paintings. These recordings not only drew attention to its aesthetic merit but enabled Battiss to develop a personal artistic vocabulary which he expanded upon throughout his artistic career. Not unlike Picasso, Battiss' reductionist abstractions fuse European reason with an African spirit; he painted with the mindset of a European but the spiritual intensity associated with Africa. Battiss is so successful that artistic distinctions can no longer be made in terms of black and white.

The internationally acclaimed architect and former Head of the Department of Architecture at the University of the Witwatersrand, Amancio d' Alpiom Pancho Guedes, similarly fuses an inexhaustible creative intuition of Portuguese origin with the distinctly African experience. The design virtuosity expressed through a myriad of drawings, paintings, sculptures and buildings, continues to exercise a profound influence on colleagues and students in search of a meaningful South African design idiom.[3]

Despite all its perniciousness, the Afrikaner Nationalist government, empowered in 1948, was neither artistically nor architecturally prescriptive. Aesthetic expression was left to its own devices and ran its own course. It is not surprising, though, that artistic expression during the incubatory period of establishing a South African artistic tradition, would celebrate the visual vibrancy of the continent and its people. The visual arts, by definition, express and inform, reaffirming the role of the pictorial tradition as barometer of a society's consciousness. The initial representational phase was soon followed by modernist experimentation in keeping with the rest of the world, yet this was to be replaced by the so-called transitional and protest art movements which culminated during the 1970s and 1980s. The momentum generated by political hardship incited an extraordinarily creative output, not dissimilar to that of pre-war Germany and civil-war Spain.

Within the intellectual arena, architectural expression closely followed global trends. The so-called Transvaal Group introduced the international style to South Africa during the 1920s.[4] In corresponding with this avant-garde group of designers in 1936, the renowned architect, Le Corbusier, expressed amazement at "finding something so alive in that far away spot in Africa ... especially because there exists youthful conviction, a feeling for architecture and a great desire to attain a philosophy in these things".[5]

As the demand for public facilities increased, modern architecture, by the

1950s, became firmly entrenched as the architectural style of the day. Brazilian architecture, in particular, appealed because of climatic similarities and provided an appropriate design precedent.[6] The United States of America, in turn, became migratory territory for architectural students during the 1960s.[7] Under the influence of the teachings of Louis Kahn, a brutalist formalism found fertile ground on local soil, importing both the strengths and shortcomings associated with "progress" and "modernism".

Awakening to the harsh realities of a developing country in which the sprawl of a "squatterocracy" become more manifest daily, the priorities as well as the focus of the architectural debate during the mid-1970s increasingly started to shift radically. As migration from rural settlements to urban centres intensified, South African architectural expression became increasingly introspective. It is, though, an enormous pity that as a result of this process of urbanization, the indigenous vernacular examples are increasingly becoming relics of a stigmatized past. The craft tradition is, however, presently being encouraged and extended through the enthusiastic and creative innovations of the younger Afro-pean generation – be it through the media of painting, sculpture, ceramics, drama or music.[8]

The scale of the dire need for built structures throughout South Africa overwhelms and presents a daunting task for politicians, architects and urban planners alike. Within this context, the role of the architect is questionable, relatively limited and frustrating at best – least of all due to the "philanthropy" of speculative development, coupled with perceived "Western" aspiration.

It calls as much for economic miracles, patience and perseverance as for technological innovation and artistic integrity. South African architects are, though, increasingly rising to the occasion and design methodologies are continually being investigated and developed in order to meet the demands at hand. Design strategies range from community participation and buildings built in stages to the formalizing of the informal without disturbing existing behavioural patterns.[9]

The majority of the work presently done by architectural practices in this country consists of the provision of architectural structures for underdeveloped communities, thereby rectifying the status quo after years of intentional neglect. A past reluctance to engage in low cost projects has been replaced by an unprecedented enthusiasm to create an innovative architecture with minimal means. Low cost buildings are not only becoming sought-after commissions but some of the most meritorious work is presently done in this particular field, displaying a far greater degree of design integrity than many commercial and even public buildings executed in recent years.[10]

Yet architects, owing to the nature of the discipline and the poetry associated with the making of buildings, will be deprived of their right of existence if they cannot explore and express their creative fantasies – to say, for as long as an elitist and privileged economical infra-structure can sustain, if at all morally justify, such a position. There is, though, comfort in knowing that local architectural experimentation is as novel and trendy as elsewhere in the world. The lack of sophisticated and super-skilled craftsmanship does not seem to inhibit local talent and ability.

Despite imported dogma and fashionable trends, there is little doubt that the truly lasting examples of timeless creations, are those whose authors acknowledge the influence from abroad, but adapt established architectural canons to the African context. It took the personal conviction of architects such as Norman Eaton, Karl Jooste, Carel Gerneke, Gawie Fagan and Barrie Biermann – to name but a few – to evolve a responsible South African modernism long before the notion of a critical regionalism or a regional modernism appeared in print.[11] This approach signifies an appropriate response to climate, the accommodation of a predominantly unskilled labour force, the use of natural building materials and the incorporation of African craft motifs and technique whilst maintaining the formal and spatial integrity of orthodox modernism.

In keeping with the now considered passé post-modern phenomenon of the 1970s and 1980s, the younger generation of architects chose not to pursue this regionalist avenue of exploration. The initial post-modern enthusiasm to extend the somewhat limited modernist design vocabulary, resulted in an often misdirected formalism with occasional or blatant ethnic reference. Regrettably, commercial and even public architecture produced during those years floundered between an often inappropriate revivalism, drawing, in a very superficial manner, from ill-comprehended theories compounded by commercial pressures. As clearer and more mature architectural insights developed, numerous architects, however, started to respond in a highly personal manner to the universal search for architectural meaning specifically relevant to the African context and its unique Afro-pean heritage.

Within the current modernist revival, according to which the previously discredited modernist intentions are being re-evaluated and reinstated, it is easy to fall prey to the temptation to discard the positive tenants of post-modernism, particularly the reappraisal of the architectural heritage – indigenous, colonial as well as suburbian iconographic. It is due to this awareness that there has been an increasing response to preservation as well as conservation of historical buildings over the last two decades. The successful conversion of the derelict railway station workshop in Durban into a upmarket shopping centre, became the precedent for the refurbishment and revitalization programmes embarked upon in other major cities.[12]

The present preoccupation with the reassessment of orthodox modernism is also starting to gain a foothold in South Africa, but, as the eminent

South African modernist, Wilhelm Pabst, has warned, it is only when functionalism ends that architecture, per se, begins.[13] Latterday architects must take cognizance of the lessons learned in the course of the development of twentieth-century architecture.[14] Credit goes to all those individuals who, despite imported design dogma, respond sincerely to a true indigenous expression – faithful to Africa with its moderate climate, its complex peoples and unique Afropean tradition.

Notes and references

1 Refer to the article, *Peter Rich, AD,* no 4, 1987, p 41.

2 Walter Battiss (1906–1987) published his first book on rock paintings in 1939 entitled *The amazing Bushmen,* followed by *The artists of the rocks,* 1948 and *Fragments of Africa,* in 1951. Battiss taught art at Pretoria Boys High School for thirty years before accepting the appointment as Professor in Fine Arts at Unisa. His work is exhibited at all the major art museums in the country and he received numerous accolades including the Gold Medal for Painting from the South African Academy for Science and Art as well as an Honorary Doctorate from Unisa.

3 Pancho Guedes practised as an architect in Mozambique. He became Head of the Department of Architecture at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1975 until 1988, whereupon he emigrated to Portugal. Refer to *Architecture SA,* May/June 1982 for a comprehensive overview of his work executed in Southern Africa.

4 The Transvaal Group comprised enthusiastic scholars of modern architecture associated with the University of the Witwatersrand and included Rex Marthienssen, John Fassler, Gordon McIntosh, Norman Hanson and Bernard Cooke.

5 Extract from a letter written by Le Corbusier to the Transvaal Group upon receipt of a copy of the *South African architectural record* which documented the first modern buildings in South Africa.

6 Publications such as Philip L Goodwin, *Brazil builds: Architecture new and old, 1542–1942,* New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1943 and the work of eminent Brazilian architect, Oscar Niemeyer exercised a considerable influence on South African architects during the 1950s.

7 The University of Pennsylvania was a particularly favoured destination as prominent architects and theorists such as Louis Kahn, Romalo Guirgula, Lewis Memford and Robert Venturi taught there. Former postgraduate students from American universities include prominent practising South African architects such as Glen Gallagher, Wilhelm Meyer, Ivan Slapobersky and Roelof Uytenbogaardt.

8 American singer, Paul Simon, successfully explored the potential of Afrocentric music in the album, *Graceland,* released in 1986.

9 The National Building Institute, CSIR, as well as the South African Development Bank undertake intensive research into cost-effectiveness of alternative buildings conventions, encouraging community participation in compilation of design briefs as well as execution of low cost projects.

10 Johannesburg-based architect, Jo Noero, was awarded the prestigious Ralph Erskine International Design Award in 1993 for the architectural merit displayed in the design of community facilities for Soweto inhabitants.

11 The term, critical regionalism, was coined by theorist, Kenneth Frampton, to draw attention to contemporary architecture exclusively relating to its immediate context. Refer to K Frampton, *Modern architecture – A critical history,* London: Thames and Hudson, 1980.

12 Refer also to the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town, the refurbishment of the Tramsheds in Pretoria, the revitalization of the Newton Precinct, Johannesburg and the restoration of the Ostrich Feather Market, Port Elizabeth.

13 Extracted from *The hen on her egg* by W B Pabst, published in *Architecture SA,* July/August 1993.

14 Despite the best intentions, the modern architecture failed dismally at creating human urban environments. Post-modernism was developed to counter the shortcomings of modern architecture yet experienced only a brief spell of success before the current modernist revival – so-called neo-moderism – upstaged it.

Labour and democracy in Zambia:
From amity to enmity

Dr Eric M Kashimani, Lecturer in the Department of History at the University of Zambia, examines the relationship between labour and the Unip government in Zambia between 1973 and 1991.

Zambia became an independent republic on 24 October 1964 and the United National Independence Party (Unip), which was headed by Kenneth Kaunda, formed a government. The African National Congress (ANC) led by Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula became the official opposition party in parliament. On 13 December 1972, President Kaunda and his Unip government transformed Zambia into a one-party state without the consent of the people. President Kaunda and his Unip government argued that a one-party system was suited to Zambian conditions because it would promote national unity, participatory democracy and bring about rapid economic development. But by 1991, when President Kaunda and his Unip one-party regime were swept from power, neither economic development nor participatory democracy had been delivered. Instead, politics in Zambia had increasingly become an activity confined to a small clique of Unip leaders. They had hijacked the political process and dealt with public matters as if they were their private affairs, making a complete mockery of political accountability.

It is not my concern here to give a detailed historical analysis of the relationship between the post-colonial state and the labour movement in Zambia because that particular matter has received considerable scholarly attention.[1] My principal concern is to analyse why and how the relationship between the state and the labour movement moved from the cooperation and solidarity of the nationalist period into mutual suspicion, hostility, enmity, and irreconcilable contradictions in the period 1973 to 1991. I must establish why the labour movement drifted from being one of the institutions affiliated to Unip to become the focus of opposition to Kaunda's one-party regime between 1973 and 1991. Indeed, the defeat of President Kaunda and Unip on 31 October 1991 was the result of a struggle for democracy in which the labour movement played a leading role.

To anticipate the conclusion to be arrived at in this section, the social and political characteristics of the working class in Zambia were not radically different from those observed in working classes elsewhere in Africa. The Zambian working class was averse to revolutionary political action in general and largely unconcerned about any fundamental social transformation in Zambia. I agree with Peter Gutkind's observation concerning the labour movement in Africa as a whole:

> The political history of the African worker indicates a locally-based reactive political consciousness rather than a broadly-based class consciousness. At no point during colonialism have African workers revealed such a

high degree of political will and organization skill as to pose a major threat to colonial rule.[2]

But it was Frantz Fanon who was most uncompromising in depicting the African proletariat as a "privileged, pampered and reactionary class in league with the new African bourgeoisie".[3] African trade unions were primarily concerned with the economic grievances of their workers and nothing else. For his part, Lenin recognized that, left on their own, workers were only capable of acquiring a "trade union consciousness; an articulation of their economic disadvantages as opposed to revolutionary consciousness consistent with their imputed rationality as the vanguard and beneficiaries of socialism".[4]

The genesis of the labour movement in Zambia

The making of the Zambian working class has its roots in the imposition of colonial rule in 1890. Before copper mining started, labour was mainly migrant. Copper mining in Zambia began in earnest in the early 1920s and was firmly established by 1926. With the development of the copper mining industry, the changing needs of colonial capital required the presence of a permanent labour force whose existence gave rise to the modification of the nature and character of class struggle in the latter part of the colonial era. The labour movement in Zambia grew from the demands of the African workers for a measure of autonomy at their place of work. From the early struggles against a colonial regime, through to the establishment of trade unionism of 1949, African workers' autonomy emerged as an integral part of Zambia's industrial relations.[5] At an early stage there was a demand by these workers to be recognized as employees with the right to discuss their grievances with employers and expect satisfaction from them.

The mineworkers on the Copperbelt and the railway workers exerted considerable pressure to establish this right, and the pattern of collective

bargaining that eventually emerged in Zambia long before the dawn of political independence was a direct response to this demand. It was based on a British industrial relations systems known as voluntarism. This system enshrined the right of a trade union to bargain with an employer and to be consulted on matters of welfare, albeit constrained by certain legislative limits.[6]

With the emergence of nationalist political parties and the growing struggle for political independence, the relationship between the emergent parties and the labour movement (which initially centred on the Mineworkers' Union) became most important. Although the model of a class alliance against colonialism fitted certain independence struggles on the African continent, it is only fair to state that this model did not fully apply in the Zambian context. Robert Bates, one of the scholars who undertook a study of labour and politics in Zambia, rejected the conventional wisdom that trade unions in Zambia readily participated in nationalist politics.[7] In his well-researched book, Robert Bates traces the antagonism between the nationalist parties and the labour movement through to the early 1950s, when the labour movement refused to call the mineworkers out for the politically-motivated strike in 1953.

A L Epstein also supports the argument advanced by Bates by suggesting that the mineworkers' union on the Copperbelt had no need of the ANC as a nationalist party at that time. In his view, the mineworkers' union served the specific interests of the miners more than adequately and better suited the unitary structure of the mine township. It was not in the interest of the labour movement and the mineworkers to be absorbed into the ANC as the only African nationalist party at the time.[8] The grassroots desire of the miners who formed the bulk of the labour movement since 1949 was to retain their freedom of action in the industrial sphere. The miners had from the early days of the nationalist struggle steadily resisted anything that

smacked of party political interference in industrial relations and indeed resisted union leaders who appeared to move too close to party or, later, the Unip government. According to Cherry Gertzel:

> The feeling has been there for a long time that once a trade union leader has accepted government office he can no longer defend the miners' case. Interestingly, one can argue that in this respect the miners made no distinction between colonial and the independent government. They unseated their charismatic founder president, Lawrence Katilungu, in 1960, partly because he had become too close to the then federal government and his direct involvement in the politics of the ANC of which he became acting president in 1960; they subsequently challenged his successor, John Chisata, a dedicated trade unionist, who went into the Legislative Council in 1962 as a UNIP candidate.[9]

Government policies towards the labour movement: 1964-1972

In the new African states, governments had without exception regarded organized labour as a sectional interest which had to be subordinated to national interest. Faced with a challenge, actual or potential, by what was regarded as a sectional interest, African governments had uniformly sought to bring the labour movement under tight control. Governments had used the parties in power to subordinate unions to the state. In any conflict between government and the labour movement, it had invariably been the latter which had been defeated, since, as Michael Lofchie and Carl G Rosberg have pointed out: "governments possessed overwhelming advantage in terms of resources and strategies for exercising political power".[10]

This subordination had invariably been justified in terms of the imperatives of economic development, which required a new productionist function from trade unions, in contrast to the old consumptionist role of promoting their members' economic interests. But the history of three decades of African independence has

shown that the more fundamental issue underlying the relationship between labour movements and governments has been political. The governments of the new African states were not going to allow autonomous centres of power which represented potential if not actual sources of opposition. Gertzel has this to say:

> Control over trade unions was therefore regarded as essential to prevent organized labour from becoming a base for politicians as opposed to industrial action. The fundamental issue was the centralization of power on which the legitimacy of the new state and its authority ultimately depended. Government was compelled to act to ensure the centralization of power and thus the authority of the state.[11]

After taking office in 1964, the Unip government tried to incorporate the labour movement as a subordinate and subservient social entity by employing various methods, some peaceful, some forceful. These methods included an attempt to take over the Mine Workers' Union of Zambia (MUZ) leadership in 1966, the vetting by Unip of leaders aspiring to office in a trade union, an attempt to transform the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) into a wing of Unip, an attempt to do away with trade union organization altogether (during the period of the one-party state), the introduction of a labour code, and the detention of trade union leaders.

By declaring most workers to be essential workers (who were not allowed to strike), the right to withhold their labour was outlawed. The government from as early as 1964 had intervened in labour relations in order to promote what they termed industrial peace in Zambia. In reality, the rules and regulations frequently passed by the government consistently promoted the power of the state, which became the major employer, over that of the workers. Though there were setbacks for the Zambian workers in their struggle for autonomy against the one-party regime, the former successfully resisted government attempts to transform their organization into a mere affiliate of Unip. So it came as no

surprise when the relationship between the Unip government and the labour movement drastically changed between 1973 and 1990.

The formation of the Mineworkers' Union of Zambia (MUZ) predated political action for Zambia's independence and exerted significant influence upon the growth of the labour movement. Its own success through industrial action strongly influenced the development of other unions. Its refusal to be subordinated to Unip, and its insistence upon a separation of political and industrial action influenced the whole pattern of party-union relations. Above all, its sound organization and its secure financial situation, combined with the strategic position of its members who staffed Zambia's major, indeed vital, industry, and its deep-rooted trade union tradition, made MUZ a powerful body whose views any government had to take into account.[12]

The insistence on trade union autonomy was immediately resisted by the new Unip government of 1964. Emboldened by its political success, Unip attempted to establish full control over the labour movement. First, there was the need to establish political control over an industry which was important to the nation's economy. Secondly, since a considerable number of the miners were Unip sympathizers, it was hoped that Unip would very easily succeed in having trusted men elected to key union posts.

But the attempt to subordinate MUZ and the entire labour movement gave rise to new tensions and conflicts – tensions and conflicts which proved that, notwithstanding its official backing, Unip was unable to break the organized resistance of the labour movement. The period 1965 to 1966 was characterized by frequent unofficial strikes and some major national ones.

Zambia's labour policy after 1964 was based upon the twin objectives of rapid economic development and social justice. According to official policy, economic development demanded increased productivity and

wage restraint; social justice required the redistribution of wealth and resources on an equitable basis. In seeking these two objectives, the government adopted a strategy which relied on pressure rather than force in seeking union support for wage restraint and hard work. This pressure was exerted upon the leadership of the labour movement, which was required on the one hand to champion the cause of justice, but on the other to ensure rank and file support for the hard work necessary to attain national economic objectives.[13]

The first official response to the resistance of the labour movement to any subordination to Unip was to initiate a number of public discussions and seminars on the questions of a labour code and an income policy. These included the Livingstone Labour Conference in 1967, two national conventions (in 1967 and 1969), and the H A Turner Report on *Incomes, wages and prices policy in Zambia* (1969).[14] Thereafter the state began to employ additional strategies to cope with the resistance of the labour movement. These included the decision to centralize trade union power under a newly constituted Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU); the informal incorporation of trade union leadership into a national development policy; the cooptation of popular trade union leaders into the government; and more comprehensive trade union legislation.

The formation of ZCTU as a strategy to subordinate the labour movement to Unip

In 1965 the government moved to centralize the labour movement by creating a central organization, the Zambian Congress of Trade Unions. This was to be a powerful agency for the regulation of trade union affairs. After the formation of ZCTU, affiliated unions could not strike without its agreement; and all unions were compelled to affiliate or lose the protection of trade union law, all member unions being obliged to pay 20% of their subscriptions to the ZCTU.[15] The ZCTU was also one of

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the main structures for the communication of government policy to all unions.

The ZCTU organized several meetings each year at which "top government officials were given the chance to address labour leaders on labour policies. The major theme in all these seminars was labour's role in national development, and the main task of the labour movement in the new set-up was to promote industrial peace and support the government policy of wage restraint."[16] Created by the government, the ZCTU between 1965 and 1972 was forced to toe the government line and support government policies, although its leaders did not welcome state intervention in union affairs.

Between 1965 and 1972 another strategy employed by the government to limit the power of the labour movement was to take certain popular leaders of ZCTU into the government itself. This practice became institutionalized to such an extent that some leaders of the labour movement began to regard an eventual job in government as part of their career development.

The other facet of incorporation was a legal one. The Industrial Relations Act of 1971 consolidated all previous laws relating to employment and trade unions, principally the Trade Unions and Trade Disputes Ordinance and the Industrial Conciliation Ordinance.

According to Gertzel, the Industrial Relations Act (IRA) of 1971 greatly increased government control over industrial relations and over the leadership of the labour movement as a whole. It restricted the field from which union leadership might be drawn, and prohibited any affiliation with, or financial assistance from, outside bodies without the permission of the Minister of Labour and Social Services. Finally, this most comprehensive and all-encompassing piece of labour legislation since independence, *The Industrial Relations Act of 1971,* eliminated the right to strike by declaring almost all sections of Zambian industry to be essential services.[17]

The IRA repealed *the Trade Unions and Trade Disputes Ordinances* and the Industrial Conciliation Ordinance which had governed labour relations hitherto. These were deemed "inadequate" to deal with complex labour relations and hence needed to be changed. This comprehensive Industrial Relations Act was introduced by Kaunda at the Second National Convention of Unip in 1969.

The objectives of the IRA were: to minimize the causes of industrial unrest by encouraging and protecting the freedom of association of both employees and employers; to promote sound and stable industrial peace by the settlement of issues respecting terms and conditions of employment through collective bargaining; to encourage and promote the settlement of disputes in an orderly and efficient manner by prescribing the procedure and machinery for settling them; to discourage and prevent unfair labour practices such as infringing on the freedom of association or dismissing or discriminating against any employee; and to promote effective worker participation and secure mutual cooperation in the interest of industrial peace, improved working conditions, greater efficiency and productivity. Prima facie, the IRA promised merely to promote industrial pluralism in Zambia.

But the reality here was that the Act was intended to control and tame the working class by, among other things, erecting lengthy bureaucratic procedures for the settlement of disputes; severely restricting the right to strike; imposing a long list of *essential services* in which strikes were illegal; restricting the powers of trade unions, some of their work, for example, being taken over by works councils ostensibly for the promotion of industrial peace but in reality to weaken the trade unions; requiring any final dispute settlement to be decided by the Industrial Relations Court, whose decisions were final, binding and could not be appealed against. Over and above all this, government strategy was to ensure that the leadership of ZCTU was politically acceptable to the government so that the latter need not in future rely as heretofore on the mass support for Unip that individual workers had always given.

From the outset the political rulers were extremely sensitive to the possibility of a popular trade union leader using the labour movement as a personal power base. In the government's mind the danger loomed large of the opposition working within the labour movement and of winning its support; they were therefore bound to seek tighter control of labour movement leadership. This strategy failed however, and after 1980 the ZCTU was one of the many sources of opposition to the regime. Without a strong and vocal labour movement to act as a countervailing force to Kaunda's one-party regime, Zambia's one-man dictatorship would probably have been entrenched for all time.

It is not very hard to discern why the labour movement continued to defy the Unip government and resisted every attempt at a Unip takeover. Since independence the labour movement had always distinguished between union and party matters.[18] The leadership of the labour movement had steadily resisted anything that smacked of Unip political interference in industrial relations and also turned on union leaders who appeared to flirt with the government. The struggles of the Zambian workers, especially the copper miners, the strength of the ZCTU as an institution, combined with the miners' strategic position in the economy of the country, helped the labour movement in Zambia to maintain a great degree of independent action in relation to collective bargaining and in its relationship with the government. The copper miners were the most homogeneous part of the working class in Zambia. This was largely because of their similar conditions at work, the concentration of the mines in one geographical region, and the strict discipline required by the industry.

Over the years, the mineworkers had been able to successfully defend

their corporate interests. It could also be said that the mineworkers in Zambia were a model of working class discipline and class consciousness. Nevertheless although the labour movement had tried to maintain its institutional autonomy, it was left with very little room in which to manoeuvre by the government's unrelenting strategies to regulate and control it in a desperate attempt to consolidate government power. Government control attempts culminated in the banning of the leaders of the ZCTU from addressing Zambia's workers on Labour Day (1 May), recognized internationally and by the International Labour Organization of the United Nations.

As from May 1984, in order to demonstrate that Unip was not only politically supreme, but that it also represented the workers, only the president and senior Unip politicians were permitted to address workers on Labour Day.

This move denied labour leaders a national platform from which to articulate worker solidarity. At a seminar in Livingstone organized by the Local Authorities Workers' Union (Zulawu), participants "felt that the action by the government was an infringement of the workers' freedom of speech and participation".[19] After 1980, the leadership of the ZCTU became very vocal in their opposition to the government and by 1990 the relationship between the two had moved from amity to enmity.

Class struggle in Zambia: The one-party state and ZCTU opposition, 1973-1991

According to Jan Pettman, the government had always been concerned with the labour movement, because, with the armed forces, it was one of the only two nationwide organizations with a real power base of its own, and so could become a political threat.[20] Organized labour in Africa historically represented a formidable political force; its demands, collectively, by their very nature, did not cease to be progressive at independence. And because these demands were rooted in the immediate reality of ordinary

people's lives they became politically achievable.[21]

Between 1973 and 1990 economic variables and political disintegration of the one-party regime were closely linked. The low priority the government administration placed on the alleviation of poverty and income inequality, and the growth in consciousness of this fact on the part of the workers, combined to provide some of the impetus for discontent. After 1973 the ZCTU laid claim to be representing not only organized workers but also ordinary citizens who had no unions to articulate their interests. In the absence of an official opposition party, the ZCTU saw itself as the *eyes and ears of Zambian society*. The ZCTU sought to speak for the poor in Zambia. There developed after 1974 within the ranks of the ZCTU a wider populist consciousness championed by Frederick Chiluba. He was assisted by other union leaders such as Timothy Walamba, David Mwila, Chitalu Sampa, Herbert Bweupe and Newstead Zimba.

In 1981, the secretary-general of the continental organizations of African Trade Unions Unity (OATUU), Dennis Akumu, referred to trade unions in Zambia as "a shining example of all English-speaking countries in Africa in terms of their organizations and effectiveness".[22] The leadership of ZCTU, headed since 1974 by Chiluba, was indeed most sophisticated and most irksome to the political leadership in the country because of their consistency in criticizing government policies whenever they adversely affected workers and ordinary people. After 1980 the growing rift between the labour leadership and the government was a matter best described as a public secret. From the time Chiluba was elected Chairman-General of ZCTU in 1974, he had never refrained from passing critical comments on almost all major government policies, pronouncements, and programmes. His criticisms were increasingly systematic and focused on prices and incomes policies, issues which naturally affected the interests of the workers.[23] Between 1973 and 1990,

the rift widened as the crisis in the Zambian economy served to exacerbate these internal antagonisms. From 1975, indeed, Zambia experienced severe economic crises. The prices of essential commodities soared, adversely affecting consumers, especially the unemployed and those in low income brackets. It was in response to the high cost of living that the massive strikes of 1978 were organized.

By the end of 1979 Kaunda was complaining of "incessant attacks on the leadership of the nation"[24] by the leadership of the ZCTU. In July 1981 a massive strike broke out on the politically sensitive Copperbelt. The chairman of the MUZ, David Mwila, observed during the course of the strike: "The strikes are the symptoms of the people's growing disenchantment with this government's economic policies."[25] Another ZCTU leader warned that "the mood of the workers is grim, their living standards are falling fast and we may not be able to hold them back much longer".[26] In 1982 the secretary-general of the ZCTU, Newstead Zimba, openly blamed the government, claiming that workers "had been taken for a ride, as all their meagre earnings were swallowed up in high prices of essential commodities".[27] A trial of strength had developed between the ZCTU and Zambia's one-party government.

The ZCTU leadership was now convinced that the government had failed to respond to workers's demands to improve their living standards. And this clash between labour and the state came to dominate the Zambian political scene until 1990. In this conflict, labour seemed to gain the upper hand because ZCTU had a substantial power base of sixteen affiliated unions including MUZ (which represented over 30 000 copper miners producing 95% of the country's exports).

So it was that the economic crisis inevitably spilled over into the political arena, generating a political crisis. After 1980, indeed, the response of the labour movement became increasingly political. Despite the economic crises Zambia was experiencing, Unip

leaders and their bureaucratic support force were living conspicuously high. The disaffection between the workers and the one-party regime was still basically over the country's economic decline. Yet no new directions or programmes were proposed by the government to correct the situation, and by 1980 the ZCTU had adopted the role of unofficial opposition party outside the parliamentary sphere. In September 1980, ZCTU chairman-general Chiluba told the annual meeting of the ZCTU:

> Industrial workers have to brace themselves for industrial action as I'm ready to press the button at any time for a national strike before the end of the year. It is time for us all to unite and be prepared to die. We must be prepared to suffer, to be prosecuted and to be jailed to bring about improvements. We rededicate ourselves to the cause of free and democratic trade unionism. We must commit ourselves as always to the fight for political, economic and social justice. We must learn to defend at all costs the work of trade unions in this country, and to this end we must oppose and fight all designs aimed at maiming the work and structure of the labour movement. And our aims are not easy to achieve if we do not get to the roots of the matter – which is the removal of the one-party government. Workers of Zambia must stand firm and resolve to restore order. Time has come for all of us who care for the future of this land to face realities. We will be prosecuted. We must suffer now. We must be jailed if necessary.[28]

Chiluba's words undoubtedly exhibited political consciousness on the part of the labour movement – on the part of their leaders at least. The latter had begun to articulate clearly political statements. Large-scale strikes occurred in Zambia in January and July 1981. The January strike occurred because of the expulsion of the ZCTU leadership from Unip on 16 January 1981 because of their strong opposition to the Local Government Amendment Bill (which brought about local government administration in 1980) simply because the Bill provided for the standing and participation in local elections of Unip paid-up members only – this meaning only party hacks. The labour movement naturally saw the Bill as taking away the voting rights of its membership, so reducing its powers and increasing those of Unip. The labour movement also wondered why the government's move should be supposedly aimed at the democratization and decentralization of power when the elected mayors of district councils were being replaced by governors appointed personally by Kaunda. From 1973 to 1980, Unip politicians would not heed the warnings of the labour leaders and in the course of 1981 the passage of the Local Administration Act strained relations between the state and the labour movement to breaking point.

At their conference in 1980, MUZ resolved to boycott the elections that were to usher in the new system and expel from the union any of their members who participated. This resolution was supported by the ZCTU, which went further and ordered all other affiliated trade unions not to participate in the operations of the new system. Needless to say, the government regarded the ZCTU stance as a direct challenge to its authority. The Unip leadership retaliated swiftly against ZCTU and MUZ leaders. On 16 January, the Unip Central Committee expelled ZCTU chairman-general Chiluba, secretary-general Newstead Zimba, deputy secretary-general Chitalu Sampa, MUZ chairman David Mwila and 13 other ZCTU and MUZ leaders. The labour movement reacted quickly against the state for expelling their leaders from Unip. On 20 January 1981, more than 50 000 miners of MUZ went on strike in protest. On 22 January, bank and insurance companies employees went on a strike and paralyzed the country's financial system. In April 1981, all the expelled labour leaders were reinstated. But the troubles between labour movement and government did not end with the reinstatement of labour's leaders. There were strikes in other industries in July 1981. This spate of strikes further shook an already politically fragile government.

The January and July strikes of 1981 raised fundamental issues concerning the character and vaunted political stability of Zambia's one-party state. Thus on 27 July 1981, Kaunda, invoking emergency powers ostensibly to preserve public security, detained Chiluba, Zimba, Sampa and Timothy Walamba. Kaunda accused the leaders of the labour movement of exploiting the country's economic problems for their own political ends.

What worried Kaunda most was that the ZCTU leaders had been increasingly articulating political sentiments rather than the bread and butter issues of concern to the Zambian working class. The use of emergency powers on the part of president Kaunda to deal with workers' strikes in 1981 marked the country's most serious political crisis since 1973, as far as labour-state relations were concerned. The labour leaders challenged their detention orders in the High Court of Zambia. The court found that the state's case for detaining the men had no basis and the detentions were revoked, all the labour leaders being released in November 1981. According to Timothy Shaw:

> The January and July 1981 strikes in Zambia raised three important elements: political, social, and personnel. Politically, the expulsion of 17 leaders of the ZCTU from Unip because of labour-state disputes was really about Unip supremacy and ZCTU subordination. Socially, the 50 000 strikers were also resisting local government legislation that would decentralize administration and undermine the labour movement's role in the townships on the copperbelt. And personally, the dispute pitted a jealous Kaunda against the imputed successor to the late charismatic politician Simon Kapwepwe: the ZCTU chairman-general Frederick Chiluba.[29]

In sum, the ZCTU remained central to Zambia's political economy and the alienation of the labour movement from the government threatened political stability. ZCTU was the largest institution outside Unip control and its leaders continued to resist regime tendencies to profligacy and personal

aggrandizement. From 1975 onwards the economic crisis had stripped the Zambian workers of any illusions that they might benefit from continued cooperation with the one-party regime, and, as workers' conditions continued to deteriorate, the contradictions between reality and the rhetoric of humanism preached by Kaunda revealed the class bias of the one-party regime.

The fight to protect worker interests since 1973 had of necessity been transferred to the political arena, as workers came to recognize the link between politics and production. Workers, especially copper miners, had come to understand the link between their particular interests and the rights and freedoms of Zambians as a whole; and the need to fight for those freedoms. That is why they became more militant in both the industrial and political spheres. According to Jane Parpart and Timothy Shaw:

> Organized labour started demanding greater protection for individual rights, a fair distribution of national wealth, and limitations on state power; a direct response to the demise of human rights and needs as political centralization and economic contraction had undermined both over the decade since the one-party state was established.[30]

From 1980, then, Kaunda believed that the leaders of ZCTU were politically motivated in their criticism of his government. He insisted that it was no accident that an October coup attempt occurred at the same time as widespread unofficial strikes, and soon after Chiluba had warned that he would call a general strike before the end of the year unless the government responded to the demands of the workers for an improvement in their living standards. It was the belief that labour leaders were politically motivated which forced Kaunda to detain them without trial in 1981.[31] Chiluba was accused of conspiring to humiliate the Minister of Labour and Social Services and former Secretary-General of ZCTU, Basil Kabwe, and of advocating violent change in the one-party regime.[32]

From 1980, a combination of global recession and internal economic mismanagement and national alienation had reduced the resources available, while significantly increasing demands were made on a bankrupt one-party government. The latter's response to increasing labour demands was repression, though arbitrary arrests failed to touch the structural problems of Zambia's dependence on copper and the gross mismanagement and conspicuous profligacy of the political leadership. Neither could they contain the social contradictions thrown up by growing economic inequalities, exacerbated by the uneven incidence of inflation, shortages and unemployment. The potentially volatile situation in Zambia in 1981 was neatly summed up by the *Economist:*

> The fact is, as almost everybody in Zambia *(outside the Unip Central Committee)* recognizes, that labour discontent is growing so fast that the ZCTU leadership cannot keep abreast of it. In a one-party state like Zambia, industrial action is one of the few means of expression for political dissatisfaction. This gives men like Chiluba much quasi-political power; but as the detention show, they are exposed to retribution from an increasingly alarmed administration. Kaunda's administration has failed to deliver the goods, and people want food, jobs, medical care and education, not just rhetoric about the evils of international capitalism.[33]

In the decade which began in 1980, foreign subversion was alleged to be behind every instance of domestic opposition. Because of the belief that social unrest in Zambia was the result of external subversive activities, two USA diplomats in Lusaka were expelled in June 1981 for engaging in activities incompatible with their status. As the *Economist* put it: "Last year an unholy alliance of South African money, Zairean mercenaries, and Zambian dissidents was supposed to be trying to bring Kaunda down. This year it is the trade unions, the soldiers and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)."[34] And the *Africa Research Bulletin* commented on the

political developments in Zambia in 1981 as follows:

> Kaunda appears convinced that his regime is in danger and is yet again invoking the spectre of foreign-inspired subversion to explain Zambia's woes, even though these claims have a tired ring for many of his countrymen. According to Kaunda, a strong chain of subversion exists.[35]

Conclusion

I have attempted to show how the relationship between the labour movement and the government moved from cooperation during the fight for independence to mutual suspicion afterwards, and to open hostility during the era of the Second Republic. The quiescent behaviour of the Zambian workers between 1964 and 1972 was not due to a lack of "class consciousness" but to political pressure from a government quietly bent on subordinating the labour movement. It also arose from the disappointed hope of workers that cooperation with the government would ultimately benefit them. When the benefits of cooperation were not forthcoming, and with the deterioration of domestic economic conditions, the ZCTU never had any doubts as to who was to blame for the economic mess.

This was the moment when the leaders of ZCTU under the leadership of Chiluba became a powerful force of opposition to the government. Their position was made more powerful because after 1980 they claimed that they were not only articulating the corporate interests of the workers but were also speaking on behalf of the country's silent majority. The excluded elements, including the workers, had come increasingly to appreciate the truth behind the ambiguities of the political stability story preached by Kaunda.[36] ZCTU leaders came to regard Kaunda's sermons on the need for political stability as a mechanism to keep himself and Unip in unchallenged power. Yet although the ZCTU leaders realized that the "constituency of discontent" in Zambia was large and

the time ripe to translate discontent into political change, they did not know exactly what to do to bring about the political change the people had been clamouring for since 1972.

Note that the ZCTU leaders never called for a radical reorganization of Zambian society. They merely wanted a fair share of the national cake for their members. Their behaviour between 1972 and 1990 indicated that they recognized the need to defend the interests of their workers in the political arena, and that this entailed protecting the political rights of all workers against Unip encroachment. Beyond that, they did not know what political strategy to adopt. The Zambian labour movement was neither revolutionary in the sense of wanting to overthrow the one-party regime by revolutionary means and usher in a new political era, nor was it a reactionary force intent on supporting the one-party regime. What it was interested in and increasingly supported were any political and economic processes in Zambia that were responsive first and foremost to the interests of the working class.

Because of the authoritarian nature of the regime, Zambia's labour leaders refrained from serious interventionist politics – preferring instead to remain outside politics while issuing critical commentaries on the government's political and economic programmes. So no matter how radical some leaders of the labour movement may have been, they could at best develop only a trade-union type consciousness. But the opposition of the labour movement to government policies after 1973 constituted an important landmark in the political history of Zambia. It was the first time that the class struggle had ceased to be silent and had come out into the open.

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Landmines in Africa: Indiscriminate warfare

Dr Simon Baynham, Head of Research at the Africa Institute of South Africa, focuses on the much-ignored armament that kills thousands of civilians annually.

The gravity and cruelty of the threat posed by land mines cannot be overemphasized. Tens of millions of mines ... remain scattered around in former combat zones, taking and jeopardizing innumerable lives and impeding the restoration of normalcy. Experts estimate that it could take 40 to 50 years to get rid of these mines. The international community should take it upon itself to end this fatal scourge – this delayed form of warfare – before the century is over.

Jan Eliasson
United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs

While a great deal of publicity has been given to NBC (nuclear, bacteriological and chemical) weapons of mass destruction, very little attention has been focused on another armament that wreaks havoc and misery across the globe: landmines – easily available, mainly low-tech, indiscriminate and cheap. They can be bought for as little as R10 each but it can cost between R1 000 to R5 000 to detect and remove one of them.

In theory, the use of landmines against civilian targets was prohibited by a 1980 United Nations convention on inhumane weapons which came into force in 1983. However, at the last count, just 39 countries had ratified these conditions. In the decade or so since then, tens of thousands of civilians have been killed or mutilated by the estimated 85 to 100 million mines scattered like seeds of death across the globe. Along village paths and riverbanks, in cotton fields and rice paddies, these ubiquitous sentinels of death and destruction continue to shed blood long after the wars end. Landmines are present in an estimated 62 states, from Afghanistan, Armenia and Kuwait, to Cambodia, Colombia and Vietnam.[1] Some 60 companies and government agencies in 35 countries manufacture and export landmines. The leaders are China, the former Soviet Union and Italy. More than a million people, mostly civilians, have been killed or wounded by mines since 1975. In Afghanistan – to take the worst example – 4 000 people are killed by these weapons each year.

Origins and variety of mines

The first mines were developed as a response to the battle tank during the 1914–1918 Great War. These early weapons were large and cumbersome devices which were easily detected, often being redeployed against the mine-layers' own armour. This weakness led to the development of the anti-personnel mine, designed to prevent enemy troops from removing anti-tank mines. Development of the mine became a priority between the two world wars, during which period the anti-personnel mine gained accep-

tance among military strategists as a weapon in its own right. During World War II, mines were widely deployed – for instance in Russia and Poland where literally millions of devices were laid. By the early 1960s, however, random dissemination of mines began (in contrast before this period to the largely controlled deployment of weapons, linked to specific military objectives). Cambodia witnessed the first large-scale, random, use of anti-personnel mines by opposing factions in the civil war.[2]

Large numbers of miniaturized mines can now be "sown" by helicopter and fixed-wing aircraft, creating an instant minefield in a fraction of the time taken to lay a conventional one. A task that previously took a battalion of soldiers a whole day can now be accomplished in just a few minutes. These offer an inexpensive means of inhibiting or inflicting unacceptable losses on enemy forces.[3]

Today, four basic varieties of anti-personnel landmines are in use:[4]

- *Blast* – laid on ground or buried just beneath the surface. Usually detonated by the pressure of footstep on top of device. Upward explosive blast maims or kills victim.

- *Fragmentation* – usually laid above ground, often camouflaged or fixed to stakes. Detonated when person walks into tripwire. Typically projects fragments over 18 metres radius circle.

- *Directional fragmentation* – mounted above ground, packed with steel balls or metal fragments in front of explosive charge. Detonated by tripwire or remote control. Blasts fragments forward. Typical version is the US Claymore which propels balls 45 metres in a 60-degree arc.

- *Bounding* – usually buried. Pressure to tripwire or fuse on top of mine causes small explosion that projects mine upward to height of one metre or more, where main part explodes and spews fragments.

In Africa, which is the most mined region of the world, the worst affected territories are Angola, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan and Western Sahara. Up to 25 million mines litter the African continent – and thousands more continue to be planted every month. Roughly every 25 minutes a human being is blown up by mines in the trouble-torn corners of the Third World. Indeed, a quarter of all war casualties are victims of mines; of these, more than a fifth are women and children. Conceived as a local defensive weapon to disrupt advancing armies, mines are now being utilized as a strategic weapon to empty territory, to close food distribution networks and to spread terror.[5] They are, in the view of human rights groups, instruments of mass destruction, in slow motion. And once the wars subside, the left-behind mines keep on killing.

State-of-the-art anti-personnel mines are designed to maim but not kill. The lethal radius of these devices encompasses one or both legs, the genitals, arms, chest and face. According to the December 1991 issue of the *British Journal of Medicine,* "land mines ... have ruinous effects on the human body; they drive dirt, bacteria, clothing, metal and plastic fragments into the tissue, causing secondary infections". It goes on to say: "The shock wave from an exploding mine can destroy blood vessels well up the leg, causing surgeons to amputate much higher than the site of the primary wound. ... Plastic fragments are difficult to detect by x-ray."[6]

About half of those hit by mines never make it to a clinic or hospital. Even if they do, the medical facilities available are woefully inadequate.

In addition to threatening life and limb, mines pose a serious obstacle to the recovery of countries ravaged by war, disrupting transportation and agricultural production and hampering relief operations and the resettlement of refugees. In the words of Jan Eliasson, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs: "Relief assistance, repatriation and rehabilitation will continue to be

seriously hampered unless de-mining is vigorously pursued."[7] Also, land once fertile and productive is rendered useless until clearance – which is both dangerous and costly – has been performed. Drawing water from wells and rivers has become a daily struggle for survival where water points have been surrounded by mines. In many countries, even individual houses have been mined, a cruel reflection of man's inhumanity to man.

Estimated number of landmines in Africa

Most affected countries/territories	
Angola	9–10 million
Mozambique	2 million
Somalia	1–1,5 million
Sudan	1–2 million
Western Sahara	1–2 million
Ethiopia and Eritrea	1–2 million

Source: United Nations and US Department of State

Mozambique

Mozambique's civil war ended with the signing of a peace accord in October 1992. Yet an estimated 2 million landmines lie strewn across its countryside, hidden and dormant until a vehicle, a labouring farmer or a child at play sets them off. They have rendered most of the 28 roads in the country impassable. According to an authoritative report released by Human Rights Watch in February 1994, landmines in Mozambique have claimed more than 10 000 victims, mostly civilians – not to mention more than 8 000 amputations – and the casualty toll could increase rapidly as millions of refugees and displaced people return home to roads and fields littered with mines.[8] Particularly at risk are the returnees using bush paths, which are apparently the worst mined areas. Human Rights Watch accused the Mozambican government, the former Renamo resistance movement and foreign forces of laying the mines. "The devastation caused by landmines in Mozambique, not only for the many civilian victims, but also to the socioeconomic well-

being of the nation, is appalling. Clearance of mines could take decades, but so far little has been done", continued the report.[9]

The variety of mine types is almost certainly higher than the 32 varieties of anti-personnel mines and 19 types of anti-tank mines that Human Rights Watch says it has identified in the country. Mozambique does not manufacture landmines: all the mines were supplied from outside, either by manufacturers, governments or arms dealers. In its report, Human Rights Watch identifies 15 countries (including Brazil, China and France) as the sources of the mines. However, the great majority of these weapons appear to be of ex-USSR or East European origin and were utilized by both Frelimo and Renamo combatants.[10]

Landmines have been planted in Mozambique for more than a quarter of a century. During 16 years of civil war, and a decade of national liberation conflict against the Portuguese before that (1964–1974), mines were deposited not only by government troops and Renamo rebels but also by soldiers from Rhodesia, South Africa and Tanzania who came to the assistance of the warring parties. Many of the unexploded devices were scattered over the countryside by the Portuguese colonial authorities in the war against Frelimo.

As previously noted, the destructive effect of these weapons does not come to an end with those actually injured or killed. Mines thwart the resettlement of the millions of Mozambicans displaced by war. They inhibit the gigantic task of restoring the roads, railways, power lines and other infrastructure to catalyse the country's economic prospects and prosperity. In short, a return to anything approaching normal life means getting rid of them. Unfortunately, while there has been slow and steady progress in demobilizing Mozambique's rival military forces in preparation for the country's first multiparty elections (due on 27 to 28 October), there has been dispiritingly little progress in the actual clearance of mines and towards more coordinated efforts to assist mine victims and their families *(but see below)*.

Angola

The problems confronting Mozambique are more than evident in Angola, where some estimates suggest that there are actually more anti-personnel mines than there are people. During more than three decades of war – originally between Lisbon's military forces and a variety of liberation movements; since 1975 between mainly the MPLA and Jonas Savimbi's Unita – anywhere up to 10 million mines of various manufacture and origin were scattered throughout the countryside, a practice that has left Angola with one of the biggest populations of amputees in the world.[11] Indeed, already one out of every 470 Angolans has had a limb amputated. This is double the level of Mozambicans and a massive five times higher than in Vietnam. As in Mozambique, Somalia, Western Sahara and elsewhere, the threat to life is serious, but the disabling injuries that mines cause put a permanent strain on society and the wider economy. They engender a climate of fear and immobilize large tracts of agricultural land, raising the costs of reconstruction and development. At the time of writing (end September), at least seven Angolan towns have been completely surrounded by landmines, essentially (and successfully) to prevent crops being cultivated and to stop scavengers going out in search of food. But even if the agreement which was supposed to have ended the conflict in 1991 was restored, it is clear that the danger of hidden landmines will continue to lurk on the tracks and in the fertile fields long after peace is achieved.

Zimbabwe

Fourteen years after independence in Zimbabwe, villagers and livestock in communal lands situated especially on the country's north-eastern border with Mozambique continue to be maimed by landmines planted during the liberation war.[12] In the first six months of 1994 alone, the Mount Darwin hospital, 110 km south of Harare, has dealt with half a dozen cases of people seriously injured after stepping on the mines. With the mainly anti-personnel devices remaining uncleared at the conclusion of the war in 1979, the mines have continued to injure and kill peasant farmers and their cattle. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that villagers in a number of areas have lately resorted to stealing fences demarcating minefield boundaries, with the result that children and livestock in particular, stray into the mine-littered fields. Throughout Africa, children have been easy victims of civil conflict. One of the first laws of terror in civil war is the imperative that you have to kill more women and children than your enemy if you want to win.

Solutions?

From the brief survey sketched out above, it is clear that, for Africa, anti-personnel mines in particular are a crisis of horrific proportions. What is to be done? There are two ways forward. The first route involves banning or restricting the manufacture and export of these devices; the second relates to the clearance of mines already in place.

The December 1993 decision by the UN General Assembly to endorse a (non-binding) worldwide moratorium on the export of landmines is welcome, but it constitutes only a second step on a protracted and painful road. This followed on the 1980 UN treaty prohibiting "indiscriminate" use of mines which requires mapping of mine fields by those who lay them. But an outright ban faces powerful opposition. Pentagon officials, for example, say the problem lies not in proper military use of landmines but in guerrilla abuse. Modern armies, they claim, either clear areas of the devices after conflict or deploy self-neutralizing mines (which blow themselves up after a fixed period, removing the long-term threat to civilian populations).

Nevertheless, Washington has now declared that it is US policy to seek an

eventual ban on all manufacture and use of anti-personnel mines. Not only that: America no longer sells anti-personnel mines itself and is urging restraint on others. In the meantime, the European Parliament has called on all West European governments to impose a five-year moratorium on mine exports; the South African government announced an immediate ban on the marketing and export of mines in March 1994;[13] and a conference to review the 1980 UN protocol on landmines is to be held later this year or early in 1995.

But tinkering with the protocol is not sufficient, say a number of human rights groups. The International Committee of the Red Cross is so concerned about the estimated 85–100 million mines in place – not to mention another 100 million already manufactured, stockpiled or waiting for customers – that it is demanding a world-wide ban on production and comprehensive measures to curb sales. One delegate at a Red Cross symposium on mines held in Switzerland in April 1993 noted: "Mines are fighters that never miss, strike blindly, do not carry weapons openly and go on fighting long after hostilities are ended; they are the greatest violators of international humanitarian law, practising blind terrorism."[14] And in a written report, two other groups, Physicians for Human Rights and the Arms Project (a division of Human Rights Watch), argue that any measure short of an outright ban is an invitation to abuse. Instead, the two bodies call for a total ban on production, sales and use alike. Their hope is that, in time, mines might come to carry the stigma that biological and chemical weapons have not.[15]

Apart from the issue of banning the production and sale of mines, there is also the business of mine clearing, a task that is being spearheaded world-wide by the UN and by the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), a British-based humanitarian, non-profit NGO. While the MAG is active along with other agencies for a ban on anti-personnel mines, the primary role of

the organization is to undertake training and clearance of mines. Its global policy and mandate is to establish an indigenous capability to respond to the long-term problems of these devices. This takes the shape of training local teams to survey, mark and clear minefields. With the advent of the UN Coordination Office for Assistance to Afghanistan in 1988, the UN was for the first time actively involved in de-mining programmes. Today, UN teams are at work in Afghanistan, Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia and Mozambique, and are training local people in clearance techniques. Plans are under way to institute similar programmes in other African states.

Another charity, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), is also at work in Mozambique, where a team which includes British Gulf War veterans has been training demobilized troops in central Tete and Manica provinces, and then supervising their work along roads and in minefields. The NPA began training mine-clearers in August 1993, taking advantage of the peace agreement signed in October 1992 between government forces and Renamo rebels. So far, several hundred ex-soldiers have been trained but they face an enormous task. They clear paths in a grid pattern, using bayonets and even garden tools in the hope of detecting a string of mines. But Mozambique's mining was a highly erratic affair and without even rough maps of what was buried where a couple of devices discovered on a track offer no detectable logic to guide the clearance teams in their search for other. And to date, only 200 or so mines have been discovered. The priority areas to be de-mined are the access roads identified by the UN Commission for Refugees. For instance, when the 45 km Doca road is cleared the UNHCR will have direct access to an important repatriation area for refugees and will thus be able to deliver food and other relief more easily.

One controversial question concerns the UN decision to hire commercial firms to assist in de-mining

programmes. The controversy arises because some of the companies, including a number from South Africa and Zimbabwe, have manufactured mines and even helped to distribute them in Mozambique. The International Committee of the Red Cross and human rights activists take exception to the idea that those responsible for the mines should profit – for the second time – from getting rid of the weapons. South Africa's landmine industry, which includes several Denel subsidiaries, has actively been seeking de-mining business. As one publication has noted: "It is part of the arms trade's cruel logic that those companies which make landmines are also providing de-mining equipment and mine- resistant vehicles (such as South Africa's Buffel armoured personnel carriers ...)."[16]

Earlier this year, the UN Operation in Moçambique (Unomoz) put out tenders for its 1994/95 mine clearance programme. More than 20 (mostly US) companies bid for the contracts, but the principal company selected was British Aerospace's Royal Ordnance Division. Royal Ordnance has subcontracted to Lonhro de Moçambique (Lomaco) which has, in turn, subcontracted to Mecam, a Pretoria-based company. According to US-based human rights organizations, Africa Watch and the Arms Project, Mecam previously supplied mines to Angola and Mozambique. However, despite criticism from human rights groups, the UN believes that Mecam is well-placed to dismantle the mines because it has first-hand knowledge of the terrain, especially in territory formally controlled by Renamo. The UN's mine clearance programme for Mozambique is going to cost $30 million in its first year alone – $5 million of which will go to the Anglo-South African consortium to remove mines from 2 000 km of Mozambican roads.[17]

At the moment, the most effective method of de-mining involves a process that combines the use of human beings, machines and dogs. The first problem in mine clearance is the detection of the mines, which may be buried up to a metre below ground

level. Electronic devices are deployed to detect the small amount of metal in mines, usually in conjunction with a method known as "prodding", where a probe is gently inserted into the ground at an angle, until it touches the mine. Detection by electronic means and by prodding is painstakingly slow and expensive, yet it offers a much higher rate of accuracy than other methods. Dogs detect mines by the smell of the explosives in them. When well-trained, they are highly effective.[18] Although defence departments are exploring more advanced systems such as infrared sensors and impulse radar, the tangible benefits of these for civilian mine-clearers are years away. For the time being, a Herculean task lies ahead: the tedious, labour-intensive and dangerous process of defusing millions of mines across huge areas of the African landmass. In the meantime, the killing fields continue to be sown with their deadly harvests.

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16 *Africa Confidential,* vol 34, no 23, 19 November 1993, p 3.

17 *SouthScan,* vol 9, no 26, 8 July 1994, p 206.

18. United Nations, *op cit,* p 3. The UN report continues (p 4): "Little research has been done on new technologies for mine clearance. Most of the equipment in use today is derived from technology developed in the 1940s, and is usually incapable of meeting the de-mining standards required. Even the most sophisticated detectors still rely on the small amounts of residual metal in mines for their detection. The problem of non-metallic mines has been solved, but ongoing work in the area of ground-penetrating radar could provide the basis for new mine-detection systems."

Gender relations of prodution in the Eastern Cape and the restructuring of rural apartheid

Dr S E Mini, of the Geography Department of Fort Hare University, argues that all existing forms of tenure in South Africa are biased against women and that the government's land reform policies are likely to fail unless this problem is addressed.

Photographs by author

The need for land reform in South Africa is now widely accepted, although there is less agreement on the mechanism and strategies for land redistribution. However the danger inherent in the widening consensus on the need for some kind of land redistribution is that land redistribution is not seen in its wider perspective as vitally interrelated to land-use strategies and other policy options. Proposed land reforms, including tenure changes, presents an important opportunity for consideration of the position of women. Problems currently experienced by women peasant farmers have important implications for future land distribution and land-use policy.

In order to understand better the constraints and opportunities of the wider environment in which processes of land redistribution will have an impact, this article seeks to analyse the nature and magnitude of land-use problems as experienced by women peasant farmers in the Eastern Cape. Several aspects of land tenure systems, including past changes in land tenure systems and the effect of such changes on women's access to land and security of tenure, are investigated.

This article further examines the position of women with regard to access to land and other means of production. The empirical results on research regarding gender relations of peasant production and landownership in villages under different land tenure systems are presented and analysed in relation to land use and agricultural productivity. Current systems of land allocation are also investigated as they affect women peasant farmers. The awareness of women and their attitude towards specific forms of land tenure systems are also investigated. This allowed for identification and location of the genesis of the oppression and subordination of women in the rural areas.

Reasons for the under-evaluation of women's productive labour are considered and the constraints experienced by women peasant farmers arising out of their subordinate position in the domestic and public domains are examined. The intention is to assess the extent to which the position of women has been redefined and restructured through colonial and post-colonial land policies and to relate such changes to the traditional communal land tenure system.

The choice of the research areas

Villages under different forms of land tenure systems were selected to allow for a comparative analysis of socio-economic conditions of households headed by women. Mills and Wilson,[1] Cross[2] and de Wet[3] identified four legal forms of land tenure in African rural villages. These are: quitrent tenure, the freehold land tenure system, the trust tenure system and the

communal or traditional land tenure system. It was therefore decided to select two villages under each form of land tenure system. Eight villages representing four types of land tenure were sampled for this study (table 1). Six villages, namely, Zingcuka, Kwa-Bell, Amatola Basin, Sheshegu, Gwiligwili and Gxulu are in what was formerly Ciskei and two villages, Mbongweni and Luthulini, are in Bizana in what was then independent Transkei. An additional village, Mgwali, a freehold African settlement village in Stutterheim, (a so-called "black spot" in the then "white corridor" between Transkei and Ciskei) was added for comparative purposes.

There are a number of important differences between the selected villages, particularly with regard to physical environment and spatial layout. The villages of Amatola Basin, Sheshegu, Gwiligwili and Gxulu are all planned villages in terms of betterment planning. Mbongweni and Luthulini are traditional villages, unaffected by the betterment programme. Freehold villages Mgwali, Zingcuka and Kwa-Bell have to a lesser extent been affected by betterment planning.

The research focused on three different, but related, types of information: facts about the rural economy and land tenure systems; opinions expressed by women peasant farmers regarding rural land use; how women peasant farmers perceive their own position with regard to access to land and the effects of land tenure systems and peasants' farming behaviour; and rural economic activities as influenced by existing land tenure systems and other factors.

Questions were designed to collect general background information about household characteristics: sex of the heads of the household, marital status, number and age of dependents. Respondents were asked how household demographic changes had affected family land ownership and family land redistribution. The purpose was also to collect data on family land redistribution and the degree to which land allocation is biased against female-headed households.

Data were collected on household economic characteristics, including sources of income, the migrant labour system, family labour availability, village resources and employment opportunities within the rural villages. The role of remittances was assessed both as a source of income and as a measure of control and subordination of women by male migrants.

The size of the sample in each village was largely determined by the size of the population in each village, but the resources and time available also played a role. A total sample of 536 household respondents was finally settled on.

The form of interview in this study was a scheduled structured interview in which questions, their wording and sequence were fixed and identical for every respondent. The diversity and complexity of the variables contained in the questionnaire together with the high level of illiteracy necessitated the use of face-to-face personal interviews.

Interviews were conducted first with heads of households and then also with all adults in the selected households. However, it is important to note that a significant percentage of these households had de facto female heads, in most cases because their husbands were absent migrant labourers. In these instances, it was the wives who provided most of the survey information.

Women peasant farmers as heads of households

The demographic structures of almost all the villages studied are typical of rural villages in developing countries that are experiencing high rates of population growth and circulatory rural-urban migration. Fifty-seven per cent of the resident population in all the villages studied are under fifteen years, and almost two-fifths are under ten years. Women outnumber men, who comprise 46% of the total population. There are almost equal proportions of male and females until late adolescence. Thereafter the sex ratio changes, with females constituting nearly two-thirds of the sampled population in the economically active age group.

In this study the majority of female heads of households are migrant's wives; less than 12% are widows. However, the number of households headed by women varied from village

Table 1: Study areas

Freehold tenure	Quitrent tenure	Trust tenure	Communal tenure
Zingcuka	Amatola Basin	Gwiligwili	Mbongweni
Kwa-Bell	Sheshegu	Gxulu	Luthulini
Mgwali			

Table 2: Sample size per village

Type of land tenure	Village	Sample size	Village Pop	% of the sample
Freehold tenure	Mgwali	30	325	9
	Zingcuka	75	378	20
	Kwa-Bell	25	125	20
Trust tenure	Gwiligwili	78	526	15
	Gxulu	78	660	15
Quitrent tenure	Amatola Basin	75	375	20
	Sheshegu	75	255	20
Communal tenure	Mbongweni	50	415	12
	Luthulini	50	357	14
	Total sample	536		

Underutilization of arable land often occurs in female-headed households.
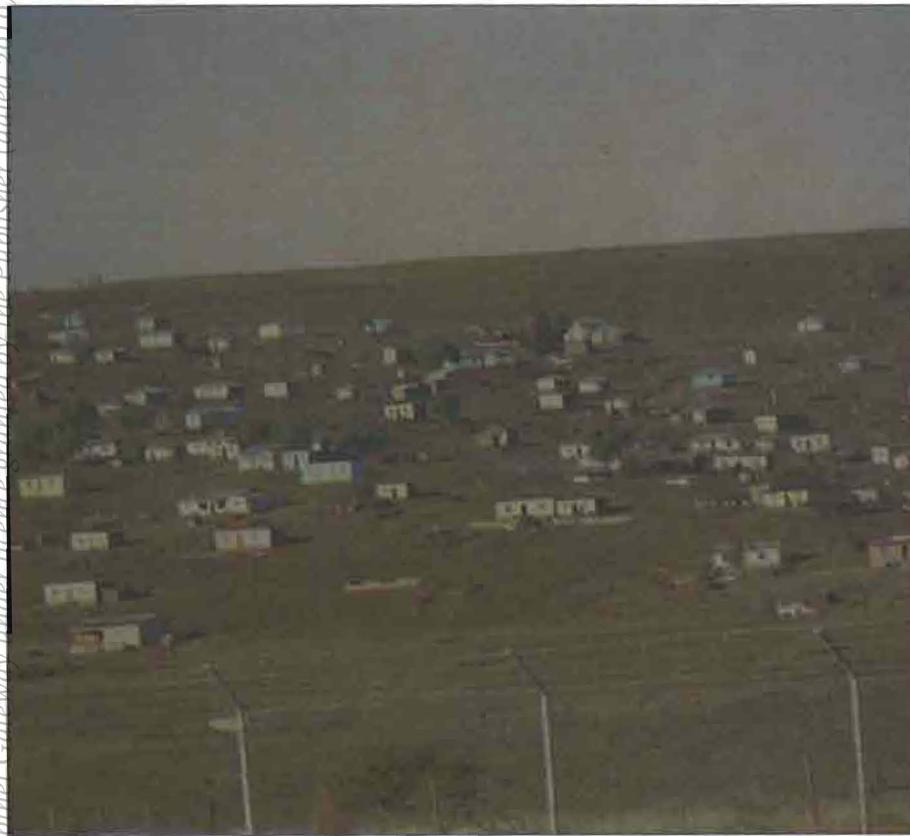
Some villages are on a steep slope making it impossible for any gardening and it is in these villages where a large number of women are involved in the informal sector to supplement remittances from migrant labourers
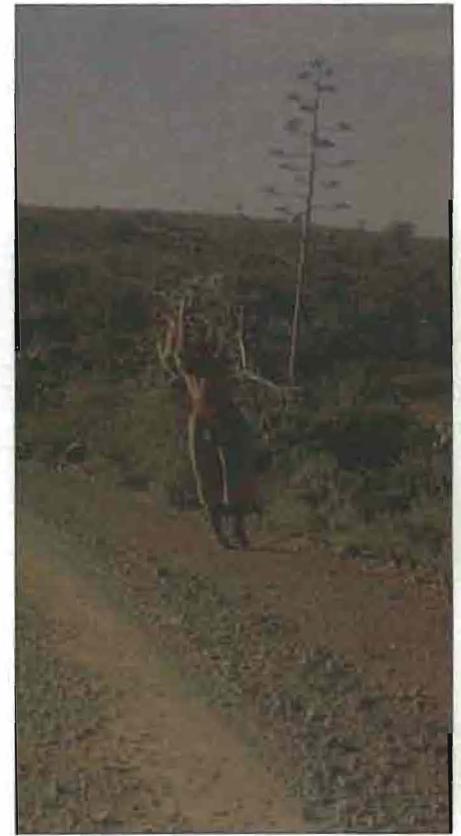
In rural villages it is largely women who have to carry wood for distances ranging between five and ten kilometres

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to village. There was a significantly greater proportion of female heads of households in the quitrent and trust land tenure villages of Amatola Basin, Sheshegu, Gwiligwili and Gxulu than in villages under freehold and communal systems. Seventy-five per cent of sampled households in these villages had female heads of households: widows, migrants' wives and unmarried adult women. Amatola Basin, Sheshegu, Gwiligwili and Gxulu villages experienced the greatest degree of male absenteeism. Households headed by females constituted 20% and 12% of the total number of households in the communal villages of Mbongweni and Luthulini, respectively. The lower percentage of de facto female-headed households in the communal villages of Mbongweni and Luthulini suggests that these villages had a lower rate of male migration than villages with other forms of land tenure. These differences reflect the nature of the economy of sampled villages and extent to which they are linked to the external economy. These differences are also associated with the availability of agricultural resources, the level of agricultural productivity and the type of land tenure system that is in place.

In traditional communal tenure systems unmarried adult females are not legally allowed to own a dwelling plot. This explains the lower percentage of female-headed households in these kinds of villages. In villages under trust and quitrent tenure systems unmarried adult females are entitled to a dwelling plot. However, rights to a dwelling plot do not constitute full communal rights. They are not invited to participate in the decision-making processes of the community or to attend meetings organized by chiefs or headmen.

In Zambia female-headed households are estimated to range between 20 and 50% and in Botswana and Malawi female-headed households are estimated to range between 35 and 45%. The high incidence of female-headed households in the Eastern Cape can be attributed to the fact that there are more urban employment opportunities in South Africa than in other African countries, which obviously leads to a higher incidence of migrant labour.

The majority of female heads of households are concentrated in ages between 26 and 55 years and in higher age groups the proportion of female heads decrease rapidly. Most migrant heads of households retire at an early age and therefore the number

Eastern Cape

● Bizana
★
★

●Umtata

●Butterworth

★ Study villages

●East London

●Port Elizabeth

Scale 1 : 4 000 000
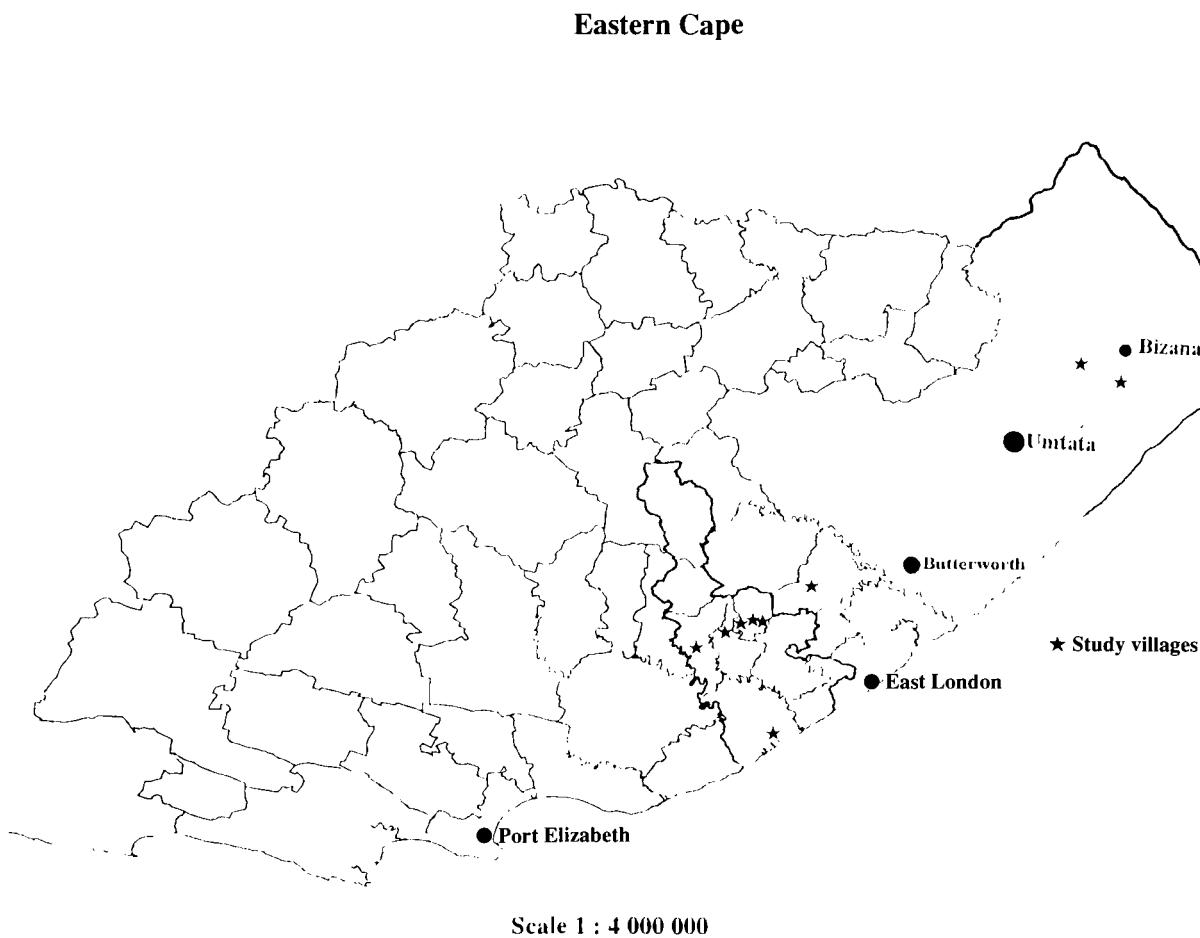
of female heads decrease from the age of fifty years.

In over 50% of the households in quitrent and trust tenure villages the day-to-day management of agriculture and routine decision-making are the responsibility of women whose husbands are away from home. Although these female heads of households sometimes depend on their grown-up children or on other family members for advice, it is evident that they make many decisions themselves and provide much of the agricultural labour.

Different communities face different problems and obviously factors such as age, dependent children, access to the means of production, capital and labour, external linkages, support networks and class and rank influence the quality of life of women peasant farmers.

Landownership and women peasant farmers

The most crucial problem facing women in rural villages is the question of access to land as defined by land tenure systems. In all sampled villages women have no direct access to arable land by their own right; they attain such access only by virtue of a prior relationship with a man. The extent to which this can be attributed to traditional customs or to colonial and post-colonial government manipulation of traditional communal land tenure and the formalization of customary law is subject to debate. It is only through careful analysis that the oppression of women peasant farmers will be located and the problem properly understood.

Sixty-five per cent of sampled households in this study have no arable land and landlessness is greatest in trust and quitrent systems, where over 75% of sampled households were landless. In trust and quitrent villages female-headed households constituted over 65% of landless households. In traditional communal villages 5% of the sampled households had no arable land. This does not suggest that women have better access to land in communal land tenure than in other forms of tenure, but that there are fewer female-headed households in communal villages than in other villages.

Although there is a high incidence of landless households in all study villages, female-headed households constitute a larger percentage of the total number of landless households. However causes for landlessness varied not only from village to village but also within villages and this suggests that women's subordination and oppression is far more complex and cannot be generalized. Nevertheless, in all cases female heads of households were the most disadvantaged. In villages under freehold land tenure, landlessness was just as high as in village trust and quitrent land tenure systems. However it is important to note that in villages under the freehold tenure system, land transactions are basically carried out on a traditional basis, that is, even though tenure in these villages is officially described as freehold, the daily land-use and land transactions revert back to traditional practices. This therefore does not justify the superior status ascribed to freehold tenure systems by economists and planners[4] as the solution to tenure and land-use problems in African villages. Women in freehold are marginalized as in other forms of tenure systems. If a freehold land tenure system were to be introduced to replace the traditional communal system in a free-market economic system, women would probably suffer most because they seldom have the capital to buy land; and those women who have access to land may find themselves having to sell their land in an effort to meet household and other financial needs. An alternative here would be to increase and strengthen social security facilities and to consider alternative safety-nets for those rural women who lose their land or fail to gain access to land. The experience in land titling in Kenya before and after independence offers important lessons in this respect.[5]

Landlessness in study villages was attributed to the shortage of land within the villages and to the provisions of existing tenure systems. Unmarried adult females have no right to arable land; married women have secured and protected rights to arable land as long as they remain married (upon the death of their husbands, the land rights pass on to the eldest son). Only men may inherit land rights. In trust, quitrent and traditional communal tenure systems widows may retain the use of their deceased husband's arable land, but the land is never actually transferred into her name. A widow does not have permanent rights to land, but is merely the custodian of the land for the descendants of the deceased husband. If a widow remarries, she loses her use rights over the land; and if her children by her previous marriage are still too young to take up the rights, the land is re-allocated.

In trust and quitrent tenure systems, female heads of households reported that issues of inheritance in cases of separation or the death of a male spouse were left to traditional law, which usually meant that women either inherited very little or nothing. This creates confusion because while trust and quitrent tenure systems are colonial constructs and are not based on the indigenous traditional tenure system, traditional customary law is expected apply in determining rights of inheritance. Inheritance laws therefore have remained ambiguous and there are many cases where the widow has been deprived of her property after the death of her spouse by his family. If a woman is directly allocated land this is normally in the capacity of a substitute man responsible for children.[6] In most customs, the primary concerns over who is to inherit the property of a deceased relative is the welfare of the children. In some cases customary law is abused. But the position is complex, both within and between villages.

The situation is made more complex by the fact that the position of widows varies according to whether they were married under customary or statutory law, which

type of marital property regime applies, and which mode of inheritance is followed. Women's subordinate position in relation to landholding is also partly related to their civil legal status as minors.

Precise identification of those aspects of the different land tenure systems that discriminate against women is an important task that must be undertaken as part of the rural land restructuring programme. The World Bank Report on the land redistribution options[7] attributes the subordinate legal position of women with regard to landownership to customary law. The World Bank has also recommended the redefinition of the term "household" to include female-headed households, so that they would then enjoy the same status as male-headed households. Whilst this may put female-headed households on par with male-headed households, the experience in other African countries suggests that this official position does not always solve the problems experienced by women in practice. There is always a gap between the government's official position and what happens on the ground. In Zimbabwe women's land rights were redefined by the Legal Age of Majority Act, 1992, which made women eligible for land allocation; but in practice most women still have access to land only through a man. On resettlement schemes, plots are normally given to the man as the head of the household and married couples are not given joint ownership.[8] The precise problem is that the communal land tenure system is based on the system of patriarchal relations, which precedes all other forms of economic, political and social control.[9] In their struggle to retain authority and control over women, men are able to draw upon external community-based social resources.

Women farmers and access to other means of production

The provisions of betterment planning made it illegal for landless households to own stock. Rights to arable land are therefore also linked to grazing rights.

The intention here was to resettle as many people in betterment villages as possible, whilst at the same time restricting stock ownership to prevent environmental deterioration. In trust and quitrent tenure systems landless households are not entitled to grazing rights and therefore cannot keep cattle and small stock. As female-headed households constitute the greatest percentage of landless households, this also suggests that they are the most disadvantaged households with regard to stock ownership. Whilst certain provisions of betterment planning will have to be retained, a closer analysis of betterment planning is required and those aspects which discriminate against certain categories of the peasant farmers will have to be removed.

Analysis of cattle ownership by sex of heads of household revealed that, on average, female-headed households own between two and three heads of cattle. The minimum number of cattle for a plough team is six.[10] This indicates that few female-headed households own enough cattle for ploughing. More than two-thirds of female heads of households who had not cultivated their land mentioned the shortage of draught animals as a major problem. Others stated that even when they do own enough cattle to raise a team of oxen they often face other difficulties, such as obtaining labour to inspan the oxen. Thus the family would either have to join forces with others to share a plough and labour or else hire a tractor or oxen. This was particularly the case in Amatola Basin, Sheshegu, Gwiligwili and Gxulu, which all had a serious shortage of male labour during the ploughing seasons.

Without direct access to land, women's alterative means of land use and production, such as sharecropping, are constrained and opportunities for investment, credit and marketing are limited (and in most instances non-existent).

Peasant farm labour and women peasant farmers

The average number of adults in a

household who are available for work in agriculture is three. Availability of labour is affected by the household size and as well as the migrant labour system. Women in the 16–65 age group accounted for more than 75% of the total agricultural labour force in study villages, compared to less than the 20% that is contributed by males. Male labour in rural agriculture varies according to employment opportunities in urban labour market. However, there are also variations between villages. In villages under trust, quitrent and freehold tenure systems, women accounted for more than 80% of the agricultural labour force and in communal villages women provided between 35% and 40% of the labour.

Female-headed households in the communal villages of Mbongweni and Luthulini and the freehold villages of Mgwali, Zingcuka and Kwa-Bell have more agricultural labour available than female-headed households in other villages. Communal villages with large homesteads have the largest amount of available labour. This reflects the demographic structure of these villages, which have not only a large proportion of children but also a larger number of young adults. The effects of circulatory migrant labour are also less severe in these villages.

Since the average family workforce is usually made up of an adult male and adult female and one or two children of working age, female-headed households have fewer family workers. The labour deficiency of these households results in their having small cultivated areas, which prevents them from producing more than their subsistence needs to sell for cash to pay against credit. Therefore, if the capacity to work on the land, as determined by agricultural household labour, is to be an important criteria in the allocation and redistribution of rural land, female-headed households are likely to be disadvantaged and remain landless.

Given the labour intensive nature of rural agriculture, a large household should mean a larger supply of family labour. But in rural villages large

In communal tenure systems a married woman has access to arable land and a garden which may be four to five times larger than in trust and quitrent land tenure systems.

Female heads of households own stock but have to graze them very close to home so as to be able to continue with their household/domestic commitments.

families do not necessarily imply a larger supply of family labour. Although the study villages have large households, the greatest proportion of household members are children younger than 18 years; and the average number of working-age adults is one. Access to child labour for women may depend on the availability of children for agricultural and domestic tasks but the vicissitudes of demography and the distance travelled by children to school each day make child labour a poor alternative for women heads of households.

The migrant labour system has a very serious impact on household labour for agriculture in these villages. Women with absent husbands, including widows and divorcees, not only provide much of the agricultural labour in these villages, but are also the effective managers and decision-makers about family land use. Moreover, female-headed households with poor resources usually find it difficult to plough their lands in time and often manage to plough only a portion of the field. In trust and quitrent villages 45% of sampled female heads of households only managed to cultivate half of their arable lands. None of the widows in the total sample had their fields ploughed for them by their husbands's brother as required by custom. Female-headed households are further disadvantaged where traditional systems of mutual help have broken down and have not been replaced by other forms of assistance. Most female heads of households indicated that they cannot afford to hire labour.

More than 50% of uncultivated arable lands in Amatola Basin and Sheshegu belonged to old people who had neither the capital nor the labour to cultivate the land. In Sheshegu, Gxulu and Gwiligwili most respondents indicated that failure to cultivate occurred where land rights belonged to individuals who were too old or to widows without adequate labour for ploughing and weeding. In Amatola Basin 45% of sampled landowners had cultivated none of

their lands, or only a portion, because of a shortage of labour. One respondent in Sheshegu stated:

> My health is unsatisfactory, so I cannot work my land. My sons stay in a township, nobody is going to prepare the soil for planting. Both my wife and I are too old to plant all this land and no one is going to weed my land.

The shortage of labour at critical periods of peasant farming activities was attributed to the migrant labour system, which deprives these villages of young adult males. The magnitude of male absenteeism was not uniform. Different villages showed different rates of labour migration and it also varied within villages from time to time. Sheshegu, Gwiligwili and Gxulu showed higher rates of male absenteeism than the other villages. It was also in these villages that most arable land was not cultivated. Labour shortage was particularly felt by landowning households. But a significant percentage of landless households stated that they sometimes failed to enter into share-cropping arrangements because of a labour shortage during the ploughing season. In Gwiligwili more than one-third of landowners argued that they depended on migrants returning home or sending extra money for ploughing; when this failed they could not cultivate all their lands. One respondent in Gwiligwili stated:

> My children and their wives are in town. My children used to hire some labourers to plant the land. But this year they have failed to do that.

In Gwiligwili, Gxulu, Sheshegu and Amatola Basin more than two-thirds of migrant landholders fail to return to their villages during the ploughing season. This reduces the family labour during the most critical periods of peasant farming activities. Ploughing and weeding therefore become the responsibility of migrants's wives, their children and older members of households. Share-cropping in these villages is limited by the fact that it is officially illegal and the share-croppers are not protected if either party were to default. In these villages most respondents reported that the

majority of migrant landholders do not make arrangements for someone to use their land during their absence. This was because of fear by migrant landowners that, should they allow somebody else to use their lands, they might lose their land rights.

In the freehold villages of Zingcuka, Kwa-Bell and Mgwali male absenteeism was not as great as in villages with other forms of land tenure systems. Labour shortage was therefore not a major problem in these villages. This was partly because of the larger family sizes in freehold villages than in villages with quitrent and trust land tenure systems.

Similarly, in the communal villages of Mbongweni and Luthulini the shortage of family labour was not a major problem for peasant farmers. These villages also have a lower level of male absenteeism than villages in quitrent and trust land tenure systems. In Mbongweni and Luthulini labour problems are usually solved by the system known as *em Ilima* (work-parties). This is a strategy adopted by labour-short households and it involves organizing and inviting near neighbours to help with a specific task such as ploughing, weeding and even harvesting. If a homestead head intends to organize a work-party, he will announce the forthcoming event at a suitable public meeting or any large gathering of people.

The word *"Ilima"* indicates that there will be plenty of food and traditional beer provided, both during and after work at the organizer's homestead. Neighbours are free to bring any form of help and sometimes they may bring a team of oxen, extra ploughs or just their own labour. Whilst four or five teams of eight to ten oxen each would be ploughing, three or four teams would be planting. This often involves a huge operation and more than four hectares of arable land can be ploughed in three hours. Working parties in these villages represent a form of free labour. The only costs involved are in preparing the meal and a good supply of traditional beer. Working parties are popular because, among other things,

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they are social occasions: they bring the whole community together for a common objective.

Female heads of households in these communal villages stated that working parties are very important during the ploughing and harvesting periods. More than one third of de facto female heads of households reported that they organize working parties every year during harvest and ploughing seasons.

In Amatola Basin, Zingcuka, Gwiligwili, Gxulu, Kwa-Bell and Mgwali most respondents indicated that the work-party system is dying out. In these villages most respondents indicated that group assistance has become commercialized. Individuals now have a tendency to sell their labour to neighbours. Respondents reported that they could not afford to employ such labour.

These responses provide very useful information as they reveal one of the contradictions in the peasant economy: a shortage of labour in the midst of rural unemployment. Data in this study draws attention to the fact that idle arable land is frequently associated with high rates of migration. This land-labour disequilibrium constitutes a serious problem from a planner's viewpoint. The problem of good land lying fallow is viewed as a major barrier to development. This raises the question of whether labour-short landed female heads of households and landowning migrants should continue to retain land they can no longer use effectively and whether land should be redistributed and allocated to those who can use it. This would mean that peasant women would probably be the losers, which would increase their economic insecurity.

The study also investigated the effects of the size of arable land holdings on land use and on agricultural productivity. In the communal villages of Mbongweni and Luthulini the respondents stated that there are no official restrictions regarding the size of arable land holdings. The area of land under cultivation rather tended to reflect the capacity of

individual households to work the land. Because of changes in the demographic structures of households, the area of arable land under cultivation tended to change from year to year. In these villages the most crucial variables were therefore the availability of labour during the ploughing season, the ability of households to raise a team of oxen and the availability of capital to buy agricultural inputs.

From the above analysis it appears that female-headed households, whether they be headed by widows or by women who never married, are becoming increasingly insecure economically. They find it difficult to farm as assistance from their extended family is less likely to materialize than in the past. As cooperation between rich households and the poor ones declines, the division between rich and poor becomes wider and more rigid. This is particularly the case in villages under trust and quitrent land tenure systems. Most female heads of households stated that many redistributive mechanisms existed in the past, and that the frequency and the extent of cooperation was diminished significantly. The break-up of the traditional extended family into small nuclear families has also contributed to changes in family relations and households' demographic structures. With the emergence of smaller nuclear families, people tend to share less within a narrower family circle. These changes have resulted primarily from commodification of the rural economy. Whilst the role of wage employment has increased significantly, so also has the need for cash to buy goods and services. The penetration of a money economy and capitalist relations of production have altered old forms of cooperation and exchange.

Despite the difficulties faced by women in the formal labour market, women find themselves under increasing pressure to obtain employment. They are being pushed out of the subsistence sector by their responsibility to provide for their children and by the low productivity of arable agriculture.

Because of the constraints that women face, they tend to cultivate small areas, which, in turn, means that their credit-rating remains low. In addition to this, many women seemed reluctant to apply for credit. Sixty-five per cent of the female-headed households had not applied for credit during the five years prior to the survey. Although it is widely recognized that modern inputs increase output substantially, female-headed households felt reluctant to apply for credit facilities to obtain these inputs. The local shopkeepers in Amatola Basin and Sheshegu stated that female-headed households were reluctant to request credit for fear of inability to repay. But it also appeared that local shopkeepers were not ready to offer female heads of households help. The majority of female heads of households, when asked about the reasons for their low use or non-use of farm inputs, indicated that it was not because they were refused credit as such but that they felt that, given their labour constraint and small arable lands, their ability to produce a surplus over and above their family requirements, which would then enable them to repay debt, was minimal. In fact these households were afraid to take input credit because of the high risk involved.

Women are also precluded from obtaining credit because they do not control other resources and therefore are unable to provide the necessary collateral. This situation is complicated by the fact that married women are treated as minors and therefore may not enter into any loan contract without the consent of her husband. Widowed women have still to bring a male relative in order to enter into a loan contract. Therefore, the likelihood of the female-headed households improving farm output and farm income is limited, first, by the labour deficiency which tends to limit the size of the cultivated areas and secondly by their lack of capital in the form of stock and cash.

In trust and quitrent tenure systems dwelling plots are fixed in size and are not flexible to allow for an increase in

household size. The tendency for these homesteads is to break up into much smaller family units with a large number of children and very few adults. This has an effect of reducing agricultural family labour. The effects of labour migration on family labour is more severe here than in other villages.

In communal villages the size of dwelling plots is not fixed and the size of homesteads continues to grow as the household size increases. The effects of the migrant labour system on family labour availability can thus be seen to be less severe in these villages.

Urban-rural remittances and the subordination of rural women

Remittances fulfil a number of different functions and migrants were asked why they remit. Several different reasons were offered by migrants for sending cash home and these can be listed as follows:

- attempt at maintaining family and marriage ties between absent husband and wife with children;

- sons who wish to support their homes (and ensure their inheritance); capital for investment in homestead stock and crop;

- production, and subsistence cash upon which poor households depend almost totally.

The most important reason for remitting appeared to be to maintain family and marriage ties. There was no difference in the amount remitted, nor in the frequency of remitting between migrants who had arable land and those who had no access to arable land. But it appeared that migrants who remit regularly are more respected by their households and are feared by their wives. Remittances therefore constitute a means of control over women's activities.

There are always tensions and conflicts between migrant labourers and their wives on how to spend the remitted income. The extent to which this conflict emerges because of different priorities on the part of migrants and their wives or is due to

the fact that remittances represent a source of power for men and subordination of women, is subject to debate. Migrant labourers appear to exercise some control over the money remitted to their families. Most migrant labourers stated that they often instructed their wives to set some remitted income aside for purchasing cattle and some also earmarked a portion of their remittances for investment in arable production. A smaller portion of the money was also released directly into the hands of dependents. There is therefore tension between various short-term and long-term uses of income. Migrant labourers stated that they were under pressure to provide for their future retirement while still in wage employment.

In households that have land and livestock these long-term and short-term objectives can be reconciled to some extent. But in those households which have neither land nor livestock or that have only livestock there is a bitter struggle between husbands and wives in particular; and the conflict sometimes extends to other dependents. There are more oppressive relations between migrants and their wives in households that have no access to land and livestock. Women in these households are more keen to look for informal jobs and engage in informal sector, but they indicated that they had to get permission from their absent husbands. Migrant labourers are often reluctant to allow their wives to take local jobs and this is often a very critical source of conflict not only between the spouses but also in terms of the traditional patriarchal economic system.

In seeking long-term security, migrant labourers tend to invest in agriculture and indicated a preference for cattle in particular. This was partly attributed to the social status attached to cattle and also because women cannot abuse this form of investment. Cattle are a man's business and men set aside money to purchase cattle when they come home and very often women are excluded completely from dealings with livestock. Women are limited to working with small stock

such as goats and sheep. This is based on the myth that women are not interested in investing in capital goods and tend to spend their money on items for consumption. Evidence from rural villages suggests that women's apparent reluctance to invest in agricultural equipment and capital inputs has several causes other than lack of interest. Most women heads of households indicated that they have to spend what cash is available on consumption goods to meet their responsibilities for domestic provision and the needs of children, such as school fees, especially when migrant husbands have failed to make adequate provision. Some women indicated that they are reluctant to invest on capital equipment which may be seized by her husband's family upon his death.

Migrant labourers with better jobs were able to remit reasonable sums relatively often. Where households held land, migrants stated that they were willing to remit for the maintenance and use of land. They therefore had a reason to remit not merely for their dependents' subsistence, but also to ensure that their fields were worked and that their land was ploughed at the most opportune time, that seed and fertilizer were purchased and that planting was effected properly. This was particularly the case in quitrent and trust tenure villages, where rights to land were linked to beneficial use of the land. Migrants in Amatola Basin, Gwiligwili and Gxulu stated that they expected their wives to arrange and oversee these activities, which included hiring tractors and planters, as they were provided with money for this purpose. From the migrants' perspective, the purpose of remittances was to provide further income in the form of subsistence agricultural production and also to secure their future in the village; and they had to acknowledge that they needed their wives' management skills to look after some of their long-term village interests.

But it is important to note that remittances from migrants offered migrant's wives more than basic needs for subsistence. Remittances were

often used to provide initial capital for activities in the informal sector. Women could use the remittances they received to purchase items such as vegetables and fruit, to sell in the informal sector. Money earned in this way was then used to underwrite further investments of this kind, while some of the remitted money was put into agriculture as originally planned. This was more common in Amatola Basin, Sheshegu, Gwiligwili and Gxulu, where a greater proportion of migrants' wives were involved in the informal sector. Amatola Basin and Sheshegu had a larger proportion of migrants' wives involved in the informal sector. Most women involved in the informal sector stated that they derived their initial capital from migrant's remittances.

Moreover most women stated that the fact that they knew they would receive money from migrants at the appropriate time gave them confidence to raise loans and advances from neighbours and local shopkeepers. These loans too were frequently used as the basis for other small income-generating activities such as brewing and selling traditional beer. Money accumulated from the informal sector was used to purchase all items which migrant husbands either omitted to provide for or commonly made available only when they saw fit.

The rural informal sector and the control over women's labour power

Rural informal economic activities contribute a substantial proportion to total household income and represent an attempt by rural women to achieve self-reliance. The aim here is not to provide a detailed analysis of the rural informal sector, but rather to relate informal sector activities to peasant women's struggles for economic independence. The emphasis will be on the significance of the informal sector in peasant economic activities, and in its relationship with peasant agriculture and formal wage labour. Respondents were asked questions about the reasons for their involve-

ment in the informal sector and the sources of the initial capital, and the ratio of informal sector earnings to total household income. This was important, especially in view of the declining role of agriculture in the peasant economy and the increasing dependence of peasant farmers on the formal cash economy.

In all sampled villages female-headed households constituted the largest proportion of households in the informal sector and the greater proportion of informal workers in all villages were women. The types of commodities sold, such as vegetables, fruits and home-made clothing precluded male participation as the selling of these items is traditionally regarded as women's business. The extent to which this can be attributed to gender division of labour is subject to debate. Although in some villages traditional division of labour by gender is collapsing it is true that in some villages gender division of labour is still remains intact.

In Amatola Basin, Sheshegu, Gwiligwili and Gxulu, 65% of informal workers were women. Although these villages had a high unemployed male work force, very few participated in the informal sector. This is partly because of the smaller scale of the rural informal sector economy, which does not allow full participation by unemployed males. Moreover male heads of households in these villages always have hopes of getting formal wage employment and are reluctant to engage themselves in informal income-generating activities.

However, a large proportion of women stated that they were involved in the informal sector in order to supplement cash income from migrants' remittances. Women informal workers stated that very often migrants' remittances were not enough to provide for all subsistence households' needs and they were therefore forced to augment this income by producing and selling some basic commodities. Forty-five per cent of women in the informal sector stated that they were involved in the informal sector because migrants' remittances were very irreg-

ular and could not be relied upon during critical periods when there is a great demand for cash, such as when schools reopen or at the beginning of the ploughing season. Whether informal sector activities represent an effective strategy on the part of women to release themselves from oppressive household power relations and reduce their dependency on migrants' remittances is an important debate in the understanding of household gender relations. But the extent of women participation in the informal sector has to be understood within the context of the patriarchal relationship operating at the level of the household.

Reasons offered by participants in the rural informal sector indicate that rural villages are completely integrated into the money economy and peasant agriculture has failed to generate the essential cash income in these villages. However, the rural informal sector, is to some extent linked to the wage income of migrant labourers. Among women involved in the informal sector migrants' wives were much better off than those without a member of the household in wage employment. Migrants' wives in the informal sector stated that they got the initial capital form their migrant husbands' remittances. Women who were getting larger amounts of income from migrants' wages showed greater participation in the informal sector. Most migrants' wives stated that remittances gave them confidence to raise loans to purchase informal sector goods. Respondents who were not involved were asked reasons for their non-involvement in the informal sector. Lack of initial capital to purchase goods was offered as the main reason for not participating in the informal sector. These were households whose members lacked formal employment. The respondents stated that the little income that they were able to raise could not be invested into the informal sector as it was needed for immediate consumption needs. A closer analysis of the rural informal sector suggests that it represents a terrain of conflict and

tension where women attempt to gain economic independence, self-reliance and release themselves from oppressive household economic relations. Whilst, on the other hand, men attempt to retain their control over women labour power and production. For women, the rural informal sector represent both a struggle for survival and a struggle against male domination. On a more general level, the rural informal sector presents a direct challenge to the traditional patriarchal economic system and opens a new front and a vigorous challenge to a male-dominated economic system. Economic depression, unemployment and the collapse of rural agriculture as sources of power for men, are all realities which force men to relinquish their control over women's labour power and watch sadly as women become economically independent.

Conclusion

This article has shown that women in the Eastern Cape are farmers and that they provide a major portion of agricultural labour. However planners, development agencies and government polices have presented women farmers as the problem. Planners, development agencies and government policy have all attributed the decline and collapse of peasant agriculture to the predominance of women as farmers. This view presents an important challenge to the

proposed land redistribution and land tenure reforms. The contemporary debate on land reforms has not as yet confronted the status of women farmers and how the redefined position of women will relate to the existing land tenure systems. Women are not recognized as farmers in their own right and despite abundant evidence pointing to the contrary, farmers are officially assumed to be men and the involvement of women is subsumed under the concept of household or family labour. What is clear is that women will not benefit in the proposed land reallocation as long as this is done within the framework of the existing land tenure systems. All existing forms of tenure are biased against women. Evidence from study villages suggest that the manipulation of rights to land under both customary law and official state law has largely been at the expense of women. Yet, as a result, while individual men exercise greater autonomy *vis-à-vis* the land than women, women individually and collectively are the main farmers. If women are to have rights to land the proposed land redistribution should take place under a new form of land tenure system. A more flexible and simpler form of land tenure system is therefore recommended.

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Democracy and the prospects for integration in West Africa

The implementation of regional economic cooperation in large parts of Africa since the 1970s and 1980s has met with limited success. Unviability and weakness remain a salient feature of most African economies. The question arises whether the introduction or restoration of democracy throughout the continent in recent years will accelerate the formation and functioning of larger economic and political entities on a regional basis – and perhaps their eventual integration. Dr Kwame Boafo-Arthur, a political scientist at the University of Ghana, looks at these phenomena in West Africa.
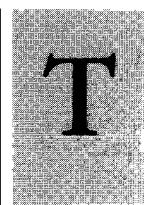
The West African region, comprising 16 countries, has always been in the forefront of groups of countries struggling to make regional cooperation/integration a reality. Moreover, in the last five years 12 West African countries have, with varying degrees of success, restored multiparty political systems. Exceptions are Nigeria, the regional giant, Liberia, Sierra Leone and The Gambia (the last-named has recently reverted from democracy to military rule).

While it is accepted that democracy holds the key to national and regional stability and development, this article attempts to examine the extent to which democracy might facilitate regional integration – an important factor in maximizing the development potential of West Africa.

It is argued that regional attempts at integration must of necessity be based on regional stability which, in turn, should preferably emanate from democratic governance throughout the region.

Since efforts to achieve effective regional integration have been bedeviled by a host of problems, I will begin by briefly highlighting some of these because they also have to do with the prevalence of political instability and the difficulties experienced in establishing democracy here and elsewhere in Africa.

Aspects of integrational problems in Ecowas

The Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas), established by the Treaty of Lagos in May 1975, has the promotion of cooperation and development in all fields of economic activity as its central objective. Its numerous articles deal with trade promotion, the elimination of tariff barriers between member states, the establishment of a common external tariff, the harmonization of agricultural and monetary policies, industrial development plans, and incentives in the fields of food and energy.[1]

Like other sister integration schemes in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), such as the West African Economic Community (CEAO), the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), the Southern African Development and Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States (PTA), and the defunct East African Community, etc, the most important motivation for the establishment of this economic community was the desire for lasting economic development.

However, there are a number of constraints that make it difficult for Ecowas to realize its objectives. Some of these are the difference in size and infrastructural development of the member states; the level of dependence on external actors; the lack of

political will;[2] and low per capita income.[3] In addition, very little has been done about trade liberalization and the free movement of goods and people.

In the view of Julius Okolo, the failure of Ecowas to foster trade liberalization has mainly arisen from the nature of West African economies, the limited transport and communication facilities in and among member-states, currency problems, competition from other sub-regional economic unions, and certain legal and administrative problems.[4] S K B Asante also relates the problem to the existence of protective trade structures that work against integration. These include tariffs or import restrictions differential import and fiscal charges, and varying trade philosophies and banking arrangements.[5] Further problems that have been identified are inadequate institutional facilities, incompatible national and regional interests, inadequate resources (both domestic and foreign) for the implementation of projects, competition with external entities – especially some multinational corporations[6] – and the low level of elite complementarity.[7]

It is clear that it is necessary to find viable solutions to these problems. The pertinent questions here are: how do we find the right solutions in a region characterized by chronic political instability; and how can cooperation be achieved in a region where there appears to be a lack of political focus and widely different forms of government? For, although Ecowas is an economic union, its success will depend on political stability and democratic governance. And, in a nutshell,[8] the constant (often violent) political flux so evident in the region's dozen or more states has, so far, militated against any real progress in international cooperation.

Fundamental political problems confronting Ecowas

Political instability, manifested in coups, ethnic warfare, civil wars and the absence of democratic governance, has been a common and recurring feature of the West African political landscape.

A cursory glance, again, at this sixteen-member community will reveal profound dissimilarities in modes of governance and a lack of genuine political stability. Most of these states have experienced civilian dictatorships, military authoritarianism, and personal rule. Such unconstitutional regime changes have exerted a disruptive effect, led to discontinuities in national plans and made the implementation of foreign policy projects extremely difficult. One very simple reason for these impediments is that the social upheavals brought about by unorthodox political changes have often led to development and long-term international issues being placed on the back burner. In addition, commitments made by a deposed ruler are all too easily abrogated, either through bad counselling or because the new regime wishes to make different arrangements as a matter of policy.

Example: General Olusegun Obasanjo raised objections to the undertaking, given by Nigeria then under General Yakubu Gowon, to underwrite 35% of the annual budget of the fledging Ecowas.[9] Again, but for the steadfastness of other community members, General Obasanjo would have based voting in Ecowas on the power of the purse (as happens in the weighted voting of the IMF) instead of on the basis of sovereign equality.

More often than not, leaders who seize power undemocratically find themselves having to protect their domestic position and are compelled to invest a great deal of money and effort to ensure that they remain in power. In addition, the antagonisms created among leaders as a result of unconstitutional seizure of power tend to undermine cooperation at international, regional level.

• Soon after the coup of 31 December 1981 in Ghana, the country's relations with its immediate neighbours deteriorated especially with Togo and Côte d'Ivoire. This arose form Rawlings' initial radicalism, the new regime's close alignment

with Libya, and the sanctuary some countries in the community gave to anti-Rawlings elements. The subsequent insecurity experienced by the regime amply explains why Ghana closed its borders for over two years on the pretext of checking smuggling.

• In Nigeria, the government of Major General Muhammadu Buhari, which ousted the democratically elected government of President Shehu Shagari in December 1983, adopted similar measures by closing Nigeria's borders from April 1984 until February 1986. The actions of both Rawlings and Buhari were clearly in contravention of the Ecowas protocols on the free movement of goods and people. Undoubtedly, the measures curtailed intra-regional trade and seriously affected growth in the regional community.

A pertinent example of what I have just argued was the general subregional opposition to Rawlings's interventions in 1979 and again in 1981. After the 1979 military coup, which culminated in the execution of eight high-ranking army officers, three of whom had been military heads of state, there were immediate favourable reactions by certain leaders within the community. Apart from the condemnation of the killings, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso closed their borders with Ghana, and Nigeria went so far as to impose an oil embargo on Ghana. Rawlings's second advent in 1981 again led to the suspension of oil sales by Nigeria and a demand for the payment of arrears of about $150 million. Rawlings at once strengthened his ties with Libya. These steps obviously had far-reaching repercussions for the unity of and cooperation within the Ecowas community.[10] It would be foolhardy to suppose that there could have been any form of meaningful cooperation (either political or economic) for the sake of regional integration while the political arena was charged with open hostility between two local heavyweights.

It is perhaps important to recall that before Rawlings's second advent,

Nigeria had refused to recognize the Libyan Peoples' Bureau in Lagos and Libyan diplomats had been expelled. Senegal, The Gambia and Ghana had deplored Colonel Gaddafi's treacherous "diplomacy of subversion". Ghana, under President Hilla Limann, severed diplomatic relations with Libya. Mali and Burkina Faso expelled certain Libyan diplomats, while Kountche of Niger charged the Libyans with attempts to overthrow his government.[11]

Sub-regional reaction to the April 1980 coup of Master Sergeant Doe was equally antagonistic. The Liberian coup led to the death of President Tolbert, the Head of State and the then Chairman of the OAU, and the execution of thirteen top politicians. West African leaders prevented Samuel Doe or his representatives from attending the OAU economic summit in Lagos and the Ecowas summit meeting of May 1980 in Lome.[12] The immediate reply was the Liberian leader's refusal to implement the protocol of the free movement of people which had by then come into force. There followed later, the Charles Taylor rebellion and the disastrous civil war of 1989, into whose vortex most members of the community were drawn.

In an attempt to end the senseless civil war and help bring sanity to the region as a whole, an Ecowas Cease-fire Monitoring group (Ecomog) was formed by some community members. But tensions again developed within the region: Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso refused to be party to Ecomog. And Senegal preferred to contribute forces to the multinational force against Saddam Hussein during the Persian Gulf war rather than to a force designed to ensure stability in its own backyard, only entering the fray later, and then only for a short while. Thus did disunity, dithering and differing perspectives compound the Liberian crisis – and do so at the expense of Ecowas.

My argument and evidence now drives me to ask: is there any causal relationship between democratic governance and the attainment of the

objectives of Ecowas? To be sure, testing such an hypothesis is not easy. Nonetheless, it may be stated with some certainty that most of the disabling conflicts and instability in the sub-region that have subverted effective integration since the inception of Ecowas might be traced to the lack of democratic governance in most of the member countries. To my introductory examples I can now add the tensions between Ghana and Togo arising from accusations and counteraccusations of subversive activities in each other's country;[13] The Ghana-Nigeria differences in the early parts of the 1980s as a result of undemocratic regime changes; and the Tuareg uprisings in Mali and Niger.[14]

Can democracy enhance West African integration?

Democracy is a concept which has been extensively examined.[15] Nonetheless, it is still a misunderstood and misapplied term because both totalitarian regimes and military dictatorships tend to appropriate democratic labels in order to claim popular support.[16] Democracy, however, implies first and foremost, the existence of a government which is prepared to ensure the existence of approved mechanisms through which political contestation and participation by individuals are demonstrated. Consent and majority rule form the universally accepted basis of democratic rule. Consequently, legitimacy is closely related to democratic principles and procedures. At the risk of sounding simplistic, it is enough to state here that a government which operates with a constitution that limits its own powers and guarantees fundamental rights to all citizens, is democratic.

The important issue for this article, however, is the link between democratic governance and economic integration. Now, the democratization process in sub-Saharan Africa has been given impetus by, inter alia, the deeply felt belief – the demonstrated truth indeed – that democratization will ultimately lead to the freeing of state apparatus from either military or

one-party rule, the strengthening of civil society and its institutions, and the liberalization of the rules of economic and political competition.[17]

The introduction of democratic governance will not automatically guarantee that all the region's problems will be solved. But what we do say is that democratic governance will provide an enabling socio-political and economic climate that will not only facilitate development in the individual countries of the region but will help in attaining the goals of Ecowas. The leader of Sierra Leone, Captain Valentine Strasser, stated in clear terms at the 15th Ecowas Summit in Dakar that the laudable efforts at integration in the region would come to nought "in an atmosphere plagued with internal strife and regional instability".[18] Internal conflicts are bound to assume more serious dimensions in the face of non-democratic governance and an overall lack of transparency. Recent events in Togo's democratization process (which led to assassinations and attempted assassinations of the political opponents of Gnassingbe Eyadema) offer opportune lessons.

The point we should note here is that an adherence to a democratic system of governance will inevitably promote *political stability* which is the bedrock of development. I am not referring to the stability borne of fear, intimidation and deprivation of civil liberties prevalent in most countries in the sub-region. I mean the genuine stability brought about by the existence of legitimate and generally accepted modes of governance; and the mass sharing of common democratic values that engenders unalloyed loyalty. It is in fact the longevity of democratic governance that ensures certain loyalties that will help citizens counteract any threat to the established order. On this Martin Grondzins notes:

> In democracy, national loyalties are largely by-products of participation in voluntary groups. They do not emerge as a consequence of manipulation from above. They are not submissive. They are more studied, less emotional ...[19]

The tragedy of our sub-region is that democracy has yet to make meaningful advances comparable in some degree to what we see in Europe, Latin America, Asia and even the recently "liberated" Eastern European countries. The correlation between genuine democratic governance, stability and development cannot easily be faulted. For a democratic social system allows the development of individual entrepreneurial skills (among others) that help in the development process. Currently, 74% of the countries the World Bank classifies as "High Income Economies" are democracies. On the other hand, 71% of the world's poorest nations have authoritarian or totalitarian forms of government.[20]

At the 15th Ecowas Dakar summit 27–29 July 1992, Dr Abass Bundu, the executive secretary of Ecowas, rightly expressed his heartfelt gratification at the "peaceful and democratic changes in Mali and a democratic reaffirmation of the status quo in Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Mauritania and Burkina Faso".[21] His expressed hope that the entire region would have gone *fully and truly democratic* by the next summit is a veiled admission of the harm the lack of democratic governance in most countries is doing to our efforts at effective integration. Since that Ecowas summit, Ghana, CAR and Niger have all three democratized.

Genuine democratic governance might facilitate or enhance West African integration, then, for a number of reasons. First, as we have already established, democratic governance will greatly enhance stability and the development of the human and material resources which are invaluable in any integration effort. Secondly, the foreign and domestic investment in individual countries that will eventually be reflected in the wider community depends critically on political stability. Since instability scares investors, and the most potent cause of instability in the sub-region is the non-democratic nature of regimes, it could be hypothesized that democratic governance could enhance

productive investment. Thirdly, one of the principal aims of any form of economic integration is the pooling of regional resources for overall development. Let us now glance at the converse. In a situation of chronic instability brought about by a lack of democracy, the human and material resources which might be pooled and provide a solid basis for regional development are dissipated. Examples are not lacking.

The civil war in Liberia has tasked the scarce resources of members of the community who have contributed troops and material to Ecomog. Though statistical indicators are not readily available, one does not need to stretch the imagination to perceive the cost in both human and material terms. Had there not been such a catastrophe (one that also engulfed Sierra Leone), the region's dissipated resources could have been utilized in ways that could have benefited those countries which felt obliged to contribute troops to Ecomog.

The ill-defined war between Sierra Leone and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) forces of Charles Taylor is a further example of the painful repercussions of undemocratic governance, of the disastrous wastage of human and material resources that could have been utilized to promote the effectiveness of Ecowas.

With the prosecution of these civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, most activities crucial to integration suffered. Trade liberalization languished. Intra-Ecowas trade and other economic activities declined. The very movement of goods and people in certain parts of the sub-region were restricted. And the refugees right across the region put unanticipated budgetary strains on most of the countries.

The wastage in human resources I listed above merits investigation. The characteristics of undemocratic governments in our sub-region (vindictiveness, pure hatred of political opponents and critics, arbitrary detention, flagrant disregard of civil liberties, etc) have forestalled the effective development of the true bourgeois or

entrepreneurial class necessary for development. Ghana under Rawlings offers very good examples. The erstwhile PNDC to a large extent crippled private sector initiatives through what could be termed political witch hunts in the group of indigenous entrepreneurs. The establishment during the initial stages of the revolution of the Citizen Vetting Committees (CVC), later to become the Office of Revenue Commissioners (ORC), gravely infringed upon the civil liberties of the business class and anybody who had a fat bank account. Huge fines were imposed by these committees on different categories of people.

Proven entrepreneurs such as the late J K Siaw who originally owned the Tata Brewery Limited (renamed Achimota Brewery by the PNDC) were thus driven into exile. The work of the CVC or ORC was complemented by the Public Tribunals. Dr Kwame Safo-Adu, who owns the Industrial Chemical Laboratories (a drug manufacturing company) had his factory closed; and he himself was brought before the Public Tribunal on various charges including those of "economic crimes". His factory was closed for over a year until the case was decided in Dr Safo-Adu's favour. (The tribunal chairman, Mr Boakye-Danquah, had to flee in January 1992 after delivering his verdict. Boakye-Danquah's accusations levelled at the PNDC for their use of the tribunal system to settle political scores are very revealing.)[22] Mr B A Mensah who owned Rothmans Ghana Limited, a subsidiary of International Tobacco Limited, has had most of his assets confiscated for an alleged tax evasion. It is believed that, as an indigenous entrepreneur, he had been granted tax holidays by the government of the Supreme Military Council (SMC) of the late General Acheampong.

The true interests of the people and State of Ghana went by the board.[23] As Rhoda Howard put it, "societies that arbitrarily deprive the wealthy of their property without due recompense, either for socialist or for nationalist reasons, frequently de-develop themselves".[24] To return to

my theme, this affects regional integration because those with investment capabilities and the ability to create wealth are thrown on the scrapheap. Such policies also send wrong signals to potential foreign investors. "Political leadership", as Omotunde Johnson notes, "is a condition for entrepreneurship".[25] Conversely, where the entrepreneurial class is targeted by ruling politicians serious developmental issues emerge.

We come now to a concluding link in my argument – a link philosophical in its base yet with practical implications for the future of Ecowas. Unless a modern polity is firmly rooted in democratic values, decisions on *national and international* policies will carry little lasting weight. (See the recent history of Ghana.)[26] We can therefore take a bold step and state that citizen participation in the activities of Ecowas is crucial. In his introductory report to the 15th Ecowas Summit in Dakar in July 1992, General Yakubu Gowon, chairman of the Ecowas Committee of Eminent Persons charged with the task of making the necessary changes to the 1975 Ecowas treaty, suggested the establishment of an Ecowas parliament to "ensure the achievement of the objectives of the community" and the "participation of the masses in the integration efforts".[27] A similar suggestion was made by G K Bluwey at an IDRC seminar in Accra in April 1992.[28] Laudable as this may seem, we need to note that, since there is very little participation at national levels, any attempt at an Ecowas parliament will be stillborn. Citizen participation at national levels through constitutional and democratic means will be the bedrock for participation at regional level. It will also be difficult to an undemocratic regime to be favourably disposed to an integration effort involving enhanced democratic structures at regional level as the suggestion for an Ecowas parliament implies.

It is significant that Gowon and Eyadema of Togo were the main forces behind the formation of Ecowas. The need for tapping grass-root support for effective integration never arose, probably because, though the Treaty was modelled along the lines of the EC, the key players themselves had come to power undemocratically. Hence, the present structure of Ecowas lacks mechanisms that will facilitate interactions with grassroot social forces throughout the community. The views of S K B Asante are very relevant. He notes that:

> Ecowas' institutional structure is a brainchild of the elite, and there are no organs through which groups or the private sector (both business and labour) can bridge ... the elite-mass gap. Hence, the broad masses of West Africa are excluded from effective participation in the Ecowas integration process. This implies that the idea of West African economic integration has yet to be 'sold' to a reluctant and sceptical private sector and working population.[29]

The often asserted lack of political will of Ecowas leaders sometimes undoubtedly arises form the fact that they have no democratic mandate from the people they claim to represent. The Ecowas Eminent Persons noted that "the intensification of political cooperation among member states in the region and the maintenance of regional peace and stability are essential pre-requisites for economic progress and the harmonious development of West Africa".[30] At present, regrettably, cooperation is often undermined at the highest political level.[31] It is apposite to note at this point that the security consciousness exhibited by undemocratic regimes is always at the expense of development, extensive resources that could be usefully utilized for national development and the long-term benefit of the sub-region being unproductively dissipated.

Finally, democratic governance will eventually result in a greater measure of homogeneity within the region in terms of the economic and political goals that must be pursued to enhance integration. Economic policy decisions in each country are at present initiated, controlled and monitored by political elites. Gladius

Lewis is of the opinion that "the greater the complementarity of elite values (with regard to economic policies) between the various countries in the economic grouping the better the chances of success of that grouping".[32] With the phenomenal changes in the sub-region towards a more liberal economic dispensation with broadened scope for the private sector under IMF tutelage, and the complementary democratization process in most West African countries, it is hoped that we will see Lewis's "complementarity of elite values" which will help the process of integration.

Democratization, as noted also by Richard Sklar and Mark Strege, may further assist in the resolution of current civil strife.[33] Should this eventually become the general trend (as has happened in Mauritania, Mali and Niger), national leaders will be able to focus more attention on the economic problems of Ecowas. In this sense, too, democratization will facilitate effective integration. For sure, other variables such as probity, accountability and transparency (even under democratic regimes) need to be present to ensure the stability of democratic governance. Democracy per se will not automatically lead to effective integration. But the fact that genuine democracy leads to loyalties that foster stability constitutes a big step towards effective integration.

Conclusion

I have argued that adherence to a democratic mode of governance by countries in the sub-region will help in overcoming some of the identified constraints on meaningful integration. I do admit that the roads to democracy and effective integration are not lined with roses. This is due to the differentiation between our countries and the underlying ethnic, racial, religious and historical antagonisms subsumed in various sub-cultures within the community. Nevertheless, democratic governance will be a boost for regional abilities to solve their problems. The truth is that societies tend to cooperate better if

they share similar political and economic values. Thus the moment democracy becomes a common denominator in the countries of the region much progress might be made in our efforts at integration. Democratic states would in all probability have more closely designed views than states with fundamental disagreements or differences on systems of government.

I argued further that challenges to the legitimacy of regimes within nations (and by other nations in the community) arising from a lack of democracy tend to create internal tensions and instability, which in turn invariably reflect on the commitment of such states to Ecowas ideals. It must be reiterated that illegitimate and non-democratic regimes spend time, money and effort in legitimacy engineering both internally and externally.

Such a preoccupation will almost certainly be at the expense of the broader goals of regional integration because in these plans repression is almost always involved. Democracy must therefore be seen and used as a driving force for regional integration.

Given the problems and the ramifications of different forms of instability generally created by non-democratic regimes, we need to explore rather the links between democratic governance and integration. In the words of Anyang' Nyong'o, "there is a basic need of establishing viable political frameworks – based essentially on legitimate political systems – for there to be initiatives that lead, gradually or cumulatively, towards economic integration".[34] Be this as it may, such viable political frameworks must first be entrenched nationally before being projected at regional level, for the necessary basis of successful economic and social development, whether national or regional, is the free will of the individual citizen, exercised in democracy and solidly protected by the rule of law.

Notes and references

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2   For an elaborate discussion of these constraints, see Julius E Okolo, "Obstacles to increased intra-Ecowas trade", *International Journal*, vol XLIV, Winter, 1988–1989.

3   S K B Asante, *op cit*, p 103.

4   Julius E Okolo, *op cit*, p 185.

5   S K B Asante, *op cit*, pp 113–114.

6   Yaw Asante, "Research and the problems of economic integration within Ecowas", mimeo.

7   See Gladius Lewis, "How to make regional cooperation work in more than theory", *Herald* (Harare), 26 August 1982.

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9   Igezundia Abutudu, "Regime change, political instability and economic integration in West Africa: The experience of Ecowas", *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*, vol 16, no 1, 1990, pp 96–97.

10   See *West Africa*, 9 July 1979, p 1997; *West Africa*, 19 July 1981, p 99; for details of the interview, see *The talking drums*, 14 May 1984, pp 12–14.

11   See K Boafo-Arthur, "Ghana's external relations since December 31, 1981", in E Gyimah-Boadi (ed), *Ghana under PNDC 1981–1990*, Codesria Book Series, 1993.

12   See Izegundia Abutudu, *op cit*, pp 100–101 for further explication.

13   For detailed discussion on the relations between Ghana and its immediate neighbours, see K Boafo-Arthur, *op cit*.

14   In Mali, the Tuaregs plotted against the undemocratic one-party regime of General Mousa Traore. For full details, see Richard Sklar and Mark Strege, "Finding peace through democracy in Sahelian Africa", *Current History*, May 1992, pp 224–229.

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16   See *The Observer*, 22–28 January 1992.

17   Harry Goulbourne, "The state, development and the need for participatory democracy in Africa", in Peter Anyang' Nyong'o (ed), *Popular struggles for democracy in Africa*, 2nd ed, London: Zed, 1987, p 30; Fantu Cheru, *The silent revolution in Africa*, 2nd ed, London: Zed, 1989, p 143; Richard Sandbrook, "Economic crisis, structural adjustment, and the state in sub-Saharan Africa", in Dharam Ghai (ed), *The IMF and the South*, 2nd ed, London: Zed, 1991, pp 95–111; Yusuf Bangura, "Authoritarian rule and democracy in Africa: A theoretical discourse", in Peter Gibbon, Yusuf Bangura and Arve Ofsad (eds), *Authoritarianism, democracy and adjustment: The politics of economic reforms in Africa*, Uppsala: SIAS, 1992, p 16720.

18   *West Africa*, 10–16 August, 1992, p 1312.

19   Martin Grondzins, "The basis of national loyalty" in Romano Romani (ed), *International political systems*, New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc, 1972, p 114.

20   Graham T Allison Jr and Robert P Beschel Jr, "Can the United States promote democracy?", *Political Science Quarterly*, vol 107, no 1, 1992, p 84.

21   *West Africa*, 10–16 August 1992, p 1338.

22   According to Boakye-Danquah, there were interferences from the seat of government whenever there were cases involving political opponents. He gave examples of some of these farcical trials as those involving Mr Appiah Menkah, an industrialist, Dr Safo-Adu, Okutwer Bekoe, etc. See *The Ghanaian Chronicle*, vol 1, no 34, 5/11 May 1992.

23   See Daily Graphic, 17 August 1992; James C W Ahiakpor, "The success and failure of Dependency Theory: The experience of Ghana", *International Organization*, vol 39, no 3, 1985, provides penetrating analysis of some of the policies initially pursued by the PNDC which had the long term effect of crippling private initiative and elan. Cited in Michael Chege, "Remembering Africa", *Foreign Affairs*, vol 71, no 1, 1992, p 161.

24   Rhoda Howard, "Communitarianism and liberalism in the debates in Human Rights in Africa", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol 11, no 1, 1992, p 10.

25   See Omotunde E G Johnson, "Political leadership and the economic development process", *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, vol 28, no 20, 1989, p 213.

26   Jeff Haynes, "Human rights and democracy in Ghana: The Record of Rawlings' Regime, *African Affairs*, vol 90, 1991, p 410; *Ibid*, p 413.

27   *West Africa*, 10–16 August 1992, p 1341.

28   See G K Bluwey, "Research and the implementation of Ecowas protocols by Ghana", unpublished paper presented at IDRC conference on *Research priorities and integration within Ecowas*, Accra, 20–21 April 1992.

29   S K B Asante, *op cit*, p 106.

30   *West Africa*, 10/16 August, 1992, p 1341–1342.

31   The hostile reactions of many West African leaders to the coups of J J Rawlings in 1979 and 1981, and Samuel Doe's coup of 1980 are cases in point.

32   G Lewis, *op cit*, p 4.

33   Richard L Sklar and Mark Strege, *op cit*, pp 224–229.

34   Anyang' Nyong'o, "Regional Integration in Africa: An Unfinished Agenda" in Anyang' Nyong'o ed, *op cit*, p 8.

A battle lost in the frontline

Prof Mubanga E Kashoki, of the Institute for African Studies at the University of Zambia, argues for the implementation of a more appropriate language policy in Zambian schools.

The assumption underlying this article is that Zambia will very shortly have to address the vexed question of the place of African languages in national development at political, cultural, educational and economic levels. For, already, forces gathering momentum on the African continent are compelling African States (Zambia not excluded) to come to grips with the still unresolved question of the greater utilization of their indigenous languages as resources in the process of national development. Zambia's economic motto during the 1980s was "Growth from our own resources"; and, as language as a social phenomenon is perhaps humankind's most valuable resource, Zambia at some point in her national history is duty-bound to find a strategic role for its indigenous languages in the national scheme of things.

Have Zambia's languages in the past occupied and/or, are they likely in the future to occupy, a strategic place in the country's overall social and economic development?

What gives immediate impetus to these questions and concerns is the stand of the Organization of African Unity on these and related matters. I shall therefore take the sentiments of the OAU as both reference point and context in which to anchor this discussion.

The OAU, in providing a frame of reference for its member states as to the manner in which they should approach and handle the linguistic resources available within their borders, have produced three documents which are essential reading for any student of language on the African scene. These documents are the *OAU charter*[1] itself, the *Cultural charter*[2] for Africa, and, more recently, the *Language Plan of Action for Africa.*[3]

In one key, relevant provision, Article XXIX, the *OAU charter* states: "The working languages of the Organisation and all its institutions shall be, if possible, African languages, English and French." This provision refers only to the in-house operational functions of the Organization itself. It is the *Cultural charter for Africa* that seeks to relate language questions to the immediate, practical concerns of the people of Africa. Accordingly, it is relevant now to focus on the challenge posed by this charter.

The *Cultural charter's* preamble reminds member states that "European cultural domination led to the depersonalization in part of the African peoples, falsified their history, systematically disparaged and combated African values, and tried to replace, progressively and officially, their languages by that of the colonizer". Later, the preamble entreats member states to make it an important national political credo that "it is imperative to edify educational systems which embody the African values of

civilization so as to ensure the rooting of the youth in African culture and mobilize the social forces in the context of permanent education". Member states are further called upon to bear in mind that "it is imperative to resolutely ensure the promotion of African languages, the mainstay and the media of cultural heritage in its most authentic and essentially popular form".

In part III of the charter the first stated priority in the programme of action is "the transcription, teaching and development of national languages with a view to using them for the dissemination and the development of science and technology. As a means to this end, the charter suggests to member states that one method should be "the introduction and intensification of the teaching in African languages in order to accelerate the economic social, political and cultural development in our states".

Article 17 of the charter then sums it all up by saying:

> The African States recognise the imperative need to develop African languages which will ensure their cultural advancement and accelerate their economic and social development, and to this end will endeavour to formulate a national policy in regard to languages.

As expressed immediately above, and in the two other documents mentioned, it is these OAU sentiments that will now set the tone, style and substance of my subsequent remarks.

Silent guns in the frontline itself

Politicians, universally, have a taste for always keeping something up their sleeve, a disinclination to tell all to their electorates. And this most undemocratic trait can be marked in Zambia (as throughout Africa) – all the more extraordinary in that it here extends, ironically, to language itself, to the very medium and heart of communication. For the people of Zambia, in general, know nothing of these splendid OAU principles we are discussing here so calmly. This is where the battle may already be hanging in the balance.

When we as academics and as informed, interested parties presume to speak on behalf of the OAU, our comments are looked upon either as outright impediments on Africa's march to modernity or as merely promoting narrower mother-tongue interests dear to our parochial inclinations. And we are helpless in rebutting these erroneous charges because there is no government official to come to our aid and restore our credibility. As long as this unstated policy of reticence or judicious silence persists, the intentions, resolutions and policies of the OAU will continue to be shrouded in a cloak of mystery as far as national populations in Africa are concerned. There can be only one result: the battle of harnessing African languages for development may not just be delayed but may be for all time lost.

Retreat from the frontline of language policy

Language policy, like economic and other social policies in any well-defined and politically organized society, serves definite social purposes, sometimes stated explicitly but often articulated only implicitly. We know, for example, that during Zambia's colonial period, language policy was intended to serve colonial ends, which were explicit and implicit. With the advantage of hindsight, it is clear that colonial language policy had two strands: that which served the colonial power itself and that which served the interests of the missionaries of different Christian denominations.[4]

In Zambia the British saw their language policy as a means to efficiently effect overall British administrative policy; and Lord Lugard's famous "Indirect Rule" came to rest on the proposition that the most effective means of governing colonized peoples was to exploit to the greatest extent their hallowed traditions – of which language was the most sacred.

The Christian missionaries pursued a parallel language policy. Evidence may be found in the Bible's translation into tens and even hundreds of languages spoken in colonial territories. In this way it was confidently hoped that the word of God could more easily penetrate the heart of the African recently rescued from worshipping what, through foreign lenses, were perceived as pagan gods in the company of the ancestral spirits.

In no other field was this policy better exemplified than in that of formal education. As early as 1925 the British Government's blueprint demonstrated an unmistakeable insistence on the principle that indigenous languages (or vernaculars to use the more common term of the time) should assume primary importance in the educational policy of colonial territories. Subsequently, in 1927, British Government language policy addressed the practical problems of implementation that had in the meantime come to the surface. Anchored in this policy, as far back as 1927, Bemba, Lozi, Nyanja and Tonga came to acquire a pre-eminent place in the schools of Zambia (Northern Rhodesia, at that time). In parallel, it was felt normal and right to have frequent resort to the interpreter as intermediary at many levels.

By the time the Institute of African Languages and Cultures (now simply known as the International African Institute) came on the scene in 1930, the central place of African languages in British colonies was well entrenched. The special significance of the International African Institute was the historical role it played in re-emphazing the educational principle that in modern education "a child should receive instruction in and through his mother tongue, and this privilege should not be withheld from the African child". The African language had thus gained a new alley.

This basic principle received further philosophical force with the subsequent foundation of the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization (Unesco) shortly after World War II. Its report, *The use of vernacular languages in education*, published in 1953,[5] left no doubt that the new international organization was a strong champion of the cause of

the mother tongue insofar as the imparting of formal education was concerned. As Unesco saw it, "pupils should begin their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue".[6]

The retreat from this frontline standpoint was sounded in 1961 by a Commonwealth conference held at Makerere University, Uganda. At this conference, in a significant reversal of earlier stands on the place of African languages in education, the view was posited that wherever English functioned as a second language, the child should be exposed to it as early as possible. Oral work was to be the first building block. The perniciousness of this viewpoint would not have had such a disastrous effect on the future of African languages in education in Zambia if it had not also been argued that, if the language of instruction in the higher grades of the country's education system was to be firmly grasped by the pupil, such a language should be introduced as early as possible *as a medium of instruction* instead of its merely being taught as *a subject* in the lower grades. In Zambia this argument foretold all that was to come.

As Peter L Higgs[7] observes,

The British Government soon realised, as did other colonial powers, that by encouraging the use of the language of the metropolitan country in the colonies, a certain degree of political and economic influence could be maintained even after independence.

It is therefore far from astonishing that English teaching programmes and British teachers of English increased significantly soon after ex-British colonies gained their independence. And Zambia, it was largely on recommendations emanating from the British Council that English was introduced as a medium of instruction throughout the entire span of school life.

What has been the effect of all this on subsequent language policy in Zambia?

By the time Zambia gained political independence in October 1964, the African ruling class that now replaced the colonial power was well disposed to the greater use of English in education at the expense of Zambian indigenous languages. It is in this light and context that the *Education Act of 1966* has to be viewed. No longer were indigenous Zambian languages to be used as the medium of instruction for at least the first five years of primary education: English was now to be the sole medium of instruction from the first year of formal education. More nails were hammered into the coffin of the earlier policy in 1977 when the Zambian Government in its *Educational Reform*[8] document stated that

the present policy, whereby English is a medium of instruction from Grade 1 should continue, but if a teacher finds that there are concepts which cannot be easily understood, he may explain those concepts in one of the seven official Zambian languages, provided the majority of the pupils in that class understand the language.

In spite of the token concession, the 1966 and 1977 documents exerted in general an unfavourable influence at all levels of Zambian society. How, we will now see.

Illiterate frontline soldiers

The most immediate and obvious result of the changes in language policy has been the considerable extent to which a single language – English – has been promoted as a lingua franca or a language of nation-wide communication in the span of some 25 years, thus making it possible for more people in the country to communicate across linguistic barriers.

We must at this point bear in mind that the policy of employing English as a medium of instruction right from the first year of formal education was applied nation-wide for the first time in 1969. Thus the first cohort of Grade 12 secondary school pupils as beneficiaries of this policy emerged in 1980. There have been more than ten such cohorts since that date. This does not take into account those pupils who made their exit from the school system during the same period after only seven, eight or nine years of formal education. This in itself suggests that, even without the benefit of a systematic study of the prevailing sociolinguistic scene in Zambia in recent years, those in command of at least a smattering of the English language must now be numbered in hundreds of thousands.

What is more certain is that the sociolinguistic situation cannot but have been affected to an appreciable degree by these developments. It seems fair to assert that the fact that Zambia's English daily newspapers are voraciously snapped up every morning, causing constant shortages, particularly in the urban areas, can be attributed at least in part to an increase in the number of people in the national population now literate in English.

This assumed increased communicative competence in English among the Zambian population during the county's now more than 25 years of independence leads us to a number of related deductions. Firstly, the existence of a common language in a community is generally accepted to be a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for promoting enhanced social and political unity. Would we then be justified in claiming that a measure of reasonable political unity has been achieved in Zambia? (We are assuming, of course, that communication establishes and promotes understanding.)

Secondly, its being axiomatic that one of the primary aims of a national language policy is to enable the national population to participate effectively in the conduct of national affairs, may we claim that there are more Zambians at present taking part in the affairs of the nation? This is, of course, not the same thing as saying that, from more Zambians possessing the ability to use English, it necessarily follows that the majority of the national population are today actually participating in national affairs. It is merely to call attention to the point that, in circumstances in which a single language has been accorded official prominence, it makes political sense to induce as large a proportion

of the country's population as possible to acquire the ability to use it in the interest of promoting greater participation in public affairs. It is in this restricted, special sense that it is being suggested that, if more Zambians today are able to speak and use English for various social purposes, *only in that context* can it be claimed that Zambia has derived social and political gains since independence from the use of English as the sole medium of instruction in the national education system.

Thirdly, a knowledge of English as the foremost language of world communication, science and technology has of course put many Zambians in touch with the outside world and with the international community of the popular arts, scholarship, science and technology. And this result of a more wide-spread competence in the use of English is sufficient evidence to tempt one to believe that to that extent more Zambians than before have become citizens of the world.

There is a fourth item among these assumed gains. It was argued at the time of its introduction that the employment of English as a medium of instruction in the lower grades of the education system would automatically lead to a firmer grasp of academic subjects in the higher grades. Insofar as a more solid foundation in English acquired at lower grades is a good preparation for a more effective manipulation of the language at higher grades, to that extent (only) can it be assumed that Zambia's language policy is bound to have had certain positive consequences for the learning process.

However, for this assumption to be supported by facts, empirical studies are required. And here we know that doubts about the effectiveness of the new policy were sounded as early as the 1970s, when in 1973, in an evaluative report titled *The reading skills of grade three children*[9] issued by the Psychological Services of the Ministry of Education, the conclusions pointed to certain negative effects which English as the medium of instruction

was imposing on children's reading habits in the lower grades.

In 1975, a second report prepared by the Evaluation Committee of the Ministry of Education entitled *The impact of English medium on children's learning*[10] further pointed to the fact that the introduction of English as a medium of instruction even at the lowest levels had not achieved some of the major objectives it had set out to achieve. Even as late as the early 1980s, similar doubts continued to be expressed, as is evidenced by the report issued in 1984 by the Ministry of Higher Education entitled *First steps in reading: In English or in a Zambian language?*[11] It is thus abundantly clear that the issue is far from settled.

It is not possible to discuss here all the negative consequences the present language policy has had for Zambian society. Let us look at just one of many.

It is common when reflecting upon the colonial period to condemn the colonial power wholesale for countless unforgivable sins of commission. Nowhere is the diatribe against the erring colonialist more damning than when he is being indicted for having undermined the cultural foundations or fibre of the African peoples and especially for having denigrated the very soul of Africa's cultures. Scant heed is paid to the other side of the coin, particularly in the matter of the welfare of indigenous African languages. A more objective assessment of colonial history will reveal, contrary to the beliefs current among political elites in independent Africa, that the colonial government in the British Empire, together with the missionaries, did more for indigenous African languages than anything nationalist governments have done since the attainment of independence.

In a fair number of the countries that gained independence from Britain, all that the nationalist governments have done is to turn their back on their indigenous languages – or at best accord them only demagogic lip-service. Indeed it is not unfair to assert that all the Zambian Government has

done since independence in 1964 as far as the promotion of the welfare of indigenous Zambian languages is concerned is to produce illiterate frontline soldiers from among the national population.

The British colonial policy of providing for the use of officially-approved Zambian languages as media of instruction for at least the first five years of the child's primary school education ensured a propitious socio-linguistic environment in which the Zambian school-going child could grasp the fundamentals of spelling, mathematics, health, civics, science, religious education and other subjects either in his own mother tongue or in a language with a close affinity to his mother tongue, one arising from his cultural background and one in which he could communicate with reasonable competence and ease. The language policy adopted in 1965 in Zambia served at once to deny the Zambian child this learning environment, providing indeed a social recipe for rendering the child an illiterate frontline soldier in the cause of his own language, particularly in its written form. Cultural alienation follows. The child can no longer be expected to care for, respect or creatively use the language of his own mother and father.

Alongside the prescription of English as the sole medium of instruction, language policy in Zambia provides for the teaching of seven Zambian languages, Bemba, Kaonde, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja and Tonga, at all levels of the education system depending on the availability of the necessary resources. A nation-wide survey selectively conducted in the early 1970s by Sirarpi Ohannessian[12] revealed that in general terms Zambian languages were taught in primary schools either lukewarmly, very badly or not at all. For a variety of reasons it cannot be supposed that Zambian languages are faring better than they were doing in the early 1970s. It seems more probable that either the overall situation has not improved or that at the very least it has stagnated or even worsened.

What can be predicted is a general decline in the degree of literacy among the Zambian population in their own languages. Something of the sort can already be seen as my subsequent remarks now seek to show.

In cooperation with the Zambia Information Services, the former Kenneth Kaunda Foundation (publishing and printing division), the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation, the Research Bureau of the United National Independence Party and the Department of Literature and Languages of the University of Zambia, Bwendo Mulengela undertook towards the close of the 1980s an ambitious project, that of documenting the genius of the Zambian people as reflected in literary works in Zambian languages from 1900–1974.[13]

Entitled *Our Great Heritage: Zambian Literature from 1900–1974*, the ultimate aim of the project was to capture on film the literary accomplishments of the Zambian people in their indigenous languages.

It is evident from a mere outline of this project[14] that, compared to the colonial period which shows a remarkable, sustained commitment to the promotion of literature in African languages – a period which may be truly regarded as the Golden Age in the emergence of an indigenous literature in Zambia – the period after independence can rightly be described as the Dark Ages. The situation inescapably reduces itself to one single proposition: as old literary practitioners in Zambian languages retreat from the frontline by turning their backs on the art of writing in Zambian languages, no new recruits are being conscripted by Zambian society in their place. In a few years to come we can predict that the outposts on the Zambian languages frontline will have become deserted, desolate places with no single person to occupy them.

Bwendo Mulengela divides the literary colonial tradition in Zambia into three periods. He designates a long period before and after the two World Wars (including the early 1960s) as the age of the renaissance of

Zambian literature in indigenous languages comparable to the Middle Ages in Europe; the period immediately after 1945 shows in particular a remarkable surge in the translation into Zambian languages of classics such as *Gulliver's Travels, Sinbad the Sailor, Pilgrim's Progress* and of course the *Bible*. Mulengela then proceeds to sub-divide this long historical stretch into two parts, regarding the period between 1900 and 1945 as the age of the newspaper, and that immediately following World War II and extending a few years beyond the attainment of independence as the age of the book in Zambian languages. The period preceding World War II, for example, saw the birth and subsequent predominance of such well-known newspapers as *Mutende* which provided Zambians at the time with an avenue through which they could successfully expose their literary talents either as literary critics, story-tellers, poets or translators. As Mulengela[15] puts it: "During this period, and later, the newspaper played the role of publisher of prose, poetry and drama", adding that "there was considerable space provided in the newspaper for literary criticism". We are further informed, from Mulengela's preliminary survey, "that there were over thirty newspapers [established over this period] some of which were monthlies, weeklies and dailies".[16]

It would, however, be wrong to associate this period entirely or only with newspapers. There is ample evidence to show that, as a result of the great interest demonstrated by the missionary, the philologist and the amateur linguist in recording and preserving the linguistic wealth embodied in African languages, this was also a period characterized by a remarkable emergence of dictionaries and the earliest grammars of the Zambian languages.

What is most striking is that no single dictionary comparable in scholarship and renown to those of the colonial period have been compiled since Zambian independence. Indeed, in general terms, nothing has been

done in the literary field to equal, surpass, or even equal the colonial record. This gives the lie, at least insofar as literary works are concerned, to the claim that the colonial period undermined Africa's cultures in all their facets. It is the period after independence that is devoid of any practical demonstration of devotion or commitment to the advancement of African languages.

The colonial period in Zambia after 1945 is even more glorious in its practical advocacy of the welfare of African languages. It is a period that can be truly regarded as the era of the novel and the compilation of African traditions (eg the riddle, the proverb, the fable and initiation ceremonies) in popular books. It is a period when the Northern Rhodesia Publications Bureau held sway and became a household name in literary circles as a result of the relatively large output of publications that flooded the Zambian market under its auspices.

Nothing done in all the years following independence by its successor, the National Education Company of Zambia (now the publishing and printing division of the Zambia Educational Publishing House), however commendable, can equal the sheer quality and quantity of the literature produced in the 1950s. On the contrary, we see a notable retreat from the frontline since independence.

Conclusion
Sitting on the fence – right on the frontline

It is plain that the most notable battle lost on Zambia's frontline has been its failure to summon the national will and political resolution necessary to induce its national population to confront head-on the complex language issues facing the nation and provide the environment in which a comprehensive language policy can be drawn up – one appropriately attuned to the country's long-term national and international interests.

Three major factors, among many others, may be put forward as accounting in the main for Zambia's

sitting on the fence on this frontline language issue.

One: there are the highly sensitive, emotive and complex issues involved in the equation, and the staggering multiplicity of languages in the country, requiring consummate political astuteness to arrive at optimum decisions in terms of greatest benefits to the nation.

Two: generally speaking, language policy formulation in multilingual countries is mistakenly understood to be a simple matter of selecting and prescribing one language as the national language, the majority mistakenly believing, whatever the outcome, that language policies are a mechanism for favouring one language at the expense of others. As I had occasion to point out at another forum, the truer perspective is that language policy formulation in its proper and comprehensive sense means making choices among a variety of competing options as regards the best use of all the linguistic resources available in the country – indigenous as well as foreign – to meet as wide a range of the country's communication needs as possible.

Three: a fair number of Zambian nationals are already favourably disposed to the continuation of English as the principal official language of the country and see little sense in making a change. There is no doubt that any future move designed to deal with language policy in a comprehensive manner will first have to confront the entrenched status of English in Zambian society.

Nevertheless, the nettle must be grasped – at promptings from several quarters: the articulation of the national economic motto that there should be "growth from our own national resources" for true development to take place; the principle that an appropriate language policy should lead to the enhancement of popular participation in national affairs; the challenge posed by the OAU *Language Plan of Action for Africa.*

The OAU challenge is simple and straightforward. It asks Zambia to do five things in the immediate future:

(a) to remember that "the adoption of and practical promotion of African languages as the official languages of the state is dependent primarily and as a matter of absolute imperative on the political will and determination of each sovereign state";

(b) to also bear in mind "the imperative need for each OAU Member State to consider it necessary and primary that it formulate with the minimum of delay a language policy that places an indigenous African language or languages spoken and in active use by its people at the centre of its socio-economic development;

(c) to attain this objective by recognizing "the need by each Member State to establish a national language council, where none exists, or to strengthen it, where one already exists, as a national sounding board for the formulation of an appropriate national language policy";

(d) "to ensure that African languages by appropriate legal provision and practical promotion assume their rightful role as the means of official communication in the public affairs of each Member State in replacement of European languages which have hitherto played this role";

(e) "to encourage the increased use of African languages as vehicles of instruction at all educational levels".

The call to arms on the frontline is loud and unmistakeable; it is hard to see how Zambia in the years to come can fail to heed it. This is one chal-lenge the frontline states cannot continue to evade. Sooner or later a pitched battle is bound to ensue. On the frontline, this as what all the signs portend.

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7 Quoted in Peter L Higgs, "The introduction of English as a medium of instruction in Zambian schools", *Zambia Education Review,* vol 2, no 2, 1980, pp 21–31.

8 Republic of Zambia (Government of), *Educational reform,* Lusaka: The Government Printer 1977.

9 Republic of Zambia (Government of), *Reading skills of grade three children,* Lusaka: Ministry of Education, 1973.

10 Republic of Zambia (Government of), *The impact of English medium on children's learning,* Lusaka: Ministry of Education, 1975.

11 Republic of Zambia, *First steps in reading: In English or in a Zambian language?* Lusaka: Ministry of Higher Education, 1984.

12 Sirarpi Obannessian and Mubanga E Kashoki, *Language in Zambia,* London: International Institute, 1978.

13 Bwendo Mulengela, "An age of Renaissance: Aspects in Zambian literature from 1900–1974", paper presented at a linguistics and literary seminar held under the auspices of the Department of Literature and Languages, University of Zambia in 1989.

14 *Ibid.*

15 *Ibid.*

16 *Ibid.*

Book Review:

**The New South Africa.
Business prospects and
corporate strategies**
*by Tony Hawkins. London: The
Economist Intelligence Unit,
1994, 136 pp.
ISBN 0 85058 801 4*

**Perspektiven der
wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung
Südafrikas. Chancen und
Risiken für deutsche und
europäische Unternehemen**
*(Perspectives on South Africa's
economic development. Oppor-
tunities and risks for German
and European firms) by Karl
Wolfgang Menck and Bernd
Schnatz. Baden-Baden: Nomos
Verlagsgesellschaft, 1994, 216
pp (Publications of the HWWA-
Institute for Economic
Research, Hamburg, No 9).
ISBN 3-7890-3458-4*
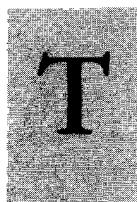
These are two of numerous commissioned studies meant to assist overseas business, governments and international organizations to understand what is happening in post-apartheid South Africa and to formulate policies to match the new situation in that country and Southern Africa as a whole.

Hawkins' EIU study is essentially addressed to business (and at £245 is priced accordingly). The HWWA publication was commissioned by the German Ministry for Economic Affairs, and while also aimed at business, it appears to be at least as much designed to help the Federal government fashion its development support to the "new" RSA.

The fundamental issue around which these (and similar) studies revolve, has been formulated in a World Bank paper as, "How can South Africa move on to a much faster growth path in which the poorer majority of its citizens gain the most?"; failing which, rising social tensions may set off a vicious circle of economic decline and mounting political instability.

Chapter 1 of the EIU study examines South Africa's strengths and weaknesses and assesses its potential. (This outline closely follows the Summary in the publication). Chapter 2 looks at the political dimension – the need to trade off economic against

socio-political efficiency. Chapter 3 deals with development policies and asks whether SA can emulate the East Asian tigers. Chapter 4 assesses business strategies against the background of the globalization of business.

Chapter 5 focuses on industrial strategy, arguing that after decades of inward-looking industrial development, SA is poised to seek growth opportunities in globally competitive businesses serving international markets. According to Hawkins, the face of the economy will be changed in the 21st century by the beneficiation of minerals, processing of foodstuffs and beverages, globally integrated production techniques, and an increased emphasis on services, especially tourism and finance.

Chapter 6 investigates the new SA's role in the continent, suggesting that it will be the locomotive not just of Southern Africa but as far north as Kenya and Nigeria. SA is expected to become the logical location for any mainstream manufacturing activities, possibly on the basis of subcontracting arrangements with smaller, low-cost labour economies, particularly in Southern Africa. "It will be the gateway to the continent; its financial and capital markets, and transport and energy systems will play a crucial role in the development of sub-Saharan Africa" (pp v–vi).

Chapter 7 assesses corporate strategies, and identifies the three broad fields where initial oppor-

tunities will arise: production for the domestic market; value-adding activities for export, including services – notably tourism; and globalization. Chapter 8 uses case studies to demonstrate how different South African and international companies are managing change.

Chapter 1 of the HWWA study describes SA's external economy, starting with the scope and impact of sanctions, and then deals with trade, investment, technology transfer, services, and economic relations between SA and the Federal Republic of Germany as well as the European Union.

Chapter 2 covers basic political and economic conditions in SA, providing a fair (and not really necessary) amount of detail concerning the apartheid policy, political change from 1984 to early 1994, political parties and Codesa. It also discusses the ANC's economic policy and, rather briefly, the presumptive effect of South African reform on the region. Chapter 3 describes the domestic economy, including the social and physical infrastructures. It concludes that the government cannot hope to create a liberal and democratic society overnight, and that disappointed expectations may result in growing support for extremist parties.

Chapter 4 outlines the policies needed to stabilize the country and stimulate economic growth: While laying stress on education and health as means to improve the quality of "human capital", the authors acknowledge that the state can cater only to basic services and that private initiative has to provide the more advanced services. They warn against the "illusion" that greater fiscal and administrative efficiency can appreciably raise state revenue. They do not see much prospect for a "peace dividend" either but believe that the state could finance an "appreciable share" of future budgets with foreign loans. Advocating outward-looking

industrial policies, they are sceptical about the benefits of regional market integration in Southern Africa.

Chapter 5 considers the commercial opportunities for German firms arising from the changed situation in SA, and how the FRG and the EU could improve economic relations with SA. A good deal is made of SA's role as a service centre as well as a launch-pad into the region and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. In view of "mighty lobbies" in the EU, the authors are not hopeful about improved SA access to the European market. They suggest that the FRG should assist SA in respect of education and technical training, and with advice on economic policy and regional cooperation.

Like the EIU study, the HWWA publication contains many interesting statistical tables and international comparisons.

South Africans reasonably *au fait* with their country's economic and political life, are unlikely to gain many new or original insights from the HWWA study, but at the same time they will have little cause to quarrel with its presentation and interpretation of the situation either. Although newcomers to the South African scene, the authors have accessed and competently used the relevant local sources of information. Even so, readers unfamiliar with SA may not come away with a reasonably coherent mental picture of a dynamic, future-oriented society which, notwithstanding potentially explosive problems, has a way of confounding confident predictions about its destinies.

In fairness to the authors, it must be stressed that their study was conducted during the run-up to the fateful April 1994 election when few outside observers foresaw a peaceful transition to a new order. Such sentiments, however, do not visibly colour the study's proposals for future FRG-SA commercial relations and for FRG development assistance. These

proposals (in chapter 5) are constructive and deserve to be taken note of.

The EIU study was completed shortly after the April '94 election, and its tenor hence is understandably more upbeat than that of the HWWA publication. As a long-standing, internationally acknowledged observer of South African and other African economies and related issues, Hawkins is thoroughly aware of the nature of the problems facing this country. Amongst others, he writes that it is "just possible that the country could degenerate into another Lebanon, Bosnia or Algeria" (p 1). He is, nevertheless, "broadly optimistic".

Noting major positive factors such as SA's resource base, its infrastructure, its sophisticated services sector, its proven capacity to expand exports in the face of tough economic sanctions, and its potential as a gateway to the laggard economies of sub-Saharan Africa, he states:

The case for optimism is that South Africa is too big a player, too important a market and has far too much potential to be allowed to slip into economic and political chaos. The rest of the decade will show whether the economic upside will triumph over the political downside. The balance of probabilities favours the emergence of a strong economy that will become an engine of growth for sub-Saharan Africa (p 19).

Elsewhere he writes:

Few, if any, multinationals can afford to ignore a $112bn market, especially one which could act as a gateway to the rest of the sub-Saharan market, which is worth another $120bn or more (p5).

The interest of the publication is enhanced by the case studies in chapter 8 as well as many others throughout the text, most of them illustrating the policies and practices of well-known SA firms.

Erich Leistner
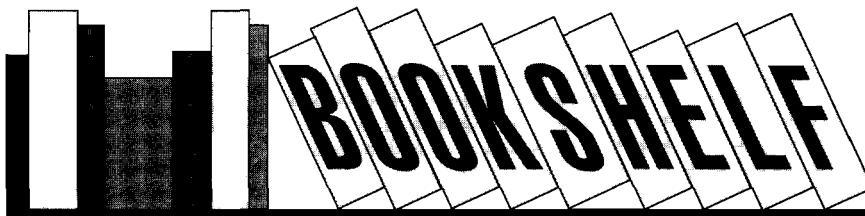
At risk: Natural hazards, people's vulnerability, and disasters by Piers Blaikie, Terry Cannon, Ian Davis and Ben Wisner. London and New York: Routledge, 1994, 284 pp. ISBN 0-415-08477-6.

Disasters continue on a massive scale. Prediction, preparation, relief and reconstruction have improved but the social causes of disasters remain largely unaddressed.

At risk reasserts the significance of the human factor in disasters. Establishing that the social, political and economic environment is as much a cause of disasters as the natural environment, the book argues that disaster mitigation is rooted in the potential humans have to understand their vulnerability and to take common action.

Analytical concepts are applied to the "hazards that become disasters": famines and drought, biological hazards, floods, coastal storms, and earthquakes, volcanoes and landslides.

At risk draws some practical and some policy conclusions with a view to disaster reduction and the promotion of a safer environment.

Green development: Environment and sustainability in the third world by W M Adams. London and New York: Routledge, 1993, 257 pp. ISBN 0-415-08050-9

The late-1980s saw an astonishing growth in apparently "green" ideas in the development field. *Green development* analyses the evolution of the concept of "sustainable development" and assesses how it is applied in the real world. The book tackles the heart of the debate by bridging the gulf between environmental and development studies. It argues that the "greenness" of development planning is not to be found in a simple concern for the environment, but in a new understanding of the politics of the development process and the power of the poor to control and determine the future of their own environment.

Population and development: Old debates, new conclusions by Robert Cassen and contributors. US-Third World Policy Perspectives no 19. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994, 282 pp. ISBN 1-56000-740-0

This volume presents the latest thinking concerning the effect of population growth on economic development and other areas of global concern, such as poverty, health, human resource development and the environment. The authors address the complex issues that currently face both developed- and developing-country governments in the area of population: the relationship between population and economic growth; the relations of family planning and fertility reduction to women's reproductive health and women's rights; population growth consequences, at family and societal level, for investments in human resource development; the impact of population growth on local ecosystems; and the rationale for population assistance programmes.

African perspectives on development edited by Ulf Himmelstrand, Kabiru Kinyanjui and Edward Mburugu. London: James Currey Ltd, 1994, 342 pp. ISBN 0-312-12087-7

This book presents 23 views, almost all from within Africa itself. Contributions are from established thinkers such as Samir Amin, Peter P Ekeh, Göran Hydén and, Mahmood Mamdani. The contributions provide theoretical perspectives on the crisis of development theories and address issues such as: the effect of population on development; rural development, industrialization and the effect of the IMF; and women in politics and in agriculture.

A governance approach to civil service reform in sub-Saharan Africa by Mamadou Dia. World Bank Technical Paper no 225. Washington DC: The World Bank, 1993, 50 pp. ISBN 0-8213-2630-9

The author argues the case for a governance approach to civil service reform in sub-Saharan Africa and examines ways in which this can be implemented. He also reviews past World Bank support to civil service reform, highlighting the limitations of the focus on short-term cost-containment, stabilization measures that emphasize reduction and control of civil service staff strength and the burden of the wage bill on the budget. He stresses the very small budgetary savings recorded in almost every case and the virtual neglect of the issues of efficiency and effectiveness.

Civil society and the state in Africa edited by John W Harbeson, Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 1994, 312 pp. ISBN 1-55587-360-X

This book examines the potential value of the concept of civil society for enhancing the current understanding of state-society relations in Africa. The authors review the meanings of civil society in political philosophy, as well as alternative theoretical approaches to employing the concept in African settings. Considering both the patterns of emerging civil society in Africa and issues relating to its further development, they give particular emphasis to the cases of Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire.

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