DON'T SQUANDER OR MISUSE MANDELA'S LEGACY

By Raenette Taljaard

Nelson Mandela's 90th birthday is both a poignant moment in history and a time to reflect on current political trends in South Africa

We celebrate Mandela's crowning achievements, but simultaneously have to ask ourselves as a country what we intend to do with his legacy. Mandela himself in recent months has asked tough questions of the new leadership group and, in the wake of the spate of violent attacks on foreigners and South Africans alike, called for a renewed commitment to unity on Youth Day.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation has also in recent weeks made key statements about actions that violate either democracy, freedom or human rights. Theirs is a crucial voice that aims to link the values of Mandela to our ongoing journey towards a consolidated democracy in South Africa, now in its 14th year. When senior political leaders, and judges, through their words and deeds, rip the South Africans Constitution to shreds and intimidate the bench, we are not honouring the legacy of Nelson Mandela. When we look the other way as our neighbours and friends in Zimbabwe are being tortured and maimed for changing their political allegiance from the former liberation movement to a new political force, and we do not, as a bare minimum, strongly condemn the violation of democracy, we betray the very essence of his struggle for freedom. When we have South Africans killing not only fellow South Africans, but foreigners who have fled the desperate situation in their own countries, we denigrate the very essence of one man's long walk to freedom, and what it represents to our entire global village.

It is incumbent on the leaders of all political parties in South Africa and the rest of us, not to render a squandered legacy to Madiba on his 90th birthday and beyond. It is our duty to demand values-based leadership with as certain a true north as Madiba's – freedom and a better life for all. It is our duty to demand sound ethics of our political representatives, and to restore an awareness that public life means public duty, not opportunity for personal aggrandisement and the pursuit of wealth through public office. It is our duty as a nation to remind ourselves that Madiba's long walk towards a rights-based dispensation was a walk in the knowledge that we have a responsibility towards others and that a balance of rights and obligations should be the cornerstone of our society.

Nelson Mandela's legacy of a values-driven life of valour and principle shines forth on his 90th birthday. But the world will rightly ask of a South Africa dogged by questions about its core values whether it chose to cherish or squander such a unique inheritance. We must not only give Nelson Mandela a gracious celebration for one day. We owe him much, much more that that. We must show, in our values, words and choices as a country, that we have secured a democratic future for those South Africans yet to be born into a country in which lived a great global icon of the 21st century.

HELEN SUZMAN -

Helen Suzman is the Patron in Chief of the Helen Suzman Foundation. She was an anti-apartheid activist and member of parliament for the Progressive Party.

MICHAEL CARDO -

Michael Cardo is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Helen Suzman Foundation. He is currently writing a biography of former Liberal Party National Chairman Peter Brown.

BALEKA MBETE -

Baleka Mbete is the Speaker of Parliament.

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Raymond Louw is Editor and Publisher of the weekly current affairs newsletter *Southern Africa Report*, African representative of the World Press Freedom Committee and member of media freedom organisations in South Africa.

JOHN KANE-BERMAN -

John Kane-Berman is the Chief Executive Officer of the South African Institute of Race Relations, and is the Editor-in Chief of the annual South African Survey.

ARTHUR GO MUTAMBARA -

Arthur GO Mutambara is the leader of the breakaway faction of Zimbabwean Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

TITO MBOWENI -

Tito Mboweni is the Governor of the South African Reserve Bank.

PATRICIA DE LILLE -

Patricia de Lille is the leader of the Independent Democrats.

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FOCUS

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The Helen Suzman Foundation would like to thank the Nelson Mandela Foundation for making these images of Nelson Mandela's hands available. The Nelson Mandela Foundation has used the images of Nelson Mandela's hands as part of its efforts to brand a living legacy and dialogue focus for the NMF in 2007.

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Tracing Political Trends

Focus

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50 issues of focus

FOCUS celebrates is 50th edition as former President Nelson Mandela turns 90. The HSF's quarterly political journal was born in the forth quarter of 1995 during the birth-pangs of our new post-1994 democracy. A look back at the 50 editions reveals clearly how important events have been traced, issue by issue. These include the gestation of the crisis in Zimbabwe, the growing pains of democracy, changes in opposition politics, the challenges of fighting corruption, especially the arms deal, the difficulties of service delivery, and the bruising succession battle of 2007. Join us as we look back at the past – and then move forward to continue the debate about our constitutional liberal democratic order.

FOCUS 1

FOCUS' humble origin was in the form of a 12-page newsletter. The first edition contained only three articles primarily dealing with the then-NGO sector itself. Former HSF Director Prof. Bill Johnson was interviewed on voting labour and then liberal.

FOCUS 3

New colors are sported as the HSF brand takes shape. Already South Africa's foreign policy anchors of national interest and human rights are probed. Questions about the state of the Zimbabwean economy foreshadow a more serious crisis to come.

FOCUS 5

FOCUS is still in newsletter form and slightly bulkier. As the new democracy starts creating a new legislative dispensations and institutional change attention is devoted to education. The South African Schools Act and university transformation are analysed.

1

Focus 1 • December 1995

Focus 2 • February 1996

3

Focus 3 • June 1996

Focus 4 • October 1996

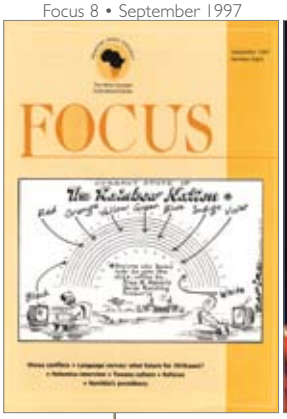
5

Focus 5 • December 1996

Focus 6 • February 1997

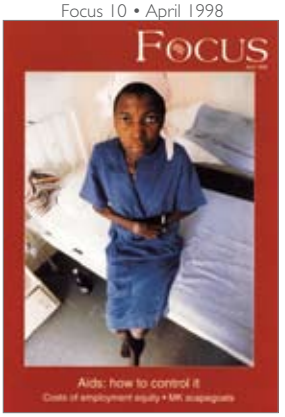
Focus 7 • May 1997

Focus 8 • September 1997



Focus 9 • January 1998

Focus 10 • April 1998



7

FOCUS 7

The first of a number of format changes and redesigns. FOCUS starts to look more like a fully fledged magazine. Two years before South Africa's second democratic elections questions of political fragmentation and the responses of the ANC and opposition parties to these complex realities are canvassed.

8

FOCUS 8

The eighth edition of FOCUS asks South Africans what lay at the rainbow nation's end and whether it was always too good to be true. Difficult questions of ethnic mobilisation are provocatively posed.

9

FOCUS 9

Feisty then-PAC politician, and HSF Board member, Patricia de Lille graces a new-look cover of a new-look FOCUS. Her courageous role in her party receives attention. The ANC's 1997 Mafikeng Conference is analysed and questions about whether the ANC wants revolution or reconciliation are posed.

FOCUS 11

This edition, during the run-up to the 1999 elections, suggests that South Africa needs a strong opposition and interviews new DP leader Tony Leon. The tension between dominant party rule and democracy is explored.

11

FOCUS 13

Perhaps with a level of prescience FOCUS posits that the African renaissance depends on rule of law and human rights. Ominous echoes of what has recently transpired in Zimbabwe are present in this edition. South Africa's voter registration challenges prior to the poll receive attention.

13

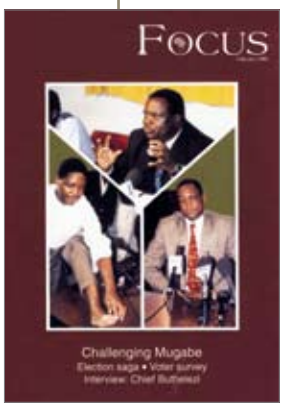
FOCUS 14

FOCUS sports its new brand colors. A new opposition party – the UDM – is born created by former NP Minister Roelf Meyer and former ANC MP Bantu Holomisa. The editorial asks whether South Africa needs change judging the track record of government between 1994 and 1999.

14

Focus 11 • July 1998

Focus 12 • November 1998



Focus 13 • February 1999

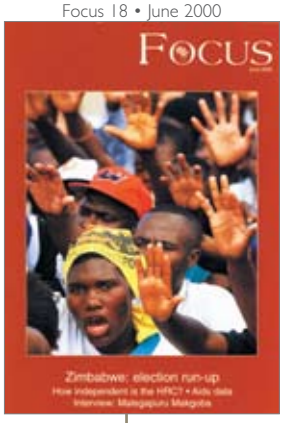
Focus 14 • May 1999

Focus 15 • August 1999

Focus 16 • November 1999

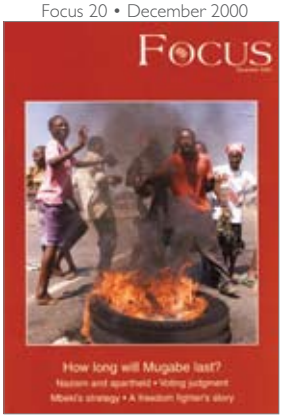
Focus 17 • March 2000

Focus 18 • June 2000



Focus 19 • September 2000

Focus 20 • December 2000



17

FOCUS 17

Already in early 2000 the growing crisis in Zimbabwe precipitated by a 'No' vote for a new constitutional dispensation is canvassed. The emerging BEE debates in South Africa as well as the escalating HIV/AIDS crisis are priorities for analysis.

18

FOCUS 18

Quiet diplomacy has failed. The emerging public spat in the ANC over whether conditions exist for free and fair elections in Zimbabwe is further evidence that President Mbeki, in opting for quiet diplomacy over the crisis, has made a huge error. A judgment error that still plagues FOCUS 50.

19

FOCUS 19

Another new opposition party – the Democratic Alliance – is formed, merging the NNP and DP after the 1999 elections in 2000. Questions of fragmentation and consolidation of opposition politics stands centre stage. The SAHRC enquiry into racism in the media is critiqued.

FOCUS 21

The silent and escalating crisis in Zimbabwe continues to garner attention. FOCUS asks, poignantly, how a democratic party should respond to a government that uses any illegality to block the opposition. Given the MDC's run-off election withdrawal under horrific circumstances in 2008 – a perfect question indeed.

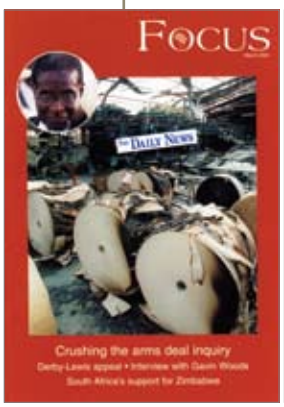
FOCUS 23

FOCUS 23 carries an image of former Defence Minister Joe Modise on its first of a number of arms deal covers. The then R43,8bn Strategic Defence Procurement acquisition and SCOPA's efforts to probe it and how it was blocked is highlighted. This issue reverberates through our body politics in 2008.

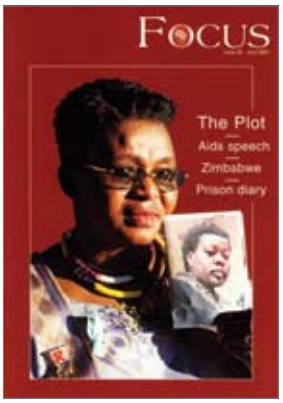
FOCUS 25

FOCUS 25's new design and dramatic cover image of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe is as relevant today as it was then – even more relevant perhaps. Once a proud liberation struggle hero he now stands before the world as an internationally isolated autocrat with pariah status.

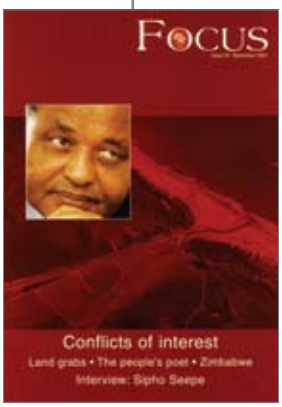
21 23 25



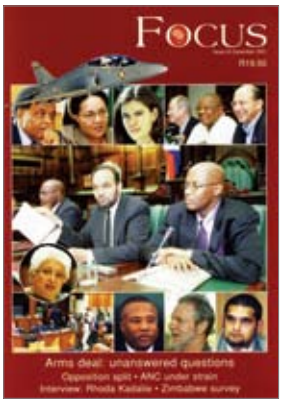
Focus 21 • March 2001



Focus 22 • June 2001



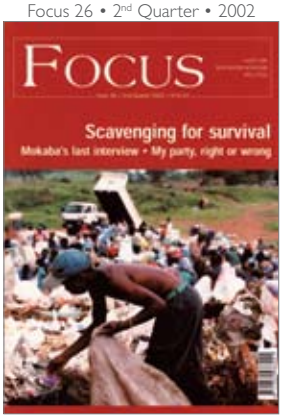
Focus 23 • September 2001



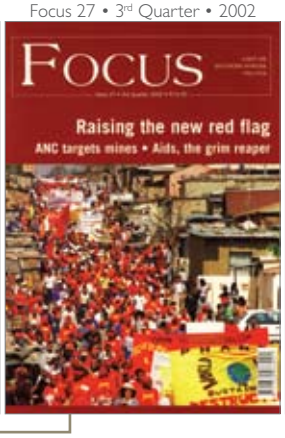
Focus 24 • December 2001

Focus 25 • 1st Quarter • 2002

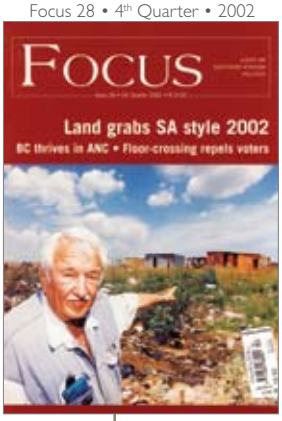
Focus 26 • 2nd Quarter • 2002



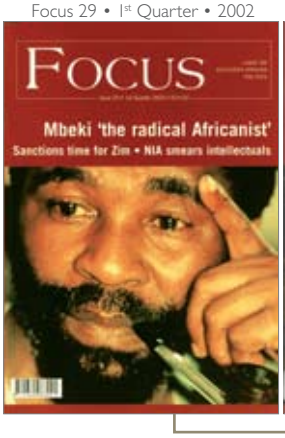
Focus 27 • 3rd Quarter • 2002



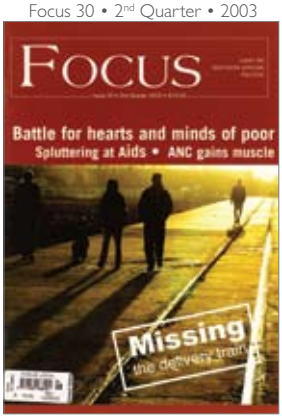
Focus 28 • 4th Quarter • 2002



Focus 29 • 1st Quarter • 2002



Focus 30 • 2nd Quarter • 2003



27 28 29

FOCUS 27

In this edition of FOCUS then-editor Patrick Laurence probes the dangers of adopting an irresponsible approach to transforming the mining sector. The politics of privatising water and general left-wing policy directions are probed and critiqued. Tensions between left-wing, centrist and centre-right economic positions are explored.

FOCUS 28

The question of land reform in South Africa receives front-page coverage. The adoption of and events around floor-crossing as a compromise of the principle of primary accountability to voters and a tool to reinforce the political structure of the one-party dominant state is probed.

FOCUS 29

FOCUS continues to probe the question of land reform and its adjudication in our courts. The philosophical underpinnings of President Thabo Mbeki's Africanist approach to politics and policy is analysed. The proposition of the notion of dissent and its legitimacy as a core democratic principle is strongly advocated.

FOCUS 32

FOCUS asks whether health Minister Manto Tshabalala Msimang , Dr - NO, has finally said 'yes' to a roll-out of ARVs to combat the country's growing HIV/AIDS pandemic. Some fear, in retrospect correctly, that lack of urgency will obstruct the implementation of ARV treatment. Dedicated leadership is crucial and largely absent.

32

FOCUS 33

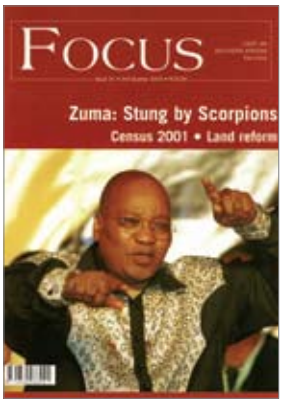
FOCUS shines a spotlight on the 2004 election and DA-IFP efforts to project a 'Coalition for Change' as an option to motivate their electoral base to turn out at the polls. Analysts assess the importance of the poll to the leader of the IFP's future. A Pan-African analysis looks at Angola and Kenya.

33

FOCUS 34

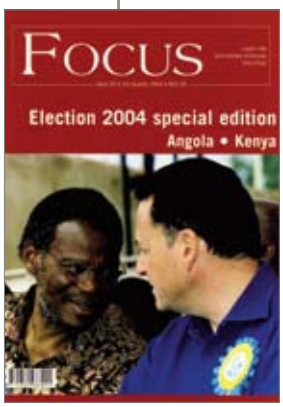
This edition of FOCUS, as only a few before and subsequently, features a cartoon cover that emphasises the dominance of the ANC after the 2004 elections. A critical review of various albatrosses around the neck of the Presidency of Thabo Mbeki as he enters his second term is a feature.

34

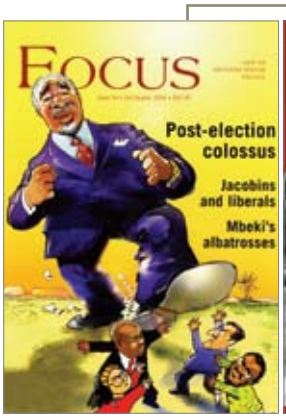


Focus 31 • 3rd Quarter • 2003

Focus 32 • 4th Quarter • 2007



Focus 33 • 1st Quarter • 2004



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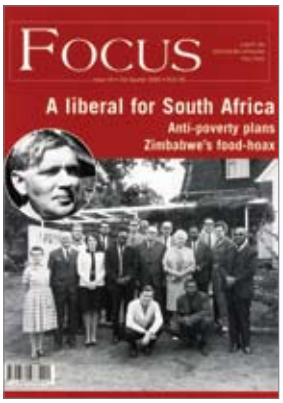

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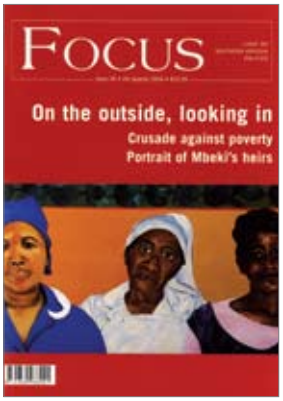
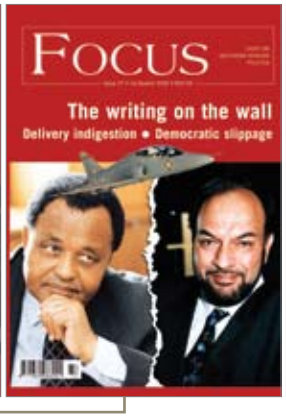
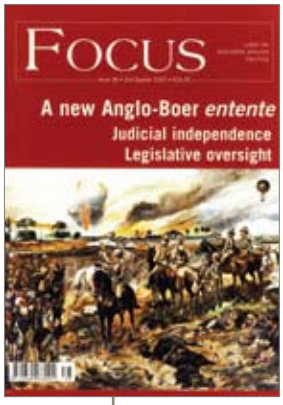
Focus 36 • 4th Quarter • 2004



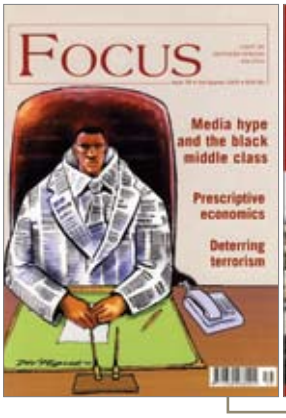
Focus 37 • 1st Quarter • 2005



Focus 38 • 2nd Quarter • 2005



Focus 39 • 3rd Quarter • 2005



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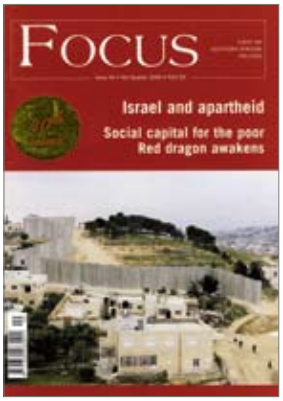


37

FOCUS 37

Attention is given, yet again, to the arms deal controversy. Joel Netshitenzhe, Chief Government Spokesman, predicts that renewed controversy over this deal will be of short duration. FOCUS editor Patrick Laurence appraises new evidence of discrepancies between the draft and final reports of the Joint Investigating Team.

38

FOCUS 38

This issue probes two key aspects of liberal constitutional democracy: the role of a fearless and independent judiciary and judicial independence – which is still under pressure – and responsibilities of the legislature – which remains at issue as the interview with Parliamentary Speaker Baleka Mbete in this FOCUS edition shows.

39

FOCUS 39

Another graphic FOCUS cartoon cover vividly illustrates the rise of a new black middle class. The editorial poignantly states that it is Mbeki's last chance to resolve the ever-spiralling crisis in Zimbabwe. There have been so many warning signals about where the Zimbabwe crisis could end up as catalogued by various previous FOCUS issues.

FOCUS 41

In a near prophetic pre-Polokwane scene-setter FOCUS 41's cover image foreshadows the travails that would beset the Mbeki-Zuma relationship during the butter succession race. Prof. Sipho Seepe reflects on the ominous implications of the ANC's *annus horribilis* in 2005 when Mbeki fired Zuma for alleged arms deal-related corruption.

41

FOCUS 43

This edition of FOCUS analyses the succession from Mandela to Mbeki and to a new incumbent and asks probing questions about the balance between continuity and change inherent in such leadership relays. South Africa's appointment of a Harvard Growth Panel is probed as is the country's Peer Review process.

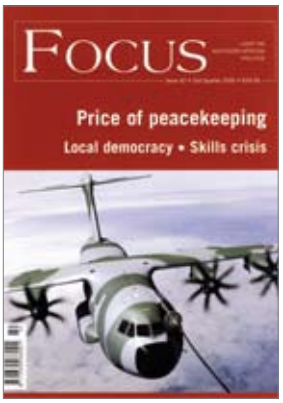
43

FOCUS 45

FOCUS convenes a panel of analysts to weigh the merits and demerits of various possible future occupants of the Union Buildings in its special succession edition. Well-known South African cartoonist, Zapiro, is commissioned to do a special cover and caricatures of the various contenders. The panel proves post-Polokwane accurate.

45

Focus 41 • 1st Quarter • 2006



Focus 42 • 2nd Quarter • 2006

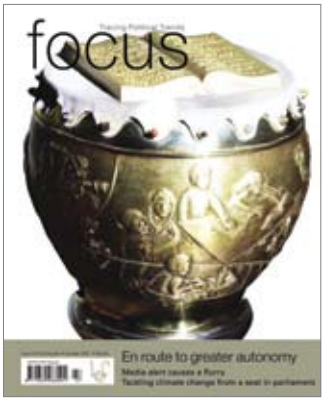
Focus 43 • 3rd Quarter • 2005

Focus 44 • 4th Quarter • 2002

Focus 45 • 1st Quarter • 2007

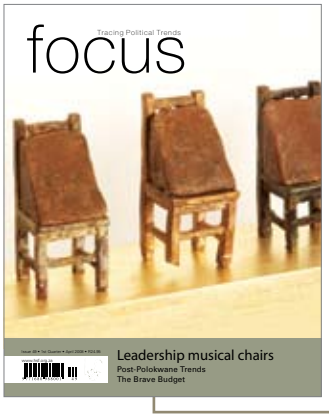
Focus 46 • 2nd Quarter • 2007

Focus 47 • 3rd Quarter • 2007



Focus 48 • 4th Quarter • 2007

Focus 49 • 1st Quarter • 2007



46

FOCUS 46

Helen Suzman pays a very special tribute to her former colleague, Colin Eglin, and his contribution to public life and constitutionalism in South Africa. South Africa's "growth diagnostic" and new growth path possibilities for the economy are analysed and the country's lacklustre human rights-unfriendly performance in the UN Security Council critiqued.

48

FOCUS 48

In its second completely revamped and modernised edition, the 48th edition of FOCUS is the Helen Suzman 90th Tribute issue. In Parliament, and outside it, Helen Suzman has provided living proof that one person can make a difference. As we prepare to celebrate Madiba's 90th we must cherish them both and their very unique contributions.

49

FOCUS 49

The previous edition of FOCUS covers events pre- and post-Polokwane – key new words in the country's political vocabulary. The Polokwane conference culminated in the election of Jacob Zuma as President of the ANC with Kgalema Motlanthe as his Deputy. More changes are afoot and FOCUS will be there to cover them.

By Helen Suzman

Our great good fortune

More than four decades have passed since Helen Suzman met a tall, composed man in a single cell on Robben Island. To mark his 90th birthday she reminisces, in tribute, about a long and treasured friendship with Nelson Mandela

I do not think of Nelson Mandela as an icon – I regard him as a longstanding friend and as a courageous man whose leadership qualities I recognised immediately at our first meeting. This was on Robben Island in 1967. Mandela had already served three years of the sentence of life imprisonment imposed on him and other political prisoners, such as Walter Sisulu and Ahmed Kathrada, at the Rivonia Trial. During that time I had been trying to get permission to visit the Island, as newspaper reports about the conditions under which the political prisoners were being held were extremely disturbing. I finally got permission from Piet Pelser, Minister of Justice. I took the ferry, in those days very slow moving, to the Island, the first sight of which created a very stark impression.

I was taken by the Chief Warder to the single-cell section where all the political prisoners were kept. I was told by the first inmate of this section not to waste time talking to any of them, but to go to the end of the row where I would find their leader. I did as he had suggested and was immediately impressed by Nelson Mandela, for whose release I had pleaded time and again in Parliament. Inside the cell at the bottom of the section stood this tall, composed man

who put his hand through the bars and said, "I'm very pleased to meet you." I replied, "I am very pleased to meet you, Mr Mandela, and I have come to get information about the treatment political prisoners are receiving on Robben Island."

Despite the presence of the Chief Warder, Mandela had no hesitation in reeling off all the objectionable conditions to which the prisoners were subjected. He described the inadequate clothing they wore through the icy winters on the Island, poor and inadequate food, and limited visits and correspondence from relatives. They were sleeping on bed rolls on the floor. They had no access to newspapers. He also told me there was a warder who had a swastika tattooed on the back of his hand and was very tough with them when they were at hard labour in the lime quarry. Armed with this information, I went back to Pelser and repeated what I'd learned. I also told Parliament that here was a man who not only had great leadership qualities, but whom I believed to be the only man who could bring about peaceful reconciliation in South Africa.

Several years later Prime Minister PW Botha announced he was prepared to release Mandela provided he and the African National Congress (ANC) renounced violence. By then the ANC had turned to sabotage after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960. Mandela refused Botha's offer because it did not include his fellow prisoners, and because of his loyalty to the ANC Freedom Charter. He wrote a letter regarding this refusal which his daughter Zinzi read out at a mass meeting in Soweto.

Conditions on the Island improved considerably thereafter due to repeated visits by the Red Cross, my intervention and more sympathetic warders. Mandela's imprisonment continued until 1990, during which time he and five other Robben Islanders were moved to prisons on the mainland. All in all, I saw Mandela several times on Robben Island, twice when he was moved to Pollsmoor Prison, once in a clinic in Cape Town when he was recovering from surgery, and twice at Victor Verster Prison, where he lived in a cottage prior to his release, attended by a white warder. I lunched with him there on one occasion, and the warder cooked and served the meal. In addition, I saw him whenever MPs from different parties in the so-called prison groups paid official visits to the prisons. I have to say that I found my individual visits far more useful! Shortly after he was released, I was on holiday in Plettenberg Bay when I received a phone call from him. He asked, "When are you coming to see me?" And I said, "As soon as I get back at the weekend." On the following Monday I went to visit him, still married to Winnie, at his home in Orlando, and we had an emotional reunion.

To my great pleasure, since that time we have remained friends and have visited each other in our homes. To their great joy, I took my daughters and granddaughter to visit him at his house in Houghton.

Three events of my long association with Nelson Mandela stand out in my memory. My first meeting with him on Robben Island in 1967, his invitation to join him in the helicopter that took him to Sharpeville where he signed the Interim Constitution for a new democratic South Africa in 1993, and his conferral on me of the Order of Merit (Gold) in 1997.

Nelson Mandela is a remarkable man whose friendship I greatly value. It is South Africa's great good fortune to have had him pave the way for peaceful reconciliation in a country torn apart for 40 years, and even before then, by racial discrimination.

I also told Parliament that here was a man who not only had great leadership qualities, but whom I believed to be the only man who could bring about peaceful reconciliation in South Africa

His contribution thereafter to the world-wide acceptance of the new South Africa – back in the Commonwealth, freed of sanctions, and recognised as a leading country on the African continent – has been invaluable.

Happy birthday Nelson – now we are both 90!

Helen Suzman
July 2008

Telling the stories of Nelson Mandela

By Verne Harris

Setting up the Mandela Archive has led to an exploration of ways in which to bind a boundless space

Nobel statues outside the V&A Waterfront

In 1999 Nelson Mandela stepped down as South Africa's first democratically elected President and moved, apparently, into a well-deserved retirement. The appearance of withdrawal from public life did not last long. He quickly founded the Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF), which joined the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund he had established five years earlier. Soon after his retirement, he acknowledged publicly his regret at not having acted sooner in relation to the HIV/AIDS pandemic ravaging the country – not surprisingly, HIV became a focus of his energies after 1999.

This led to the NMF setting up an HIV/AIDS programme and to the launching of the 46664 campaign. His interests in education and young people resulted in the NMF setting up an education programme, initially dedicated to building schools with money raised by him, but soon broadening its focus. In 2003 Mr Mandela founded The Mandela-Rhodes Foundation, built around a scholarship programme but aiming more broadly to promote leadership in Africa. For him the long walk to freedom is a continuing walk. To quote the final sentences of his 1994 autobiography:

"I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended."

As we are finding in South Africa, freedom is not something one ever possesses. And the moment one stops working to

nurture it and to grow it, it seems to start shrivelling. I know from many conversations with Mr Mandela that he feels intensely both the growing pains of our democracy and the call of justice to keep walking.

Nonetheless, for individuals the ravaging of time ultimately slows the walk to a shuffle. In 2004 Mr Mandela announced that he would be "retiring from retirement". That moment inaugurated a long period of review and reflection within the NMF, culminating in the 2006 decision by our Board of Trustees to recast the Foundation as a memory and dialogue non-governmental organisation with its core business undertaken by the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory and Dialogue.

The questions we've been asking ourselves as we've conceptualised the Centre are legion. The ones we regard as critical at this particular juncture are: what is "the Mandela Archive", how do we convene (or constitute, or construct) it, and what do we do with it?

Whatever the Mandela Archive is, it is vast and shattered, and it can reach you everywhere. We have begun to document the bigger, more obvious fragments, and already we are understanding

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that, in principle, it is infinite. How far back do we go? How far do we reach into the histories of family, clan, kingdom, nation and land? How far forward can we reach into the future tellings and re-tellings of story? How do we hold that extraordinary spacing of archive that is Thembuland, the place of Nelson Mandela's birth? The communities living there today have inherited many generations of storytelling about Madiba – Nelson Rolihlahla Dalibhunga Mandela. They continue to engage the landscapes and the cultures which shaped him. And they absorb, from "outside", the new accounts in school curricula and from the media.

Wherever we choose to view the Mandela Archive, we find open-endedness in time, in medium, and in geography. We can, and we must, bind and stabilise it through the range of conventional archival interventions – selecting, collecting, safekeeping, cataloguing, restoring, digitising, and so on. But always the archive will dance beyond our capacity to keep it within bounds.

I haven't answered the question "What is the Mandela Archive?" In truth, I don't believe there can be a definitive answer.

Convening the Mandela Archive

How do we convene (or constitute, or construct) such an archive? How does the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory and Dialogue propose to convene it? How do we do the impossible? Whose stories do we tell? Whose stories do we not tell? Which stories are we listening for? What audiences do we privilege? How do we resist the pull of every archive to authorise and to sanitise and to inflate? Readers will appreciate that Mr Mandela's international icon status makes that pull extraordinary. How does the Centre resist the temptation to hagiography?

For three years now we have been conceptualising and negotiating the Centre of Memory and Dialogue. This has spanned a range of formal studies and a continuing more or less formal consultation with stakeholders. But our primary adviser has been Mr Mandela himself. We have consulted him all along the way, more informally than formally, and have listened carefully to his directions. What has emerged is what I regard as a set of founding values for our endeavour, and for any other memory initiative in the name of Nelson Mandela. There are six of them:

1. The Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory and Dialogue should not be all about Nelson Mandela. He was always part of a collective leadership. Many individuals around him made important contributions.
2. We don't have to protect Mr Mandela by sanitising his history. (In early 2006 our exhibitions team was conceptualising the exhibition "Madiba: Public and Private", and we realised that the significant number of intimate images of Winnie might provoke sensitivities unreasonably. I showed Mr Mandela the images we proposed using. He smiled and said: "That's fine. It's history.")
3. Work with, don't compete with, other institutions. (On 21 September 2004 Mr Mandela said of what was then the Centre of Memory Project: "We want it to be part of what we have called the processes of restoration and reconciliation … We want it to work closely with the many other institutions which make up the South African archival system."
4. The Centre should invite contestation, not simply represent an orthodoxy. (After a memorial function for the late Anthony Sampson at Mandela House in 2005, Mr Mandela said to James Sanders and John Matshikiza: "Yes, you young people, you must keep troubling us.")
5. Memory is not an end in itself. It must not be allowed to lie inert. It is a resource for action, and should provoke action. (In

2005 I was showing Mr Mandela and a visiting dignitary around an exhibition at Mandela House. We were discussing South African music, and the name of Gibson Kente came up. Kente was desperately ill with full-blown AIDS. Mr Mandela told his personal assistant to cancel his remaining appointments for the day, and a short time later he was visiting Kente in Soweto. Just weeks later Kente was dead.)

6. The Centre must have place for mischief and humour. (Mr Mandela is renowned for his sense of humour. According to him, this is something he has cultivated as a means of helping people to feel at ease. In his words: "We have a sense of humour because we feel it is our duty." But, in my view, there is a mischief which rises from wells deeper than duty. At a function at Mandela House attended by the world's media, Mr Mandela spotted his old friend Mac Maharaj sitting in the front row. At the time Mac was in the throes of giving up smoking cigarettes. Mr Mandela asked him if he was still not smoking, and Mac replied affirmatively. "Ah, but I know you," Mr Mandela responded, "now you're smoking dagga.")

   For us at the Centre these founding injunctions are best expressed in the concept of "memory for justice". Listen to Mr Mandela speaking about the Centre on 21 September 2004: "Most importantly, we want the Centre to dedicate itself to the recovery of memories and stories suppressed by power. That is the call of justice. The call which must be the project's most important shaping influence."

What do we do with this archive?

Whatever else we do with it, whatever else we do, our memory resources must be a resource in the making of a just society. But what might this mean, practically, for an organisation like the Nelson Mandela Foundation? At one level it is easy to catalogue implications: it means institutionalising the core values given us by Mr Mandela; understanding the power we wield as authorised Mandela storytellers; and privileging the weak and the poor.

At a higher level of analysis, we have answered the question "what do we do with this archive?" with a single word – "dialogue". We have identified "dialogue" as the means for making memory work in society. And we came to dialogue from at least three vantage points:

Conceptually, we would argue that memory is dialogue. In our indigenous traditions, memory is not something that the individual possesses, or owns. And even an individual sitting in a garden on her own remembering her childhood is entering into a dialogue with herself.

In terms of legacy, Mr Mandela's life has been about finding solutions to intractable social problems through processes of dialogue.

In terms of the needs of our country, robust analysis of South Africa reveals the extent to which we are still speaking past each other. It is only now becoming apparent the extent to which our social fabric was torn during the apartheid era and continued to be ripped through the transition period. The challenge posed by social cohesion is immense. In the words of author Mmatshilo Motsei: "Having returned from political exile, the nation is faced with an act of inner exile referred to by Wole Soyinka as 'internal severance'. Society's moral fibre is in shreds …"

At the Foundation we are in the middle of an extensive study designed to answer the question: "What, precisely, has the life and work of Nelson Mandela taught us about dialogue?" We do not have more than preliminary answers to questions. And we question whether final answers are ever possible.

In terms of legacy, Mr Mandela's life has been about finding solutions to intractable social problems through processes of dialogue

What do we propose to do with the Mandela Archive? In summary, we propose to:

undertake dialogue with it;
interrogate it;
open ourselves to interrogation by it;
intervene on critical social issues with it; and
create space for dialogue with it.

Finally, we understand that the legacy of Nelson Mandela is not something to be preserved. It has life only as it is made and re-made. We do not aspire to be custodians of legacy. We aspire rather to be makers of a living legacy. And our aspiration is inspired by Mr Mandela himself:

"But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended."

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By Tito Mboweni

Central banks in times of turmoil

The Governor of the South African Reserve Bank addressed the Annual GIBS-HSF Forum on the recent global financial crisis, and the challenges it has presented for central banks

The global financial landscape has changed dramatically over the past 12 months, with global financial markets experiencing a financial crisis of note in the history of the world economy. The impact has been severe, with some of the world's largest and most credible financial institutions reporting large consecutive quarterly losses. By the end of March 2008, the market capitalisation of banks globally had declined by US$720 billion. These developments prompted Mr Alan Greenspan, the former Chairperson of the United States Federal Reserve Board (known as "the Fed"), to remark that "the current financial crisis in the US is likely to be judged as the most wrenching since the end of the Second World War".

Financial market asset prices have also echoed these extremely distressed circumstances and volatile conditions, in some instances requiring unconventional responses by central banks and other international institutions. Recent events again put into full perspective the crucial role of central banks in times of turmoil. In particular, the dual responsibility of central banks to implement monetary policy as well as contributing to financial stability has become much more challenging.

Causes of the crisis

The financial market turmoil, which started around July 2007, was initially triggered by huge losses on United States sub-prime loans, disclosures of delinquencies and foreclosures by households, as well as a number of major hedge funds reporting substantial losses.

Exceptionally benign macroeconomic and financial market conditions between 2004 and mid-2007, as reflected by robust economic growth and low inflation and interest rates, fostered an underlying search for yield over recent years. At the same time, decades of vigorous financial innovation facilitated a deepening

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of capital markets, and easier access to credit by households and enterprises through a variety of new and complex instruments. In recent years, however, financial innovation has been increasingly associated with complacency in risk management. In particular, the lack of transparency of these complex products may have made it easier for investors to underestimate the risks they take on, as well as the under-pricing of risk in some key asset markets. In addition, with prudential regulation sometimes lagging behind financial innovation, some institutions may not have been sufficiently transparent about their exposures to complex structured financial products on and off their balance sheets.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that the most recent Triennial Survey of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) showed that the credit derivatives market has witnessed substantial growth, from US$118 billion in 1998 to US$52 trillion in 2007. The main participants in credit derivatives, comprising about 80 per cent of the total market, are banks and hedge funds.

The announcement of losses by hedge funds exposed to United States sub-prime mortgages in mid-July 2007 triggered the reappraisal of asset prices and excessive market volatility, with a general flight to quality or less riskier assets. Credit risk evolved into liquidity risk and banks struggled to obtain funding as interbank liquidity dried up, causing sharp increases in money-market rates in the major financial centres of the world.

How deep and widespread?

What began as a fairly contained deterioration in portions of the United States sub-prime market has evolved into severe dislocations in broader credit and funding markets that now pose risks to the global macroeconomic outlook.

In April 2008, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that declining United States house prices and rising delinquencies on mortgage payments could lead to aggregate losses related to the residential mortgage market and related securities of about US$565 billion, including the expected deterioration of prime loans. Adding other categories of loans originated and securities issued in the United States, related to commercial real estate, the consumer credit market and corporations, total losses are estimated at almost US$1,0 trillion.

Tighter credit conditions imposed by banks, the erosion of consumers' spending power due to rising inflation, and continuous increases in energy costs have impacted severely on the United States economy. According to the IMF, the continuing correction in the country's housing market and the unresolved problems in the financial sector have led its economy to the verge of recession. The IMF has downgraded its forecast for gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the United States in 2008 to 0,5 per cent, while the Fed, in its latest Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) minutes, released on 22 May 2008, expects the economy to expand by between 0,3 and 1,2 per cent. This has serious implications for global growth, particularly for countries whose economic performance depends heavily on exports to the United States.

One of the interesting developments I would like to mention is that, whereas previous crises originated from emerging-market economies, developed markets were essentially the epicentre of this crisis. So far emerging markets have proved relatively resilient to the financial turmoil. Improved fundamentals, abundant reserves and strong growth rates have all helped to sustain flows into emerging market assets. However, there are macroeconomic vulnerabilities in a number of countries that make them susceptible to a deterioration in the external environment – in particular, countries with current account deficits financed by private debt or portfolio flows, and countries in which

domestic credit has grown rapidly. There is also a risk that banks in developed markets may pare back funding to their subsidiaries in emerging markets, particularly in circumstances where external imbalances are large. Emerging markets are, therefore, by no means isolated from the turmoil in developed markets.

The role of central banks

Central banks assume a crucial role when market liquidity dries up and funding constraints cast doubt on the solidity and safety of financial institutions. Central banks have to prevent or limit systemic risks. In essence this entails addressing adverse dynamics and preventing the collapse of financial intermediation.

During normal times, central banks provide sufficient liquidity to the banking system to keep their policy rates effective. Generally, a reliable relationship links the short-term policy rate and longer-term money-market rates, and counterparties effectively distribute liquidity to the wider market. However, in mid-August 2007, the pattern of banks' liquidity demand in the United States changed: the short-term yield curve steepened and became more volatile, the gap between secured and unsecured rates widened, and the broader interbank market that distributed liquidity throughout the system was disrupted.

At the immediate onset of the crisis, there was a strong increase in demand for central bank liquidity (that is, reserves at the central bank), but as the crisis unfolded, commercial banks desired increased liquidity beyond central bank balances. Initially, both the European Central Bank and the Fed provided additional funds, while the Bank of England allowed banks' increased demand for reserves to be reflected in higher reserve targets. As uncertainty over the financial soundness of counterparties increased, trading of unsecured term interbank funds dwindled because banks – and other clients – wanted to borrow long-term funds, but lend only in the short term. Hence, term funding dried up and longer-term yields rose sharply. Central banks were able to increase the volume of longer-term refinancing to the market without expanding their balance sheets by withdrawing liquidity at other maturities or periods. This approach helped to achieve the twin goals of executing monetary operations while addressing financial stability concerns.

Central banks had to face a number of challenges in addressing financial system stress. Firstly, they had to deal with the breakdown of standard distribution channels for liquidity, both nationally and internationally. This was because the provision of sufficient liquidity to a small group of intermediaries no longer guaranteed that it would either flow through the system, or to those in need of funding in specific currencies, as stress in money markets spread to foreign-exchange swap markets. Secondly, some banks lacked direct access to open market operations (OMOs), either because they did not belong to the list of eligible counterparties, or because they lacked the eligible collateral. Finally, central banks had to project liquidity demands at different time horizons, as demand patterns changed rapidly and unexpectedly, and the impact of factors such as year-end effects became increasingly unpredictable.

The decision by central banks whether or not to provide additional liquidity to markets and to bail out failing banks has its own set of complexities. Clearly central banks have to be concerned about systemic risk. The provision of overall liquidity is probably more clear-cut, as such provision is generally done against appropriate collateral, although this requirement was relaxed in a number of instances.

With regard to bailing out failing banks, there are more difficult issues. Firstly, there is the issue of moral hazard to consider. Should a central bank under all circumstances bail out a bank – even when it has been mismanaged? How does the central bank ensure that its lender-of-last-resort assistance doesn't result in excessive risk-taking and poor risk management by banks?

However, even central banks that focus primarily on price stability sometimes face possible conflicts of objectives. The most obvious one is probably the potential conflict between maintaining price stability and financial stability

Secondly, the issue of timing and the degree of intervention required has to be considered. Acting too soon can increase the risk of moral hazard and favour bad firms over good ones. Acting too slowly can exacerbate the consequences. The Bank of England, for example, was accused of delaying too long in attempting to save Northern Rock. In my view, there is no such thing as the perfect handling of a bank failure. A bank failure is a financial disaster, and the most central banks can do is damage control. It is a very difficult call to make whether or not to try to save a failing bank, when to intervene and to what extent to intervene. Whatever decision is taken is normally criticised by some or other group of stakeholders. In addition, central banks can usually not disclose the information upon which their decisions were based

However, even central banks that focus primarily on price stability sometimes face possible conflicts of objectives. The most obvious one is probably the potential conflict between maintaining price stability and financial stability. The issue may be complicated

by the fact that there could be a negative feedback loop from financial instability to macroeconomic instability, which in turn feeds back to the financial sector.

Central banks potentially have conflicts of interest, being at the same time participants in and regulators of financial markets. Banks that are supervised by the central bank are often also counterparties. This has the potential of complicating decision-making, unless properly governed. I am sure that this is not a major issue affecting the role that central banks play in maintaining financial stability: it is generally well managed and controlled through segregation of duties and firewalls between operational, supervision and policy departments or divisions. However, it is something that central banks should remain sensitive to and manage diligently.

Other role players

In all of their activities, central banks have to be very sensitive to changes in the structure and functioning of the financial markets. These changes take place on an ongoing basis, and a trend normally becomes visible only after it has progressed fairly significantly. One such change that is occurring is the bigger role played in global financial markets by a number of new players, in particular sovereign wealth funds (SWFs), private equity funds and hedge funds. The role of SWFs in the current crisis is particularly of note, and it is also interesting to see how the activities of these funds occurred in a manner complementary to those of central banks.

SWFs appear to have played a stabilising role during recent times, alleviating capital constraints and absorbing some of the market volatility. These institutions contributed US$41 billion of the US$105 billion in capital injected into major financial institutions since late 2007. Several factors facilitate the ability of SWFs to act as a stabiliser in times of market stress. These include the fact that they have a long-term investment horizon and limited liquidity needs. They also have a stable funding base and no capital adequacy or prudential regulatory requirements that could force them to liquidate positions. However, the long-term impact and the potentially stabilising role of SWFs as major institutional investors will require a broader set of data and assessment, and you may well be aware that some SWFs are regarded with quite a bit of suspicion as regards their long-term motives for investment.

A number of other institutions also played important roles during the current turmoil, and several initiatives were announced to improve regulations and enforce disclosures, aiming to restore and improve financial stability. At the national level, the United States Department of Treasury issued a blueprint for regulatory reform in that country during April, part of which has come into effect, with the United States Securities and Exchange Commission announcing its plan to require top Wall Street firms to disclose their liquidity and capital positions publicly.

At a broader level, the BIS has also been active. From mainly focusing on capital adequacy over past years, the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision is now also devoting more time and resources to the analysis of risk and liquidity management of banks. It will require wisdom and insight to draft and implement the most appropriate regulatory reforms. In addition, the Financial Stability Forum (FSF), an international body under the auspices of the BIS, has established a Working Group on Market and Institutional Resilience.

Concluding comments

We have been relatively fortunate in that the South African Reserve Bank did not have to deal with the same financial stability issues that confronted central banks in Europe and the United States. The impact of the current turmoil in global financial markets affected South Africa indirectly, through changes in share prices,

We have been relatively fortunate in that the South African Reserve Bank did not have to deal with the same financial stability issues that confronted central banks in Europe and the United States

bond prices and the exchange rate, rather than directly, as South African banks had almost no direct exposure to the United States sub-prime market. Not surprisingly, given the state of the international banking environment, international credit lines are more difficult to access and the domestic securitisation market is much tighter. Our banks, however, have not had any interbank or liquidity problems of the type experienced in Europe and the United States, and the South African Reserve Bank has not had to intervene with any unusual liquidity provision.

The fact that we have not had to be concerned about liquidity and financial stability issues has allowed the Bank to continue focusing on its objective of bringing inflation back to within the target range. As you are aware, our inflation rate is significantly above our target of 3%–6%, and we remain committed to bringing inflation back to within this range.

Images in this article © Mark Wessels

M&G CRITICAL THINKING FORUM

The future delayed

A panel discussion on Zimbabwe demonstrates a fair degree of hope, some trepidation, and a high degree of frustration

As Zimbabwe waited for its much-delayed election results, a Mail & Guardian Critical Thinking Forum discussion, "Zimbabwe: Crisis? What crisis?", brought together panellists Dr Ibbo Mandaza, National Co-ordinator of Mavambo; independent MP Prof. Jonathan Moyo; and Dr Heneri Dzinotyiweyi, member of the National Executive Committee of the (Tsvangirai) Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Moderator Judge Dennis Davis explained the absence of a representative of Zanu-PF by reading a statement from the Embassy of Zimbabwe declining to take part in any discussions while the election results were pending. These are edited extracts from the discussion.

MODERATOR:
What can South Africa do now?

DR MANDAZA:
I think we expect too much of South Africa. What has happened in the past few months has been largely through Zimbabweans themselves, so I'd like to focus the initiative on Zimbabweans. What we expect from you and the international community is to be supportive and to identify the line of development out of this crisis. Mugabe should step aside and allow a new process to take place.

PROF MOYO:
Obviously whatever South Africans can or will do will have to be through their government. The election would not have been as peaceful, as free, as fair as it was without the mediation led by South Africa and mandated by SADC. Obviously they set out to have a mediation whose outcome was an election result that was not disputed. That objective was not achieved, but a more important objective was achieved, starting with the fact that the two formations of the MDC were able to sit around the table with Zanu PF and agree on a set of constitutional and legal reforms. Secondly, by sitting around that table, Zanu PF was basically moving away from its position that it would not sit with puppets, that it would rather sit with puppeteers, and it sanitised the MDC.

PROF DZINOTYIWEYI:
The reason we have this perception of higher expectations from South Africa is largely historical. When Ian Smith declared UDI [unilateral declaration of independence] and countries of the world [called for] sanctions, South Africa said, "Yes, we will back you," and that was enough. When the situation became difficult and South Africa said, "My friend, you have to retreat," that gave Zimbabwe the opportunity to change. South Africa has played a leadership role in the history of Zimbabwe, and we look to see if it can provide that leadership once more.

Parnelists actively debated what South Africa could do but also what actions Zimbabweans could take.

MODERATOR:
What does the South African Government do if Mr Mugabe says, "To hell with you, I'm not going?"

PROF DZINOTYIWEYI:
South Africa cannot be treated that way by Zimbabwe. They can only do that when they know that South Africa is behind them

[And] I don't believe that the balance of forces is such that the military and the security forces as a whole would not accept a change. If this is stretched out, the possibility of a civil war in Zimbabwe is very real, [but] I do see a situation in which the armed forces would not shoot a single person on the street if there was such an uprising in Zimbabwe.

PROF MOYO:
Ahead of the election, there was nationwide deployment of the army and police to campaign for Zanu-PF, and in most cases those forces on the ground did not campaign for Zanu-PF. They actually campaigned against Zanu-PF. Subsequent to the election, there have been more reinforcements and in a number of untold cases, they are co-operating with the people. They are reassuring them that they did the right thing in the way they voted but did not do it well, and that they might get another opportunity

It's no longer possible for Mugabe to win any election, whether free or not. No rational person wants to see Mugabe in office any more. [But] we have to understand that there are some who are prepared to dig in. There are people around Mugabe, there are people in the military, who have the means to cause big time trouble.

PROF DZINOTYIWEYI:
Any free and fair run-off will yield a disastrous result for President Mugabe. So if he's determined to go for it, it means he wants to make use of our security forces to try and rig it. The only way he can succeed is to create enormous violence.

MODERATOR:
Isn't there sometimes a point where you've got to accept that even if you won, you might do something different in order to bring everybody along with you?

PROF DZINOTYIWEYI:
There's no doubt that when Mr Tsvangirai goes to form a government, he will extend his hand to all the other players. He cannot extend it when he's being prevented from realising what is due to him.

MODERATOR:
If you could project into the future, what's going to happen over the next two to three months?

DR MANDAZA:
One of the major problems we've had is that as opposition groups, we have not been able to sit down together to chat and take the initiative away from Zanu-PF. Zanu-PF is in disarray, but I think the lack of critical mass around the opposition has tended to give Zanu-PF and Mugabe the initiative. It would have been very good for the MDC to have announced its provisional government, to give some kind of presence, an indication that they are a potential government.

Among the topics raised from the floor were issues of transitional government, neo-colonialism and the economy.

DR MANDAZA:
Whether they call it a government of national unity or a transitional or national authority, it should be time-framed to address three key issues. The first is the economic question. There should be certain guarantees; I don't think there should be a reversal of social questions that the post-colonial government undertook [to deal with]. I don't think that we should reverse land reform. We should reinforce it, perfect it and ensure that it reaches the rural areas where most of our people live. We think there should be a national dialogue on economic policy. It's an occasion to agree precisely how to begin to resolve the neo-colonial question. It must be put on the table by whatever government comes in. The election process in Zimbabwe offered a very useful debate on what can be done on the economic front.

PROF MOYO:
There is apprehension in Zimbabwe partly because there are questions about the MDC's policy programme – not just in relation to certain sensitive issues, including land reform, but also how they are going to reform major institutions: the army, the police, the civil service. But we have an immediate crisis, focused on elections, and that's what we need to solve.

MODERATOR:
[A questioner commented that] a government of national unity would give [Zanu-PF] the ability to manipulate the process in many ways to subvert a democratic victory for another party, and that makes it awfully problematic.

PROF MOYO:
It does, and it calls for courageous and audacious decisions. The fact is, the will of the people is very difficult to quantify with certainty. In fact, impossible. I sympathise with one questioner who says, I went to vote and I want to know what the result is, but I'm afraid you will never know. The whole thing has been contaminated.

MODERATOR:
There was a question about multinational companies in Zimbabwe. You're not advocating the sanctions?

PROF DZINOTYIWEYI:
It's embarrassing to admit it, but a certain level of civilisation and appreciation of humanity is necessary for sanctions to function. This government does not have the conscience to say certain things must be left running. They will just ignore it.

In the same vein, do you realise, it's difficult even to meet? If you go to the Head Offices of MDC, none of the major staff will be there. Nobody dares go there. [But] you will meet not less than 200 people from the villages, some with broken hands, some with babies who have been injured, some saying our house has been burnt. Immediate challenges to be addressed are like that.

Following the MDC's decision to withdraw from the 27 June Presidential run-off election the crisis in Zimbabwe keeps spiralling.

MODERATOR:
How can you then say, as you earlier did, that the military will stop shooting its own people?

PROF DZINOTYIWEYI:
The military right now is causing havoc. They still have the upper hand. But there is growth of a spirit of resistance among the people. The way forward is really to make sure that this level of resistance is understood.

MODERATOR:
There's a question that [the MDC] is persisting with a zero-sum game. You're not giving enough to the losers to let them buy into a process.

PROF DZINOTYIWEYI:
The position of the MDC is that it will do more than that. The idea is to form what it calls a government of national healing. There is enormous capacity among the Zimbabweans who are neither MDC nor Zanu-PF. The understanding, really, is to focus on how to revive the economy in Zimbabwe and ensure that everyone has got a convenient place to play their part.

The hand of partnership cannot be extended to Zanu-PF at this point in time. There's just no space. We need to clarify the ground before we can say who comes in. The real issue won't be a partisan position, but rather a revival of the Zimbabwean economy.

DR MANDAZA:
The major question this evening has been about what's going on. There's a lot going on. Some of it we can't talk about, but there are discussions going on. Regrettably, most of it is taking place outside. Obviously Morgan Tsvangirai is very busy on the diplomatic front. That's important, but our fear now is that we will be overtaken, both as a country and as a region, by the international initiative. The initiative must be at home, first and foremost, with the region and the international community supporting it. We need to get back home and meet as Zimbabweans to plan the way forward.

PROF MOYO:
We should remember that before the elections, there was quite an effort to promote a united front. If those efforts had succeeded, Mugabe and Zanu-PF would be history right now. And the effort included working with Zanu-PF.

Vigorous discussions about the ongoing stalemate violence and desperation in Zimbabwe continued after the panel discussion.

Now we have a better opportunity. I'm a bit disappointed that my colleague is hesitant to say the obvious, that the Morgan Tsvangirai/MDC formation got the highest votes in Parliament, and if they join with the rest of the opposition, the votes are even higher and the possibility of forming a government better. All democratic and progressive forces are willing to work with them, but they have suspicions. I hope that the opportunity will be taken advantage of.

PROF DZINOTYIWEYI:

Things have happened which may not be public knowledge, where we maintained the same position together, consulted each other. SADC had a session on Zimbabwe. Both Mr [Simba] Makoni and Mr Tsvangirai attended that meeting and discussed what their common positions should be. That's the working together we are talking about. We all know that when we talk about MDC MPs at home, and we say we are a majority, we will block anything Zanu says, we are actually including both formations of MDC.

MODERATOR:

What about civil society in South Africa? Do they have a role?

DR MANDAZA:

An enormous role. It was as part of civil society that the ship [carrying arms for Zimbabwe] was sent off from Durban. Likewise this meeting organised by Mail & Guardian. It puts enormous pressure on your government, and on the region. We need to maintain pressure on our governments in the region. SADC has been behaving disgracefully.

MODERATOR:

I want to make two final conclusions of my own. Our own Freedom Charter said that the people will govern, and that the land belongs to all. It was central to our own struggle that South Africa belonged to all who lived in it and that the people shall govern. A second point is that people from all over the world supported the struggle against apartheid. I think there's a serious argument that things like sanctions and international pressure made their contribution.

So when we have a debate like this tonight, perhaps we should remember our own history, and that history, it seems to me, should actually enrage us to this conclusion, that it's absolutely outrageous that an election can take place and the will of the people can be denied. And it's that particular insight which I think should fuel us in South Africa in the manner in which we conduct our own debate.

By Darshan Vigneswaran

‘Can’t we all just get along?’

The answer to US taxi driver Rodney King’s famous plea – in an incident that eventually led to the 1992 Los Angeles riots – would appear, in South Africa, to be ‘no’. Changing it to ‘yes’ in the wake of the recent tragedy of xenophobic violence will have to be a matter of long-term thinking and policy decisions

South Africa needs to move quickly from short-term reactions to long-term solutions in its response to recent violent attacks against foreigners. The government can’t just chase ringleaders; it has to recapture the entire population. We can’t continue to warehouse victims; we need them back in their communities. Instead of border control, immigration policy must focus on how to regularise the foreign-born population.

South Africa has just witnessed a human tragedy. As we sift through the debris of the lives, homes and communities that have been shattered in the maelstrom, it can prove difficult to find rational explanations, let alone reasonable policies. To some extent, the sheer scale and severity of the violence demand emotion – we have used our grief, shame and tears to douse the flames of intolerance, bigotry and anger just witnessed.

But as society experiences collective emotional trauma, leaders are already making decisions that will reshape the political landscape. The past two weeks have seen one policy watershed after another. The army was called onto

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Violence reminiscent of our apartheid past caused grave harm to our country and perceptions of it as a moderate welcoming democracy.

the streets. The police became a humanitarian agency. Foreign governments evacuated their nationals. South Africa set up refugee camps.

Further policy changes are in the making. Ordinary South Africans will need to judge whether the many "hard decisions" being taken on their behalf are necessary or desirable. Most of all, they will need to ensure that short-term, instinctive responses to the tragedy don't lead the nation into long-term policy debacles (such as happened in the United States post-9/11).

So what are some of the key steps to be taken beyond the violence and towards a more peaceful and tolerant South Africa? Let's begin our search for answers by looking at some of the familiar themes raised in policy discussions over the past few weeks.

How do we stem the violence?

Violence against foreigners in South Africa will continue until we try to address the underlying causes of the attacks. Too many hold onto the hope of a quick fix. According to this logic, if we capture the ringleaders we cut off the movement's head. These sorts of appeals have often been linked to speculation about the involvement of a supposed "Third Force" in the recent attacks. Echoing the language of the apartheid era, senior government officials in the Cabinet, ANC National Executive Committee and National Intelligence Agency have suggested the attacks were all pre-meditated, planned and co-ordinated.

The government must investigate the attacks thoroughly and come down with the full force of the law on the perpetrators, particularly those involved in organising or inciting violence. However, we can't expect that rooting out and eradicating any so-called "Third Force" will put an end to these problems.

We have to face the more stark reality that South Africans have been regularly violently victimising foreign nationals for years. In the mid-1990s South Africans in Gauteng were already evicting foreign hawkers from the streets and foreign residents from the townships. Over the past year, prior to the attacks in Alexandra which ignited a wave of nationwide violence, there were sporadic mass organised evictions of foreigners from settlements in North West, Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Mpumalanga and Gauteng.

A more genuine and sustained effort at poverty reduction in the townships will possibly limit the potential for renewed attacks. But it won't also, necessarily, deal with the recurrent and often publicly sanctioned predilection to blame foreigners for all South Africa's post-apartheid misfortunes, and to act violently on these suspicions.

What is needed is a frontal assault on xenophobia in all its forms. This could begin with a greater recognition of a shared African heritage in the education system and popular media, but must go further. For too long South Africa has preached a policy of openness towards its "African brothers and sisters" while openly tolerating, and in some cases directly encouraging,

Xenophobic violence on the streets of Johannesburg.

discrimination in the delivery of services to the population. Now, the government has to lead the way by making sure that planned poverty alleviation strategies in the townships address the institutionalised xenophobia that foreigners experience when they try to access hospitals, schools and housing.

Where should the people go?

The process of resettlement must empower moderating elements to receive foreign nationals back into their communities. This differs substantially from a policy of encampment.

South Africa has toyed with the possibility of setting up refugee camps to house its refugee population for several years now. The Refugees Act supports a self-settlement system for foreigners, not a camp-based solution. However, section 35 of the act allows the Minister to set up camps in the extraordinary event of a "mass influx".

A careful reading of the Refugee Directorate's regular reports on asylum statistics show that Home Affairs officials have been carefully building the case to allow the Minister to invoke section 35. A recent report envisages applications for asylum increasing radically in coming years: "Certain people foresee the number registered in 2007 escalating to a possible double in 2008, treble in 2009 and even quadruple in 2010." The Department has produced little credible evidence to substantiate these claims.

It is important to stress that South Africa hasn't chosen a policy of encampment for asylum seekers and refugees. Camps began to develop around police stations as soon as the police wisely recognised that they had to provide protection to internal migrants fleeing persecution within South Africa. The government then responded to an emerging debacle by working with international organisations and civil society to designate areas for the establishment of less makeshift camps. Nevertheless, this decision may represent the first step down a proverbial slippery slope.

A cursory tour of some of the continent's many refugee camps would illustrate why this approach should not become South Africa's primary response to forced migration. Temporary camps rapidly turn into permanent settlements with complex and unforeseen infrastructural and service delivery problems. Camps compound ethnic difference with residential segregation, perpetuating ostracisation and disenfranchisement. Finally, and most ominously, camps can become the breeding ground for further violence, either as soft targets for perpetrators or mobilising sites for resistance.

South Africa is learning the hard way what problems camps pose. At least one proposed campsite has already been subject to an attack.

Eventually the government will have to face up to the challenging task of sending affected peoples home; that is, to their former homes in South Africa. No-one, including the author, can identify with any precision how this can be achieved, but we should not begin the process by underestimating the capacity of the South African communities to move beyond experiences of tremendous conflict and violence.

Over the past two years our researchers have spoken to many South African citizens from affected areas who deplore the violence directed at non-nationals and respect foreigners' contributions towards the local economy. Some share deep ethnic, personal and familial connections with affected groups. These same groups have resisted calls to join in the attacks, offered shelter and protection to victims and, in at least one case, rebuilt one of the shacks the attackers tore down.

Integration is not a process that the state can enforce, but can be a process the government can assist. We can begin by empowering political, spiritual and traditional leaders to lead acts of reconciliation. This not only requires space to discuss the injustices that have occurred and hear the grievances of all concerned, but also firm guarantees for the personal safety of those who speak out. The process should continue with commitments to fund integration projects. Ideally these projects should be designed and run by civil society, ranging from events to promote cultural understanding to efforts to rebuild the affected areas physically.

We have heard South African leaders condemn the violence in the strongest terms. Are they prepared to back up their comments with cash?

Where to for South African immigration policy?

The politics of exclusion will continue until South Africa regularises its foreign migrant population. As the violence gradually subsides, South Africans have begun to reconsider the fundamental tenets of the nation's immigration policy. Unfortunately, too many have located the blame at a familiar site: the porous border. Echoing the appeals of some of the perpetrators of the violence, various commentators have suggested that incompetent border management led South Africans to take up arms against their neighbours.

This logic of the argument is seductive: "If we don't allow them to come, South African citizens won't harm them." The Institute of Race Relations has recently floated this brand of thinking: "Poor policy decisions and simple incompetence in border policing … contributed directly to the presence of a large illegal population in South Africa. Without adequate legal

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standing in the community, these people became easy or soft targets for mob violence."

Undoubtedly, the Democratic Alliance and other "law and order" advocates will seek to build on this line of argument in the same way as they have in the past, by calling for the South African army to seal the borders once and for all. Others may want to go further, by asking the police to divert yet more attention to the task of policing immigration laws internally.

In addition to silently avoiding the fact that many foreigners affected have been long-term legal residents, these arguments never adequately explain what would be required to stop new migrants from coming or to send them all home. South Africa simply cannot afford to continue, let alone ramp up, its vigorous surveillance, arrest and deportation strategies. In 2006 (the latest released figures) South Africa deported over a quarter of a million people, a hike of more than 56 000 on the previous year. Given the massive amounts of public expenditure and total economic costs involved, it is surprising that advocates of control-oriented policies have succeeded in representing themselves as hard-nosed hawks and painting advocates of more liberal border policies as unrealistic doves.

More importantly, the South African Police Services end up doing all the enforcement legwork. This limits their ability to respond to South Africa's real problem of violent crime. It is also an entrée to corruption for many ordinary officials.

The recent statements by Home Affairs Deputy Minister Malusi Gigaba to the effect that South Africa needs a "management-oriented" and not a "control-oriented" border policy are a welcome departure from current practice and orthodoxy. As the Minister has signalled, we need a raft of regularisation policies to support this new approach. This must include amnesties for long-term residents, bilateral and multilateral free-movement agreements, and improved access to the refugee reception system.

Importantly, this does not mean turning South Africa into a proverbial "soft touch" on immigration enforcement. Instead, South Africa's capacity to enforce immigration laws needs to be refocused along the lines that Cosatu has long endorsed. Policing should take place at the sites where workers' rights are being most affected: in the workplace. Instead of chasing foreigners on the borderline, in the streets and in their homes, Home Affairs and the Department of Labour should be raiding workplaces without warning, and regularly punishing employers who flaunt labour laws.

Darshan Vigneswaran (PhD) is a researcher at the Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of the Witwatersrand.

Institute of Justice and Reconciliation Panel

Probing the heart of hatred

Uncomfortable and forthright opinions were expressed at a panel discussion on 'Xenophobia – why now, where to next?', hosted by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation

FOCUS presents edited extracts from the addresses of panellists Bishop Paul Verryn of Johannesburg's Central Methodist Church, well known as a safe haven for homeless immigrants; Patrick Chauke, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs; and Dr Adekeye Adebajo, Executive Director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution. The discussion was chaired by Dr Lionel Louw.

BISHOP VERRYN:

I suppose the question that has been asked most frequently is: why this infection in our communities? I don't think there is a single answer, but if you call people illegal aliens you must understand that you are designing what we are living with at the moment. It gives a good excuse for upstanding citizens to get rid of the "scourge".

Knowing the struggle that it is not to be called an illegal underscores that. As a South African, I am sick of it. Somebody arrives in our country who has been fairly seriously traumatised – probably had his genitals electrified or some such other delightful opportunity for torture. At the Department of Home Affairs you are given papers to fill in; the appointment is five or six weeks later. Then you should really not move around the streets much because the police are doing their job meticulously, as they did when they pursued people for passes. Of course it's criminal to be caught without proper documentation. You serve your sentence and then off to Lindela and eventually to the border, and then about two weeks later, back to Central Methodist. Racists in South Africa are like hen's teeth since 1994, but nonetheless we are fairly susceptible, I think, to prejudice.

I think that there are all sorts of political things going on at the moment which open up the doors for mischief of this nature, and when a mob is set free, the easiest identifiable target is going to be hit. It hasn't been exclusively xenophobic. Under the violence, I think, lies this dreadful, fearful thing of tribalism.

Finally, the most important thing is that the stage is well set because of the huge disparity between the rich and

Images in this article © Mark Wessels

Bishop Paul Verryn, Dr Lionel Louw and Patric Chauke, chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs, probe recent violent attacks.

the poor in this country. The poor are angry, with good reason, but beyond reason. Many have nothing to lose if they engage in a revolution. If we don't start dealing with this issue substantially, we must prepare ourselves for this phenomenon to spill out elsewhere.

Despite the fact that most of us have been quite seriously traumatised by what we've seen, I don't actually think that we have changed our minds that much. Nobody, not one South African, can skip free of responsibility in this. I'm a racist, you're a racist – xenophobia can domicile itself in any one of us at any time. It's an infection that can get hold of our imaginations in an instant, no matter how much we've worked against prejudice. There's no place for smugness, which is another problem we have in South Africa. We have a peculiar arrogance in us that enables us not to listen.

At some level the Government has tried very, very hard to face the crisis. There's been a huge amount of work done in trying to prepare camps. But the refugees themselves are still very anxious and traumatised.

Let me dream for two minutes: first of all, I do believe that all of us have something within us that wants to embrace and include other human beings, and that's the best part of us. I want to plead that we investigate opportunities to be exposed to people who are not like ourselves, who don't think like us, and we engage in them in a way that unfolds a rigorous relationship. Let me speak as a Christian and say that I think that this is the most incredible moment for us to build up a legacy in this country which could leave the world stunned. The whole world wants to put refugees into little places where they are isolated and organised according to what that country wants. I believe that the Government is 100 per cent correct to say: "Let's not have camps." So, my dream is that they be reintegrated into society as complete human beings. The privilege of working with that overcrowded church building has been beyond what I have ever experienced in my ministry – we have a Latin American and ballroom dance thing, we've got a book club, a drama club, a reading circle for children, a crèche, home-based care for the vulnerable and the sick, a computer school, and an ABET training centre that's had five sets of examinations, with one failure in all those examinations and a 60 per cent distinction rate – it's all their work.

We have to welcome as friends, not strangers or aliens, people who come from Zimbabwe and the DRC, and Uganda and Kenya, and wherever they are. We have huge ignorance about what Africa really is, and this is the moment in which God has decided, in my humble opinion, to open those doors vigorously. I don't even think that we have begun to understand what could be built here.

MR CHAUKE:

I share a problem with my Deputy Minister, Malusi Gigaba. Both of us are dark. One day, walking up the St George's Mall in Cape Town, I came across this group of police. I was approached: "Where are you going?" "I'm going to have lunch." "Can I see your papers?" "What papers?" "Your papers. Why are you here? You're from Nigeria?" These normal policeman get you at the corner, get a bribe for a Coke and a pie, and then you pass on. What saved me was that I produced my Parliamentary card.

I bring this up because it is clear that the issue we are dealing with has very much to do with ourselves as Africans. Most people

Former Education Minister Prof. Kadar Asmal asks some difficult questions at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation Panel discussion.

who are at the receiving end are African people, and the poorest of the poor.

The first thing asylum seekers do is go to Home Affairs. How do you make sure that they get the services Home Affairs must provide? Five centres deal with refugees – one in Marabastad, one in Cape Town, one in Port Elizabeth, and one in Johannesburg. The influx is very high, and the department does not have capacity to produce documentation. We are dealing with the amendment to the Immigration Bill, to provide that capacity. The experience, when you apply, is that sometimes you stand in a queue for four or six months. That's one of the biggest challenges we are faced with.

I happened to be one of the people that visited Alexandra immediately [after the violence]. Parliament set up a task team that went to Alexandra. The report will be debated very soon, but we found that a number of meetings had taken place dealing with service delivery. In a stronghold of a particular political party a decision was taken – it's recorded – to move certain people because there was going to be housing development. So a certain category of people must be removed, so that their own can benefit. We discovered that it was not the foreigners who were attacked directly, because of the number of South Africans we met at the Alexandra Police Station who happened to be Pedi, Tsonga, Venda-speaking people. Maybe we are dealing with tribalism.

Our findings are scanty in that regard. However, people that were arrested in Thembisa had come from elsewhere, and the same applies at Cyril Ramaphosa squatter camp, where there was a very serious problem. Clearly, this was a well-organised attack for a particular purpose.

Most of the displaced people we met were Zimbabweans and Mozambicans who said they wanted to stay here. Look at the numbers of Mozambicans in Soweto who have integrated very well. We agree with the Government policy on integration. There may be some challenges. What does integration mean? With international practice, if one goes to another country as an asylum seeker, what is one entitled to get?

We have more than 100 000 people to integrate; whose responsibility is that? What is our role as stakeholders? It's not only the responsibility of Government, and I think that we have to begin to find solutions out of this kind of engagement. because we do not want to see this happen here again. We are beginning

to see commitment from communities. But what is our role? The church, political parties, opinion makers, local government, provincial government, everybody. It's our problem, together, to resolve.

DR ADEBAJO:

I want speak out on behalf of the people that have been denigrated as "amaKwerekwere". I first came to this beautiful country in 1994 to observe apartheid's funeral as a United Nations-observer and a citizen of Nigeria, a country that had provided tremendous support to anti-apartheid efforts. I moved here five years ago from New York to contribute to efforts to rebuild the country as an Afripolitan success story, with a pan-African Brain Trust that could produce solid academic and policy knowledge.

In 1994, Nelson Mandela eloquently noted that out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud. Almost exactly 14 years later, in the same month of May, local South African mobs wielding knobkerries, pangas, axes, clubs, knives and guns, in xenophobic acts of awesome savagery started slaughtering their African neighbours from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi. Mandela's country had gone mad again.

How had his vision of a New Jerusalem been so tragically perverted in 14 short years?

Much of the coverage of recent events has failed to note the widespread xenophobia that pervades South African society. A few years ago a black South African self-declared intellectual told me during a debate that non-South Africans should not discuss South African politics. Of course he still goes around discussing other African countries. While there have been admirable responses by many South Africans to these incidents, some of the tears shed by the elite appear to be crocodile tears. It is simply inadequate to explain these incidents in terms of uneducated and ignorant mobs or an elusive and invisible third force, which seems to absolve everyone of responsibility. Evil must simply be called by its name.

In 1998 two Senegalese and a Mozambican were flung to their deaths from a train by a mob coming back from a protest rally. Data in 2001 showed that 85 per cent of South Africans surveyed felt that undocumented migrants should be denied their freedom of speech, while 60 to 65 per cent thought they should be denied police protection or access to social services. Many Africans are still pejoratively derided as "amaKwerekwere" in a new perverse version of the apartheid era's Swart Gevaar, the Black Peril. As with the Rwandan genocide, African migrants are seen as cockroaches and dehumanised, making it easier to justify their annihilation.

The media talk about a parasitic flood of impoverished masses threatening to overwhelm the country. Headlines have included "Illegals in SA add to decay of cities" and "Francophone invasion". Nigerians or Moroccans in this terminology are condemned as drug traffickers, Congolese as passport racketeers and diamond smugglers, and so on. People from North America and Western Europe who are involved in crime are rarely reported on.

African countries defended and supported the freedom of South Africa, and many of them bore the brunt of many bombings. Our first recommendation is that South Africa should consider paying reparations to its neighbours for the destruction of the past and, I think, as the richest country on the continent, even with its own domestic problems, it can surely provide the grants, investment and special trade concessions its neighbours need to trade profitably and develop their own industries.

Secondly, I think the country's refugee determination regime must be strengthened to be able to separate genuine asylum seekers from those who are seen as economic migrants.

Thirdly, the delivery on social services is an obvious area in need of urgent action.

Finally, public education and conflict-resolution sessions with local communities and educational institutions will be critical.

This has surely been the most perverse commemoration of Africa Day: at a time when the continent should have been celebrating its freedom and unity, marauding hoards were hunting down and burning the homes of their neighbours.

Some analysts have used these incidents as yet another stick with which to beat Mbeki, resorting to simplistic and often infantile name-calling. Surely his policy on Zimbabwe cannot explain events as disparate as the killings of Somalis, Mozambicans, and Senegalese,

This has surely been the most perverse commemoration of Africa Day: at a time when the continent should have been celebrating its freedom and unity, marauding hoards were hunting down and burning the homes of their neighbours

some of which started under Mandela's rule. Mbeki has been the visionary prophet of Africa's renaissance over the last decade, and an energetic peacemaker across the continent – for these alone, despite his other flaws, his legacy is secure. No prophet is honoured in his own land, but the continent has much to be grateful to Mbeki for.

This tale may not have a happy ending. A great country that has produced four Nobel Peace Laureates appears determined to consume itself in an orgy of uncontrolled hatred. This nomadic Afripolitan citizen of the world now questions whether this is really a place to call home. There is much poignant symbolism in this situation, even as Mbeki, the prophet of Africa's renaissance, stumbles on wearily to a post-Polokwane regime, the xenophobic attacks in poverty-infested, hate-filled and bloodthirsty black townships in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Mpumalanga and Durban may well represent the smouldering ashes of the death of the African renaissance project, which he initiated.

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation Panel

Zimbabwe: where to now?

Before his return to Zimbabwe and subsequent arrest there, MDC Secretary-General Tendai Biti participated in a forum discussion in Cape Town on the way ahead for his profoundly damaged country

As this edition of FOCUS prepares to go to press, Tendai Biti, Secretary-General of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), is being held in prison in Zimbabwe. He was arrested on charges of treason immediately on landing at Harare after spending some time in South Africa. This development makes his no-holds-barred comments at the May forum on Zimbabwe organised by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) all the more relevant. They are presented here in an edited form, together with the edited comments of Elinor Sisulu of the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition. The moderator for the evening was Fanie du Toit, Executive Director of the IJR.

MR BITI:

Zimbabwe is going only one way, because our people spoke on 29 March 2008. No analyst gave us a chance in hell, but the people in Zimbabwe did it. The baby has been conceived. The birth pains might be long, but the baby will be delivered, there's absolutely no doubt about that.

But it would be folly to try to unpack the future without understanding our past. At the core of the present is the nature of the struggle that gave birth to a new Zimbabwe on 18 April 1980. However, the colonial state that preceded it was a narrow state, controlled by a few, serving the interest of a few, and what Robert Mugabe and the many comrades who were there did in 1980 was to enter into the shoes of this same narrow, militarised, privatised state that had been there since 1891.

That state was not designed to be democratic, to be liberal. More importantly, it was not founded upon a democratic dispensation where the overwhelming majority of the people owned it and could claim ownership of it. What gave Robert Mugabe and his cronies power was not the election in February 1980, it was the National War of Liberation.

Their source of legitimacy has never been elections. He has never accepted that power can be transferred through five minutes in a ballot box. Elections have been nominal exercises to put a veneer of legitimacy over something that was not founded on a democratic construction.

So when we went to the elections on 29 March 2008, when we went to the elections in 2005, 2002, or 2000, the transfer of power was not on the agenda. But an accident happened on 29 March 2008. They lost when they did not expect to lose.

So the crisis in Zimbabwe is inextricably tied up to the nature of the state: a privatised, militarised state. Some would say a vampire state, a criminal state, it is all those things in one. But it is presided over by people that are pursuing a tired ideology, nationalism. Nationalism has a historic function, of dealing with the race question and decolonisation. But it does not have an agenda beyond that, it must pass the baton.

The struggle in Zimbabwe is therefore not a struggle between the MDC and Zanu-PF, it is a generational struggle between exhausted and tired nationalism and those of us who feel that, and who know that there's unfinished business. And one of the biggest pieces of unfinished business is the issue of democratisation. And when we talk of democracy, it is not a metaphysical abstract concept, it's a real thing. When you wake up in the morning and you don't have the freedom of listening to a second radio station, it is a real demand. We live the reality of oppression, so the fight is not a simple fight of transfer of power. It is a conflict of ideologies.

In my value system democracy is critical. That is not to undermine the value of issues such as land or social justice. It is simply saying, this is the time for these other values that represent our generation.

It's almost a revolution that we're going through. There is violent conflict. Our people are being killed as we speak. Over 10 000 families have been displaced since 29 March 2008, hundreds of houses have been burnt, particularly in the provinces that Zanu-PF considers their own private property. And not even the Interahamwe in Rwanda in 1994 used the torture tactics they are using.

So there's a war of retribution. They call it Operation Mavhoterapapi, meaning Operation Where Did You Vote. The Zimbabwean regime loves operations. In 1982/87, it was Operation Gukurahundi, and 30 000 people were killed. In 2005 it was Operation Murambatsvina, and over a million people were displaced. These operations are signs of a regime that is not afraid of taking risks.

Unemployment might be 90 per cent, inflation 400 000 per cent, 4 million people might be in South Africa, our life expectancy might be 34 – it's a failed state, a fragile state. But when it comes to the politics of power and the power retention, Mugabe is second to no regime. And when he claims he's got degrees in violence, it's not a metaphor, it's reality. One of the problems, which explains the paralysis of perspectives in SADC, is that you've got amateurs dealing with a monster with years of dealing with power. If you cut Mugabe's veins, blood doesn't flow, power flows.

You now have food being deliberately denied to areas where the MDC did particularly well.

[One of our officials] was telling me that some of the people who are in the hospitals are saying, "We want the run-off, we want to finish the old man." And I said, "But some of them have no hands, how are they're going to vote?" And he said, "They're going to put the pen in their mouth."

One of the things that they're doing is asset stripping. Major transactions are taking place. Company names are being changed, shareholders' names are being changed to hide assets. They've got a US$300 million application awaiting processing before the Export and Import Bank of Africa. And I want to say to any organisation prepared to do with business with them, that Mugabe's term of office expired on 28 March 2008. He's a caretaker President who doesn't have substantive rights to conclude a contract with anyone. And the Zimbabwe Constitution is very clear: any deal concluded has to be approved by Parliament, which Parliament, as we all know, has not been called up. So the people's government will not honour these illegal agreements.

It is a disaster for Robert Mugabe to insist on a run-off in an election that he has lost. Parliament is now being controlled by the MDC in its two formations. That means that he is pushing the country to a ready-made constitutional crisis, because if you're not government, then you do not control Parliament. How do you push a legislative agenda when you're in the opposition? So it is a constitutional disaster from the word go.

Robert Mugabe has taken us to where we are a laughing stock. The highest note in Zimbabwe is $50 million, and it can't buy you a pint of beer. Every week 4 000 people are dying in Zimbabwe from starvation.

Mugabe has taken our country to where it was in 1923, when the most common diseases were cholera and dysentery. In 1923, if an African wanted to eat meat, he would go and hunt, that's what we're doing now. In 1923, if a black man wanted


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money in order to marry, he'd go to South Africa. In 2008, if a Zimbabwean wants money, he comes to look for a job at a restaurant in Sandton. So if he has taken us to 1923, and he now wants to participate in a run-off to take us to 1800, the people of Zimbabwe will not have that. We are saying there must be a solution in Zimbabwe.

Some would call it a negotiated settlement. We won, the people spoke. What are we negotiating? Some call it a power-sharing agreement, but power-sharing presupposes equality. We are not equal to Zanu-PF, the people of Zimbabwe rejected Zanu-PF. But there must be a solution, and the fundamental non-negotiable principle is that whatever solution there is must respect the principle of democracy. That means that Morgan Tsvangirai must be in charge of whatever construction is put in place as part of that solution.

Some will call it a transitional authority, or a government of national unity. We prefer to call it what it ought to be, a government

Some would call it a negotiated settlement. We won, the people spoke. What are we negotiating? Some call it a power-sharing agreement, but power-sharing presupposes equality. We are not equal to Zanu-PF, the people of Zimbabwe rejected Zanu-PF

of national healing, because that country requires healing. That country has been traumatised, vandalised and brutalised.

Healing includes truth, so there must be a truth and reconciliation commission in Zimbabwe, because without the truth, you can't move forward.

The second matrix that we have to balance with the democracy matrix is, of course, that of stability. Stability means that you have to recognise and incorporate the gains of the national liberation struggle, complete its unfinished business. Zanu-PF has squandered even the little that they built after 1980. They squandered what Smith had, then they built, then they destroyed what they themselves had built. But you have to incorporate even those ruins.

Everyone must be a shareholder of this country. But we draw the line at Robert Mugabe. Robert Mugabe is not part of the future. But the most critical thing is that any agreement must be based on substance.

Therefore there must be fundamental deliverables, and the first is the issue of the constitution. There has to be a new constitution in Zimbabwe, by Zimbabweans, for Zimbabweans. There has to be an undertaking to democratise. Thirdly, there must be commitment to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of our country; the economic and social agenda.

And lastly, of course, there must be commitment to national healing.

Without that settlement there's going to be more blood, and our people are going to hit back. They've turned the left cheek, they've turned the right cheek, they've turned the left cheek, they've turned the right cheek, but they will begin to hit back. Some will call it civil war, but it's not civil war, it's self-defence. To avoid that the people's victory of the 29 March 2008 must be recognised. That's not negotiable.

The point is it cannot be an opportunistic elite pact, nor can it be a solution along the Kenyan lines, which favoured the incumbent. You cannot have a compromised situation that favours the incumbent if that therefore steals the people's victory.

Zimbabweans have done what they could and this baby will be delivered, but where is the midwife? Where is SADC, where is the African Union? And that is where the problem is: the international community has not done enough to ensure the realisation and the fruition of the people's dreams, aspirations and gains. And the international community has to play that role of midwife. We have done enough as Zimbabweans.

What if this does not happen? I don't know what the consequences would be. Maybe they will start paying attention when rivers of dead people start flowing in Zimbabwe, as they did in Rwanda in 1994. Even then, in Rwanda, the international community did not respond. Maybe when it's a black dictator, there is another standard from when it's a white on black dictatorship. Maybe.

But the point we are making is that the international community has not responded to what we've done. The battle of democratisation is a relay, so we as Zimbabweans did what we did, we came number one in the first 400 metres of removing the dictator, so we have passed the baton to the international community and, sadly, they've dropped it.

MS SISULU:

A few weeks ago I heard a very interesting quotation by Berthold Brecht, referring to governments that do not want to give up power. The sense of it is: "Some governments ask themselves, why can we not dissolve the people and elect another?" I would say that this outgoing government of Zimbabwe is in the process of trying to dissolve the people.

It's almost like a scorched earth policy: assaults, murder, burning of granaries. From a human rights perspective, one particularly

worrying feature is multiple assaults on the same people. When the MDC offices were raided, people who had been beaten in the rural areas were re-beaten, re-assaulted in the MDC offices. Patients who had been assaulted and were being treated at Driefontein Mission were re-beaten when the hospital was invaded by Zanu-PF militants. Patients, nurses and doctors were beaten, and the hospital had to close.

A particularly heinous feature of this violence is the burning of granaries and people's homes. At an inflation rate of whatever hundred thousand the replacement value of a teaspoon is so high. To burn someone's house in that context is really a heinous crime. The burning of granaries is really a death sentence.

And this is a state-sponsored campaign. There is documentary evidence of meetings of the joint operation command – military control of the country, rather than control by the Cabinet and the politicians.

This violence is very, very well documented by a whole NGO forum of human rights organisations. Yet this is met in the region, and especially in South Africa, by an official discourse that completely ignores this, which effectively dissolves the people of Zimbabwe.

It blames the United States and Britain for the problems of Zimbabwe, and accepts the construction of the outgoing President of Zimbabwe that the crisis is a bilateral issue. There has never been acknowledgement by the Presidency of this country of the nature of state-sponsored violence in Zimbabwe. There has been complete denial of the plight of people. It is as if they do not exist.

I agree totally with Tendai Biti that the nature of the Zimbabwean state was inherited from the settler colonial state, and a state apparatus was inherited which is not designed for democracy, which doesn't have its legitimacy based on elections, and that apparatus committed the crime of genocide of Gukurahundi from 1982 to 1987.

The MDC is under intense pressure to give the generals and the politicians a soft landing. And so true justice and reconciliation are thorny issues in Zimbabwe because it's going to be very, very difficult for people to accept this kind of impunity. And if you have this impunity, how do you change the nature of the state, and the political culture?

And that brings me to the generational issue. As civil society organisations, particularly the coalition I represent, the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, we never ever appreciated the SADC-led mediation because it was the wrong diagnosis of the problem. It was diagnosed as a conflict between the MDC and Zanu-PF, and for us, the problem in Zimbabwe is the nature of the state.

Thoko Matshe, a veteran Zimbabwean feminist and human rights activist said, "It's not so much about changing who is ruling us, it's a question of changing how we are ruled." The SADC mediation process never ever recognised this: it's almost as if the existence of the MDC is a problem.

I've been openly critical of things about the MDC. But after March 29, nobody should be asking whether the MDC has the right to govern.

So we are in a situation now where the people of Zimbabwe have to face a run-off, an expensive, dangerous exercise. Certainly the change is going to happen. The question is, how many more people have to die before then?

One thing that has encouraged us is that we've had regional and international civil society acting together to deal with the dictatorship. One of the first actions was on the Ship of Arms. On 21 April, more than 120 people gathered in Dar es Salaam, representing 30 organisations from about 20 countries on this continent, and made a very profound statement on the crisis in Zimbabwe. The Kenyans were very, very strong that what happened in Kenya should not be duplicated in Zimbabwe.

As civil society organisations, particularly the coalition I represent, the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, we never ever appreciated the SADC-led mediation because it was the wrong diagnosis of the problem. It was diagnosed as a conflict between the MDC and Zanu-PF, and for us, the problem in Zimbabwe is the nature of the state

The crisis of elections in Africa is not only in Zimbabwe. We've had elections in Ethiopia that undermined the will of the people and resulted in over 200 Ethiopians dead in post-election violence just a few years ago. We've had Ugandan elections which were highly questionable, we've had the elections in Kenya. There are going to be elections in Angola next year, and already the Office of the UN High Commission for Human Rights has been closed. So the Zimbabwean problem is a symptom of a sickness on this continent, and the sickness has to be addressed by civil society raising a stronger and stronger voice, invoking the African Charter for Human and People's Rights, invoking the SADC guidelines on elections and democracy, and confronting this discourse that this problem in Zimbabwe is a problem of an anti-imperialist revolutionary hero versus the colonial West.

World Economic Forum: Africa

Waiting for 'go'

Zimbabweans are ready to reconstruct their country – if only a solution can be found to the country's profound political, economic and social crises

Tendai Biti of the MDC; Nigel Chanakira of the Kingdom Meikles Group; Simba Makoni, former Finance Minister in Zimbabwe and one of the presidential candidates in the 29 March poll and Collen Gwiyo of the ZTU discussed the then scheduled presidential run-off and its alternatives, as well as the reconstruction of Zimbabwe, as members of a panel titled "Reconstructing Zimbabwe at the Annual World Economic Forum Africa Meeting" in Cape Town chaired by HSF Director Raenette Taljaard. MDC faction leader Arthur Mutambara was present in the audience after his release form prison that week. These are edited extracts from the discussion.

MR BITI:
There is a structural and organic crisis in Zimbabwe, but there is also a challenge of reconstruction, and we have to think about that, because it is going to happen. But before we get there, the pre-condition is quite clearly the immediate resolution of the political crisis in Zimbabwe. That must be seen in the context of pervasive economic and social crises. Only yesterday, 1,8 billion Zimbabwean dollars would buy you one US dollar. This economic crisis is in the context of a fragile, failed state, and while it has lost its capacity to provide all those things that a state is socially obliged to provide to its people, it has not failed when it comes to the issues of violence. It is a predatory state.

Underpinning the present political crisis are the question of violence and the unwillingness to accept that elections are a medium and vehicle of power transition. The regime has not come to terms that it lost power, and has to transfer power. That question is critical because 28 June will not be different from 30 March.

Its natural reaction is to respond violently. It is almost as if the regime is sending out a message to the region that it does not care, it has no respect for life, it has no respect for the rule of law – and unfortunately the region is blinking. It is telling the international community in a loud and clear voice that it is not prepared to play by the rules, not prepared to listen to logic, and, most importantly, not prepared to listen to democracy and the voice of its people. Unfortunately the response of the international community, of the region, has been pathetic.

MS TALJAARD:
Mr Makoni, you have called for the run-off election to be called off and for a different resolution to be reached?

MR MAKONI:
The situation in our country is very grave. The condition of life of the majority of the people of Zimbabwe, particularly the rural people, is hell on earth. This does not reflect a leadership that is serving the people. It reflects a leadership that is assaulting the people. But March 29 did not yield the electoral outcome that the people of Zimbabwe wanted, it produced a hung parliament. It produced no presidential winner if we go by the numbers announced by Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. We find ourselves faced with the prospect of a run-off when, particularly in rural areas, there is no prospect of any semblance of a free and fair election. And even if by the remotest of chances we could have an election whose results would resemble the will of people, it would still not resolve the crisis, in that neither of the two leaders would be able to form an effective government.

If we are committed to going through the process, we must talk about timing that offers sufficient time to pacify the countryside, that enables resources to be delivered to a government that is not able to finance another election at this point, that would enable free campaigning by all parties, and ultimately allow the people of Zimbabwe to cast their vote freely.

Our proposition is that we must negotiate a government of national unity (GNU) that involves all key players, so that we can take the country forward and redeem the people from the hell on earth they are in at the moment. Whatever happens, the Zimbabwean political landscape is already permanently changed. Zanu-PF is now the minority party in Parliament. And therefore the future of Zimbabwe is going to be influenced not so much by Zanu-PF alone, if at all, but by the forces that represent change, progress and commitment to serving and service to the people. That is the premise on which I believe we will discuss the reconstruction of Zimbabwe.

MS TALJAARD:
Nigel Chanakira, would you address some of the issues in relation to the challenges that you have confronted in continuing your business operations in the current political climate?

MR CHANAKIRA:
Running a business in that environment is certainly a hair-raising experience. The macro-economic indicators defy all logic. But the reality is that countries do not fall off the face of the earth. People live in Zimbabwe, people conduct business still and try to fashion a life. So I was able to go back to Zimbabwe some two and a half years ago, and I tell you the adage "high risk, high return" certainly does apply. Amidst the chaos there are business opportunities. Services are required, basics are needed. Clearly business models have to be changed.

I believe genuinely that everybody who has a passion for Africa and for poverty alleviation has a role to play, but if you call yourself a leader you have a responsibility to engage in the issues of Zimbabwe. If we say we are committed to changing the state of the world, then we have this unique window of opportunity. This is a strategic moment in time which we must really grab with both hands, and focus our attention for the next 100 days or so on the affairs of Zimbabwe.

I have a plan, but as an economist and as a businessman, and most importantly as a Christian, I think the value of life must be sacrosanct. Where there is any evidence of genocide or silent killing by starvation, we cannot stand by and watch. What has happened is all a function of poverty. What in South Africa

MDC Secretary-General Tendai Biti, now incarcerated, and former Finance Minister Simba Makoni in animated discussion about a 'goverment of national unity'.

we are terming as xenophobia, all these political issues, have entrenched within them the alleviation of poverty. I think that has become our business as business, and we will engage in that process. So can the real leaders stand up please and stand up and be counted, within and outside of Zimbabwe, and in South Africa in particular.

In my plan, firstly, this is not the time for an African renaissance, it is time for the African reformation. Number two, clearly, the political dispensation that has been articulated is the first ingredient for a future Zimbabwe, and we are not silent observers in that process. Then, talks with the West have to take place whether we like it or not. Pointing fingers in public fora at one another just does not cut it any more. The commitments made in terms of the Lancaster House agreement for land reform are the Achilles' heel of Zimbabwe. So a conference needs to occur, perhaps within the next 100 days.

The next issue is governance reform; adherence to basic economic principles and governance is fundamental. Next: constitutional reform within the next 100 days. Then the reinstallation of Zimbabwe in terms of dealing with the multilateral institutions, and SADC has to be part of that. Then we will have our investors' confidence, and Zimbabwe is ripe for that. The region, indeed the world, knows it, because the acumen, the capacities, of Zimbabweans is world renowned. Finally, I hope that by this time next year we will have the World Economic Forum of Africa taking place in Harare, in a reconstructed Zimbabwe.

MS TALJAARD:
Collen Gwiyo, we would like to engage with you on the socioeconomic issues on the ground in Zimbabwe, and how members of your trade union movement, in particular, are experiencing the events as we approach the run-off.

MR GWIYO:
The fundamental issue is that the Zimbabwe crisis is premised on a background of the politics of exclusion: either you are Zanu or you are not in politics; either you are for Mr Mugabe, or you are not a political leader. Either you merge into Zanu-PF or you do not exist.

Tendai Biti's passionate pleas for the future of Zimbabwe were met with arrest upon his return to Zimbabwe by the Mugabe regime.

That culture of exclusivity has undermined the existence of national dialogue. Why is it that Mr Mugabe and Mr Tsvangirai have not met around a table? One side is armed, the other side is not armed, so it cannot be called a war situation. I am aware that Mr Tsvangirai has extended a hand on the issue of a GNU; I have never heard Mr Mugabe raising that issue. This is a big challenge for SADC. It is not enough for President Mbeki to see Mr Mugabe on the sidelines, and to see the other leader on the sidelines. We want to hear them speak about the problems Zimbabweans are facing.

From a labour point of view, we have been involved in the problems since way back in 1997, when the labour movement challenged the government of President Robert Mugabe that corruption needed to be curtailed. Those issues were not heard. We raised the issues of democracy. We challenged the labour movement to go for politics, because the ZANU-PF view is that politics and leadership are exclusive to ZANU-PF. The other point, from a labour movement perspective: the average income now is equivalent to R300 a month. Unemployment is above 80%. It is not normal for an economy to exist when it has exceeded more than three-digit inflation. So the crisis in Zimbabwe is not imagined, it is real.

As regards the run-off, my view is that it cannot be deferred. The crisis is man made, so there would not be any justification to defer it. Zimbabweans are in need, they want to try for the second time to send the message.

Zimbabweans are hard-working people who love their country. Once the governance issues are addressed Zimbabweans are willing to start afresh.

MS TALJAARD:

I would like to open the floor for questions, but over to you, first, Arthur Mutambara from the MDC.

MR MUTAMBARA:

A word of caution to Zimbabweans, to the Africans and to the international community: please, do not encourage genocide. What is happening in Zimbabwe is moving towards that direction. In the past 72 hours we have lost eight activists, in the past four weeks we have lost 60 people. People dying because Robert Mugabe wants to win the run-off by any means necessary and at any cost. Robert Mugabe and the State of Zimbabwe are committing fraud, violence, murder and torture to stay in power.

Secondly, Morgan Tsvangirai is not Morgan Tsvangirai the person, he is an embodiment of the change that Zimbabweans have sought to have in their country. There are democratic forces in this election represented by Morgan Tsvangirai, and there are forces of evil, the despotism of Robert Mugabe. You cannot afford to be neutral.

I understand the strategy of Robert Mugabe, it is very simple. Mugabe wants to win this run-off at any cost, then control the Senate. Then he will say, "Now that I am the president of the country and I control the Senate, let us have a GNU." When you say Zimbabweans must talk, and do not condemn the genocide, you are encouraging Mugabe to use genocide, get his presidency, and then say, "Let Mbeki facilitate dialogue between me and the MDC." You are encouraging genocide if you do not tell Robert Mugabe that if he gets into power through murder, torture and fraud, Africa will not recognise that government. That message must go out from Mbeki, from SADC, from the AU. On our part as the opposition, if he does that we will not recognise that fraudulent government and, secondly, there will be no GNU between the democrats and despots. It is on your watch as Africans, as the international community, if you do nothing as Mugabe proceeds to acquire power through genocide.

Beyond this we are dreamers. We have so much potential – human capital, natural resources, infrastructure – we have the potential to be the Singapore of Africa in Zimbabwe. We do not intend to be a junior partner to South Africa, to the United Kingdom. We have the potential, when we get our stability and our legitimacy, to become a globally competitive economy. But please help us to help ourselves.

The following are extracts from the Q&A session:

Q: What is the solution, what can we do to bring back our Zimbabwe, apart from the negative?

MR BITI:

We took the decision to participate in the run-off as late as 10 May 2008 because we won the election of 29 March, and it took them five weeks to announce the result. No verification actually took place, so the figures that they announced they plucked from thin air. That is why we were against the run-off in principle. But we are ready for it and we are campaigning for it.

However, we fully acknowledge the importance of dialogue. One thing is very clear, any run-off pushes Zimbabwe to a precipice and closes all doors for democratic accommodation. To put it very crudely, the post-28 June scenarios are scenarios that nobody controls, that can actually lead our country to war. So if possible, it is in the best interest of Zimbabweans to talk. The next issue is that of inclusivity. The new Zimbabwe has to have everyone as a shareholder, and that includes all the major political parties.

Q: The sharing of power, the president of Malawi said the other day, is one of our biggest problems, especially when there is a sense of entitlement. There are people who have this sense of entitlement. I do not see President Mugabe all of a sudden working in a government of healing or national unity, because there is a sense of entitlement, and losing, for most of our leaders, is not a word that exists in their vocabulary.

MR BITI:

The issue of entitlement, the issue that "Zimbabwe belongs to me because I fought the war and I liberated the people of Zimbabwe", is the problem – of owning Zimbabwe like it is your tuck-shop. I think it will be a tragedy if we are going to have a solution in Zimbabwe which subordinates the voice of democracy, the voice of the majority. What happens after 28 June is anybody's guess. In our own view President Mugabe has created conditions for war in that country. If we are unable to talk before the 27 June, I do not think we will talk after the 27 June, which is why it is imperative that we talk now.

M&G CRITICAL THINKING FORUM

We're running out of time

A Mail & Guardian Critical Thinking Forum on poverty was held in Johannesburg in the aftermath of the xenophobic attacks that so sharply spotlighted issues of deprivation in South Africa

Varied views on poverty were presented by four panellists at a recent forum on African and global poverty, but one message was clear: action is becoming extremely urgent. The moderator was Debora Patta, and the panellists were Isobel Frye, Director of the Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute; Dr Vusi Gumede, Chief Policy Analyst in the Presidency's Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services; Dr Michele Ruiters, Senior Researcher, Multinational Programmes at the Institute of Global Dialogue; and Dr Dale McKinley, co-founder and current Executive Member of the Anti-Privatisation Forum. These are edited extracts from the panellists' opening addresses.

Discussions at the Poverty Panel focused heavily on how we effectively measure and respond to levels of social exclusions in our country.

MS FRYE:
Poverty relates to power and the allocation of resources, who gets what and who takes what from whom, and power relations determine distribution of resources internationally in accordance with geo-political power relations. But the strange fact is that there is no official poverty definition or measurement. Poverty can refer to material needs, having no food to eat; or to economic circumstances, having no or low income; but it also refers to social relations and social exclusion, not being able to participate in events, being humiliated, being stigmatised and being vulnerable to events beyond your control that can wreak havoc on your finely honed survival mechanisms.

Power and equality are at the heart of the determination of how allocation occurs nationally and globally. It's not that as South Africa we lack resources, but that the patterns of inclusion and exclusion which were perfected under apartheid have not been structurally broken yet.

It's useful to know what we're talking about. The head count of poverty in South Africa could range between 45 per cent and 80 per cent of our population, depending on how you define and measure it. We have incredibly high inequality in terms of income allocation – a Gini coefficient of 0,8, probably one of the highest in the world. And in South Africa poverty has an incredibly racial nature. The average black African household income for 2005/2006 was R37 711; for a white household it was R280 780.

Under the broad definition of unemployment, 43 per cent of people of working age are unemployed – 7,3 million people. Under our official definition, which excludes discouraged work-seekers, unemployment was [estimated at] 25,5 per cent in a study by the International Labour Organisation. The average in developing countries was 7 per cent.

We have to predict how we engage with getting those people into the employment market. And if people are not able to access income from employment, what policies are there to address their needs?

We need to dwell on the fact that marginalisation leads to atomisation, which is the antithesis of social cohesion. Fault lines lend themselves to explosions and implosions such as we've seen in the past two weeks. We need to acknowledge that we are running out of time.

Symbols of inclusion are not optional. When we talk about poverty experts, the people living in poverty know what defines

Debora Patta, Head of E-News Channel, moderated the Mail & Guardian's Critical Thinking Forum on Poverty.

poverty, they know what they lack. They also know what would enable them to move to a more secure livelihood strategy.

Government is developing an anti-poverty strategy and spearheading policy development, poverty measures and social-security reform. Now is a critical time for us to insist that the debate gets opened to people who live in poverty, and they're seen to be able to engage in the process, that people hear what they have to say, and that our policies are honed and appropriate to ending exclusion and trying to move out of this current crisis of poverty.

DR GUMEDE:

Martin Ravallion, one of the scholars on poverty and inequality, observed that poverty measurement and public policy issues are almost always inseparable.

The conceptualisation and measurement of poverty has been influenced by economists. Not until about 10 or 15 years ago did scholars from other fields come on board – psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists. As a result, I think we'll be able to move forward with speed in understanding the world's poverty challenges. Economists have always looked at this from a money metric perspective. In a sense, income, or consumption, is used as a proxy for well-being and quality of life. This is very debatable because poverty is multi-dimensional and very complex.

However, how do you measure the multi-dimensionality of poverty? Perhaps Isabel's point about the involvement of the people is our only answer.

Amartya Sen, Martin Ravallion and others argue if you do go for a poverty line, it should preferably be through the cost-of-basic-needs approach. There are other approaches. My view is that you need a poverty line as a monitoring instrument and a guide for targeting, and technically, methodologically, any poverty datum line is a contested terrain. It is also a political animal because once it's there, any shifts and changes around it would determine whether politicians are meeting their targets.

Given the theme of today's discussion, I want to [note that] in regions such as Latin America and Asia poverty is largely a matter of redistribution; something can be done through redistributive policies. In the case of most sub-Saharan African countries, maybe South Africa is an exception, we need to grow these economies quicker, and that growth has to be equitable. Scholars have advanced various arguments about why Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, is unable to move with speed to eradicate poverty. In almost all other regions, poverty is declining; it's only in Africa that it is not. Most of these reasons are

Panelists debated the various roles of power, equality and redistribution in addressing poverty.

economic. Some African scholars, however, have assessed public policy-making in relation to poverty eradication, and concluded that in Africa it has largely been influenced by nationalist agendas of nation building and economic growth.

Further, the way Amartya Sen conceptualises development, freedom, and poverty in particular, raises an important question: are African governments indeed expanding human capabilities, and does that make them developmental states, and, if so, how effective are the African developmental states in relation to eradication of poverty?

> Amartya Sen, Martin Ravallion and others argue if you do go for a poverty line, it should preferably be through the cost-of-basic-needs approach. There are other approaches...

These questions are important for policy, and timely, because the United Nations Development Programme is undertaking, for the first time, a Sub-Saharan Human Development Report, and I think these issues are going to come up.

However, I want to present this argument: that poverty, at least in most African countries, is a social construct, and it will take sustained human ingenuity to foster an environment in which it can be eradicated, where the poor are able to create their own wealth and be a part of their respective societies. It is an artefact of human creation in a world devoid of morals. It seems to me that countries determine what kind of poverty they can tolerate and for how long they want to tolerate it, and how vigorously they want to deal with it. Why do about a billion people go hungry every day when we know that there are enough resources?

I think it could be argued that poverty only exists for as long as we want it, because if we do not want to see poverty we could eliminate it from the face of the earth.

DR RUITERS:
I need to underline some of the issues already mentioned. The first is that policy is political. It's a decision made by government to do or not to do something. So if we see that government is not doing something, we have every right to say that something needs to be done – as with the so-called xenophobia riots, it's about the redistribution of power and defining who is included and excluded within the national project.

> Most of the people in the second economy of this country are women; under what conditions do they have to eke out a daily living?

On the issue of money metric measurements, the problem is that they are defined around a particular basket of goods. Who defines that basket? There are very local particularities we have to be concerned with before we address those issues at international level. We need to find a definition of poverty and policy in response to poverty in this region, and in South Africa, that takes into cognisance both capability and monetary issues, but it needs to be a pro-poor, people-centred, participatory approach.

Most of the people in the second economy of this country are women; under what conditions do they have to eke out a daily living? Women are the largest percentage of cross-border traders; how do they have to negotiate the relationship with the border guards, the bus drivers? How do we create policies sensitive to the fact that women are also exploited sexually because of their poverty status?

Issues of national identity are extremely important, especially where poverty is on the increase. We've seen in the past few weeks the perception that there is a scarce resource that is being taken away. How do we talk about national identity in a regional context? Are we African, or are we only African when things are good? What is South Africa's responsibility to the rest of the region as the economic powerhouse?

The regional aspects of poverty are extremely important to South Africa's stability. We need a political decision to co-operate, that our policies will be coherent, that we speak with one voice on a political level. And then there needs to be another level where we determine how much interaction our economies have. At the moment South Africa is the economic hub; we need to create economic hubs within the region so that people do not find it necessary to move to find a better life.

DR MCKINLEY:
Poverty is not simply an economic phenomenon, it is a state of living that encompasses a range of interlinked realities and experiences, some of which have been mentioned. It is also inherently universal, a global phenomenon embedded within the dominant socio-economic system, capitalism. Exploitation and accumulation is endemic to capital, and we're being dishonest if we don't think that's the case. You cannot accumulate without taking away.

So poverty is about power relationships at a global level, and has always been, because of the interlinked nature of political, economic and social activity driven by expansion and conquest, whether that was 200 years ago, or whether it's right now, with South African capital buying up the entire financial system of Zimbabwe.

Capital itself has, over the past three to four decades, with the neo-liberal version of it, become further globalised. The national identities that used to set some boundaries hardly apply anymore. Capital has globalised, poverty has globalised with it. They're twins.

Analysts firmly rooted South Africa's own poverty patterns in a global and regional context.

So there's no irony that the dominant developmental approach of a country like South Africa has been embedded in global processes of capitalist accumulation. The choice was made in the 1990s. We are paying the price 15 years later, and people are finally beginning to wake up to the reality that people in poverty are desperate, and that makes for desperate measures.

In the South African context the way in which poverty has been dealt with is like inviting the fox to take care of the chickens. As long as we accept that a small portion of the population should be able to make as much money as they can on the exploitation of others, we're going to have poverty. And the only thing we can do is put band-aids on it and make it a little bit better.

Will policy formulations eradicate poverty? I would argue not, and that what we need, in terms of consciousness, politically, and economically, is revolution – not in the sense of storming the Bastille, but a revolution in the way we think.

In the past few days, I think have had a revolution in our minds about what's happening in South Africa. Revolutions are about what we accept and what we reject. Are we willing to accept the situation, which is where poverty is endemic and we barricade ourselves in order to protect ourselves from those that don't have, or are we going to be able to integrate?

The answer, like the problem, is global. South Africa cannot deal with the problem nationally, nor can sub-Saharan Africa deal with it regionally.

Where is poverty and how is it really going to change? I work with organisations on the ground, with people that are constantly poor, and desperately so. Those people have been organising, all across the world; the desperation is getting greater. Change is not going to come from policy formulation; it is going to come from struggle, ordinary people forcing those in power to change. Whether we like it or not, that's how change historically has always happened.

There is a trade-off. Something has to be given up and something has to be gained. Are we willing to give up, to live in a society that's more peaceful, more equitable? Or are we going to be greedy and say those people can remain poor, somebody else can deal with it?

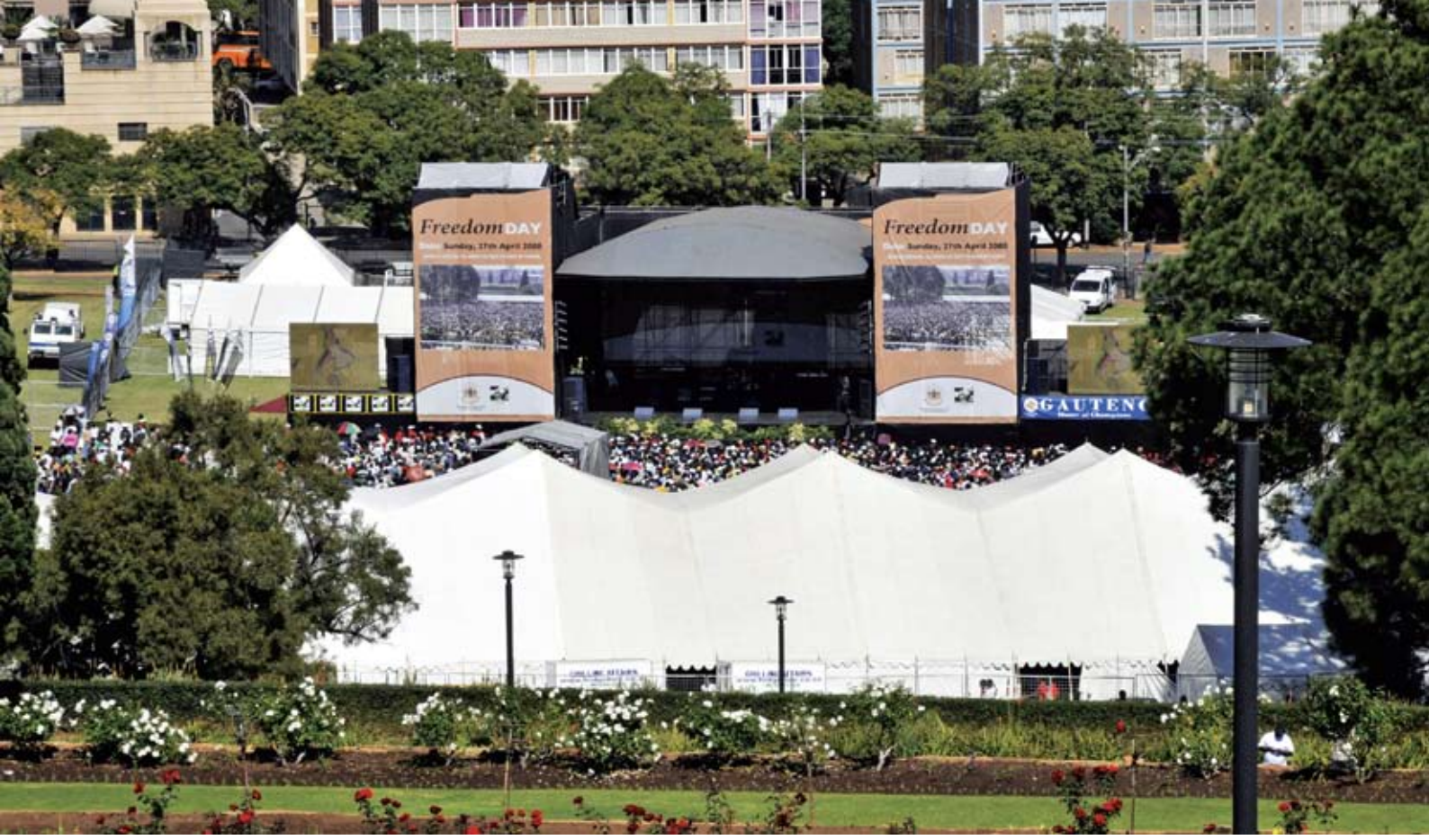
By Arthur GO Mutambara

Reflections on Africa Day

With xenophobic violence marring the possibility of celebration, a Zimbabwean political leader urges the need to rethink the African economic model – and to see opportunity in a world-wide crisis

The recent xenophobic attacks against black immigrants in South Africa signify a shameful and despicable development on our continent, and constitute a terrible indictment of our collective and historical commitment to pan-Africanism, the African Renaissance, ubuntu, African dignity and black humanity.

However, rather than address the symptoms of the crisis, we should deal with the fundamental issues that have caused this sad development. Both the push and pull factors of the tragedy must be attended to. Firstly, the poor people of South Africa have not yet economically benefited from their nation's transition from the evil apartheid system to democratic rule. Secondly, the economies of other African countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region and beyond have not grown sufficiently to provide a decent standard of living to their peoples.



South Africa's developmental programs, including black economic empowerment, have failed to address historical economic imbalances inherited from apartheid. True broad-based social transformation has been elusive. By and large, the traditionally rich whites, and their new black counterparts, are getting richer while the poor blacks are receding into abject poverty. Unfortunately, to the down trodden South African have-nots, poor black immigrants are then conveniently perceived as job stealers, criminals and competitors placing unreasonable demands on scarce resources and a shaky infrastructure. The foreigners, in particular the undocumented ones, are loathed for receiving slave wages for unskilled jobs.

Indeed, South African businesses have also mercilessly exploited this glut in cheap labour in pursuit of supersonic profits. There is a need to reflect on the role of capital in South Africa, and Africa in general. We should debunk once and for all the outdated and flawed concept of the trickle-down effect. Throughout the world, almost without exception, growth has led to the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor. The captains of South Africa's industry have become super-rich through obscene compensation, while the majority of the population continues in poverty. So, while economic growth is crucial, there is a need for active social justice to ensure that the prosperity is shared.

The crisis of unbridled capitalism is not unique to South Africa. Globally we witness the tragedy of unfettered market forces running amok as executives are paid exorbitant salaries while they hire people at near-slave wages to toil under inhuman conditions in Asian and African sweatshops. Oil companies wantonly pump toxins down rivers. The pharmaceutical industry denies life-saving medicines to millions of HIV-infected Africans. We are experiencing a global crisis that calls for business and political leaders to start thinking differently.

Governments must effectively play their role in setting the business terms of reference, levelling the economic playing field, and providing a safety net for the poor. This is clearly more imperative in Africa, and it is on this score that there has been a major policy failure on the part of the South African government with respect to the under employed, the unemployed and the unemployable. Any attempt by the Mbeki regime to link the uprisings to third-force actors should be rejected with the contempt that it deserves. Even if such actors existed, they would simply be taking advantage of systemic and structural policy failures

Externally, the economic and political instability within the SADC region and other parts of Africa has led to an influx of both skilled and unskilled Africans into a fairly stable South African economy. Of particular significance is the meltdown in Zimbabwe, which has led to disproportionate displacements into South Africa. Here again South African foreign-policy failure has led to a harvest of thorns. If Mbeki cannot be convinced that there is a crisis in Zimbabwe, maybe he can be convinced that events in that country have led to a crisis in South Africa.

We need to paraphrase Kwame Nkrumah into the language of a 21st century characterised by globalisation. Economic prosperity in South Africa is meaningless without prosperity in the rest of Africa. More importantly, that economic growth and success must be shared with those at the bottom of the pyramid, the poor. For the despicable xenophobia we have witnessed to be effectively contained, the needs of the poor in South Africa must be met. There must be efficient social-service delivery and increased opportunities for the poor, through a radically overhauled and broad-based economic empowerment model. We are not in any way advocating for equality of outcomes, but rather equal access to opportunity. The importance of personal agency and responsibility cannot be overemphasised.

Beyond South Africa, there is need for an inclusive pan-Africanist approach that puts regional sovereignty, stability and prosperity ahead of narrow and perverted definitions of sovereignty. This means, for example, the crisis in Zimbabwe must be viewed as an African catastrophe that undermines both the strategic and the economic interests of the SADC region. It demands immediate and unequivocal African intervention. We must totally disregard any claims to sovereignty by the illegal, illegitimate and kleptocratic regime of Robert Mugabe. It is the people's will that is sovereign. Under globalisation, nations will only prosper as successful regional economic blocs. The collapse of one national economy is detrimental to the entire region.

Furthermore, economic paradigms and programmes must be transportable across African borders. For example, would it not be sensible to have an Africa-wide, broad-based economic empowerment model that ensures that South African corporates that operate in other African countries are legally bound to empower black people and poor communities in those countries? Currently, white South African corporates are essentially exporting apartheid and unbridled exploitation to the rest of Africa, while carrying out minimum and ineffectual empowerment in South Africa (characterised by the enrichment and corruption of a few black elites). It is important that the economic growth and prosperity in South Africa is shared among all citizens and effectively extended to the rest of Africa. This is the only sustainable way to contain xenophobia among Africans.

An African opportunity

At the same time, regional prosperity requires all the countries of the region to attend to their own growth, individually and co-operatively. For instance, while most African economies are predominantly driven by agriculture, there has been very limited investment and innovation in agricultural development. In particular, the small-scale farmers and the poor rural land-owners have been largely neglected. When our poorest farmers finally prosper, all of Africa will benefit. A wide range of interventions across the agricultural "value chain" can be implemented, ranging from strengthening local and regional agricultural markets to supporting the development of seed better equipped to cope with the harsh African climate.

A new path for prosperity can be opened by spurring the continent's agricultural development. The objective is to build broader political and economic support behind a vision of pro-poor, pro-environment partnerships needed to revitalise agriculture for Africa's small-scale farmers. Africa must learn from the efforts that dramatically boosted agricultural productivity in Asia and Latin America, while seeking to appreciate the limitations of these models as well. For example, it is of critical importance to ensure that small farmers are the primary beneficiaries of the efforts, and that consumer and environmental health considerations are made part and parcel of the agricultural development process.

Innovations from the information and communications technology (ICT) revolution must be linked up to agriculture. For example, a system for disseminating real-time market information to farmers across a country could be based in ICT kiosks in rural markets, where farmers find up-to-date prices and link with buyers.

The current world food crisis is an African opportunity. It is a reflection of the disparities, inequities and contradictory forces at play in the global economy. There is a bottom billion starving to death while there is a top billion that are eating themselves to death. The protectionist policies of the developed countries through the use of large agricultural subsidies for their farmers have stifled and


Date:
Venue:

undermined the growth of vibrant and globally competitive agri-businesses in poor African countries. This has undermined global food security. We need free and fair trade in the global food industry.

However, the food crisis is an opportunity that can be used to unlock the agricultural potential of Africa to produce enough food for its people and supply other parts of the world. Most of Africa has arable land and rural populations that are not economically active. The crisis has created scope to commercialise rural agricultural activities, creating sustainable jobs for millions of rural poor people. Assistance with technical support, business skills, and managerial expertise will enable them to play a meaningful role in providing solutions to the food crisis. Please do not give us fish. We would rather learn how to fish.

This would be a unique empowerment opportunity for the rural poor. The revitalisation of agriculture through innovation dovetails perfectly with these farming opportunities created by the world food crisis. Food security, self-sufficiency, and an agri-business export strategy must define the clarion call for a new agrarian revolution in Africa.

In terms of the world food crisis, what we are partly experiencing is also the real cost of the bio-fuels industry, which has been promoted as a solution to the global energy crisis. Bio-fuel production uses more fuel than it produces. Thus its net effect on energy security is debatable. In addition, given the world food crisis, the challenge is whether we should grow food for people or for cars.

The food crisis has revealed the world's lack of preparedness to deal effectively with the unintended consequences of globalisation, energy security and climate change. Africa needs an integrated approach to both energy and food security. This continental framework should then inform regional and national strategies.

Towards an economic paradigm shift

On a wider front, African countries need to move from aid-dependent economic models to economic development driven by both domestic and foreign investment. Within this framework they need to migrate from resources-based economics to manufacturing and value addition. This should be driven by export-led investment, leading to the production of finished products for both the domestic and export markets. Entrepreneurship, innovation and leveraging of the ICT revolution should be the central organising mantras of our industrial revolution. All this must be backed by extensive investment in physical infrastructure and human capital development.

Beyond this, Africans must strive to be net exporters of capital. This means we should become competitive players in global financial and investment markets. Our higher educational systems, research and development, and intellectual property rights legislation need to be robustly developed and advanced as we seek to become net exporters of knowledge, ICT expertise and human capital.

This is how we should move up both the value and skills chains. This is the way to drive the productivity and competitiveness of African economies. As we do all this, we have a unique opportunity to leap frog and bypass destructive industrialisation stages, by adopting green and clean technologies. Thus, we will be advancing the global climate-change agenda through leveraging its business case.

In pursuing all these economic endeavours there must national inclusiveness leading to shared economic growth and prosperity. More importantly, there is a need for a new type of pan–Africanism, rooted in collective economics, that invokes the dictum: poverty anywhere on the continent is an indictment of every African. The destiny and prosperity of all people of African descent is irrevocably intertwined.

Arthur GO Mutambara is the leader of the breakaway faction of Zimbabwe's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).

Images in this article © Mark Wessels

Slowdown, social instability and Sovietisation

By John Kane-Berman

The new ANC power structure faces a formidable list of national problems – and may introduce new ones of its own

After a wide-reaching statistical presentation at a gathering organised by the South African Institute of Race Relations under the rubric "South African Mirror: Post-Polokwane", the organisation's Chief Executive, John Kane-Berman, elaborated on the areas of risk that he believes South Africa now faces. This is an edited version of his comments.

I think three risks face South Africa.

The major economic risk is a growth slowdown, particularly one of such a magnitude as to cause a reversal in the across-the-board increase in living standards that we have seen. If living standards start to decline because growth drops to the 2,5 per cent that some people are forecasting, the international evidence suggests that there is a risk of social instability. The major social risk is obviously continued failures in education, healthcare, land reform and, of course, physical security. On the political front, the major risk, I think, is the Sovietisation of the state, which will undermine democracy, undermine accountability and promote corruption.

On the economic issues, in the past three to four years we've had an annual average of 4-5 per cent growth, but it's not enough to conquer unemployment. If we continue to try to combat poverty by a social-security system, we risk perpetuating dependency – and can the roll-out of social security to a quarter of the population be sustained? Ironically, what has made that possible is the very fiscal and monetary policies for which the left have criticised President Mbeki's government. The ability to keep paying these grants at this level depends on tax revenues remaining buoyant, on macro-economic stability, on global conditions. If the left tries to upset the applecart of fiscal and monetary policy, it will be shooting itself in the foot – or rather, shooting the poor in the foot because part of the package that the left-wing critics of the Mbeki administration want to introduce is lower interest rates, [leading to] higher inflation, budget deficits. Inevitably the consequence will be price controls.

Is the left going to get its way? There are four factors to consider.

Firstly, we don't really know how strong the forces on the left in the ANC's National Executive Committee are. We don't know who's going to be deployed to the South African Reserve Bank and the Department of Finance.

Secondly, the new Secretary-General of the ANC, Gwede Mantashe, has stated that the ANC is going to stick to budget surpluses and inflation targeting. One senses a bit of tension between Cosatu and the new top leadership of the ANC.

Thirdly, the ANC's adoption of these policies of macro-economic stabilisation is not just an Mbeki foible, but is rooted in the recognition that it was necessary in order for the ANC to be master in its own house, and not run up the kind of budget deficits and inflation rates that make you hostage to the International Monetary Fund and other outsiders.

Finally, the fourth factor, Jacob Zuma. Many people fear that he is going to be a Trojan horse for the left. Politicians notoriously don't pay their debts to the people who put them into particular places; why should Mr Zuma be any different?

The upshot is, I think it's wrong to assume that either he or Kgalema Motlanthe, if he's the one who eventually becomes President, would become instruments of Cosatu and the South African Communist Party. So a shift in fiscal and monetary policy in the direction that many people fear is by no means a foregone conclusion. Having said that, what we've seen under Thabo Mbeki is more and more intervention by less and less competent ministers.

On the social side, I want to focus on six issues. First is healthcare. There's clearly a risk that the Minister is going to undermine private healthcare. If she tries in the interests of equity or equality to narrow the gap between private and public healthcare, she is going to narrow it, I suspect, by lowering the quality of private healthcare, rather than elevating the quality of public healthcare, which of course is what she should be doing. And in the process she is likely to chase away investment.

Then there's the labour market. I think that Jacob Zuma is to be commended for what to many people are heretical utterances

about labour-market reform. He's been shot down by Cosatu and ridiculed in the press, but he opened up an opportunity for debate. And, of course, one of the desirable unintended consequences of the electricity crisis might be that South Africa has to start thinking again about labour-intensive, as opposed to energy-intensive, investment.

Looking at education, we've got some excellent public and private schools but 80 per cent of public schools were founded by transformation audits some years ago to be "dysfunctional" – that's the euphemism that they used. The Minister recently said that many schools spent two to three terms without textbooks, which suggests that schools are not the only dysfunctional institutions. And although there are improvements, it's difficult to see any light at the end of the tunnel of education. I certainly think it's going to be easier to fix our electricity problems than our educational problems.

And what about the police? The recent raids on students in clubs and pubs in Stellenbosch, and the police attacks on Zimbabwean refugees in a Methodist church in downtown Johannesburg, are reminiscent of the brutality of the pass raids that were the hallmark of the old South African police. And there are persistent allegations of corruption, incompetence, bribery, assault, attempted murder – so persistent that it suggests to me that we have a major problem.

> The upshot is, I think it's wrong to assume that either he or Kgalema Motlanthe, if he's the one who eventually becomes President, would become instruments of Cosatu and the South African Communist Party

General decline is the next social factor. We need to recognise the risk of gradual decline as South Africa ratchets downwards, and not only ratchets downwards, but we become conditioned to it, which in a sense is the greater threat. How can we come to accept entrenched criminality, police brutality, decaying infrastructure? Eskom is an example, but there are the roads, sewerage pipes, unprotected borders, dubious passports, high-level cover-ups of corruption, dysfunctional public education, the steady exodus of scarce skills out of the country, declining public accountability, the callousness of the government's response to AIDS, incompetence at all three levels of government, and of course the utterly crazy distorted sense of priorities that can make the government think it's legitimate to spend a few hundred million rand building a Pan-African Parliament in Midrand when they can't even put lavatories into all public schools. There's a risk that these kinds of factors will in due course outweigh the positive ones – the thriving public sector, our highly efficient South African Revenue Service, excellent private and some excellent public schools, excellent private hospitals, constitutional protection of rights, a vibrant civil society, a free press and an independent judiciary. Long may those last two last.

The final social factor is race relations. The vast majority of violent crimes in this country are not committed across the colour line; it's impossible to determine the true extent of racial motivation in crime. The only way to eliminate the perceptions of racial motivation is to reduce the incidence of all crime, whether racially motivated or not. At the same time, we have to beware of another problem in race relations: stereotyping. One black writer complained that he felt that whites held him and all other blacks responsible for the Eskom catastrophe. That's unacceptable, but so is trying to hold all whites responsible for the depraved behaviour of those four students at the University of the Free State.

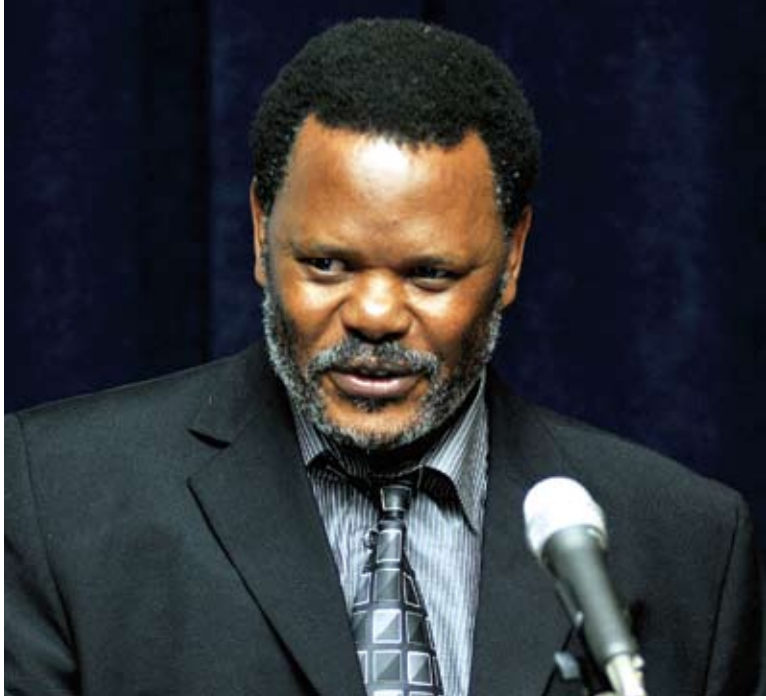
There's plenty of anecdotal evidence that among the many reasons for Eskom's failure was the application of policies of racial preferencing in the promotion and hiring of people and the procurement of coal supplies. We need to ask whether racial-preferencing policies lie behind some of the other failures in policing and local government, for example. Has anybody learnt any lessons from the Eskom catastrophe? I suspect that Eskom hasn't.

Finally, political issues. The lesson of Eskom is my first heading here. There's clearly a much wider problem, affecting roads, pavements, water and sewerage, too. You will have seen in the press various authorities asking questions about the quality of water supply in the country. The Minister denies that there is a serious problem. Even if she's right, will we believe her?

It seems to me the answer's got to be no, because if somebody had resigned over the Eskom catastrophe, they would have demonstrated that accountability is taken seriously and we might then have some confidence in public officials. But the lesson of Eskom is that you can make a major foul-up with unfathomable economic and human damage to come in its wake and there's no price to be paid. In fact, there's a bonus to be earned.

The arms deal: an amnesty is reported to be being considered for all those involved in that suspect deal. If that is granted, we will know that corruption on a major scale is permitted in South Africa provided you happen to be at the top of government. It would, of course, be an admission of guilt.

As far as the rule of law is concerned, there's I think an obvious risk that Mr Zuma will interfere with the rule of law to avoid trial. But there are other threats to the rule of law. I don't need to go into the [issue of] the Scorpions. There's also the threat to the independence of the Judiciary, contained in draft legislation that has not yet been finally killed. That could in some respects put the administration of justice under the control of a Minister of Justice who, under the new Sovietisation of the state, is going to be answerable to Luthuli House.



That is the main political risk: possible Sovietisation of the state. It's got several elements. There's the party-state relationship, the question of deployment of party comrades, and the question of accountability. One of the criticisms levelled at Mr Mbeki is that he removed power from the party and concentrated it in the President's Office. There were thus supposedly two centres of power. Now there's to be only one, or so it would seem.

The deployment policy works to strengthen the party's power. ANC Today said: "The ANC is the strategic political centre that directs and guides its deployees in various centres." And these deployees, as they are called, include MPs and Ministers and even the President. And since any MP who loses his membership of the party ipso facto ceases to be an MP, your job is at risk if you don't toe the party line. It applies to all parties, but it's relevant to the ANC's policy of one centre of power.

If Luthuli House is the centre of power, then ANC members deployed to Parliament are accountable to party headquarters rather than to the electorate, and the executive branch of government is also accountable to the party rather than to Parliament. That undermines democracy; it renders public participation in the legislative process, which the Constitution enjoins, a mere formality. It's also disdainful of all opposition parties and the 28 per cent of the electorate who vote for them, since all decisions are taken behind closed doors at a party meeting.

The final ramification is if MPs are expected to be mere instruments of the ruling party, paying their salaries out of public funds amounts to misappropriation of those funds. If they represent the ANC rather than voters, then the ANC should fund their salaries. And that is unlikely to happen because another aspect of Sovietisation is that the state is seen as the property of the ruling party.

The good news. MPs of the ruling party have become much more assertive vis-à-vis the Executive. We don't know whether this new assertiveness is merely part of a wider anti-Mbeki rebellion, or a symptom of something more profound.

This assertiveness can be encouraged. Institutions and civil society very often go to great lengths to prepare submissions to Parliamentary Portfolio Committees. If they find they're ignored because all the decisions are taken in Luthuli House, they can

If Luthuli House is the centre of power, then ANC members deployed to Parliament are accountable to party headquarters rather than to the electorate, and the executive branch of government is also accountable to the party rather than to Parliament

withdraw from the parliamentary process. I don't think that is something that the ANC would like to see happen.

So one of the great challenges facing everybody who believes in democracy in this country is to strengthen Parliament as an institution to counter the Sovietisation thrust of current ANC thinking. It's no less important to do that than to preserve the most important of all the Mbeki administration's achievements, and that is the policy of economic stabilisation.

By Raymond Louw

Publish and be squashed

Government transparency to the media, so evident in 1994, is in rapid retreat

In the wake of the euphoria generated by South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994 the customary surliness and unhelpfulness of the civil service towards the anti-apartheid media gave way to a warm and welcoming friendliness and willingness to be of service.

This transparent attitude became manifest as the old guard were moved over to make space for newcomers as a result of affirmative action programmes. Almost overnight, there were new, fresh voices answering the civil service telephones, and the striking thing about them was their readiness to supply information and answer questions.

The apparent delight in answering even awkward questions and providing information went on for a few years before one started to sense that the willingness was being overlaid by hesitation and temporising which, in many departments, grew steadily stronger.

And so South Africa emerges 14 years after those first heady days of freedom to see its freedoms now being encroached upon, restrictions on the free flow of information are being steadily applied and others contemplated.

Constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression and of the media are clearly expressed on paper; indeed, hundreds of thousands of booklets detailing South Africa's advanced Constitution and Bill of Rights were distributed far and wide throughout the country; but they still remain on paper.

In many national and provincial government departments that cheerful willingness to help has been replaced by surliness, obstruction and obfuscation.

Reporters now speak freely of the many difficulties they face in trying to obtain information. Some government departments have centralised the information supply process so that only one person is empowered to answer media questions.

Several years ago Defence Minister Mosiaua Lekota issued an edict that all information supplied to the media had to be approved by his office beforehand. That instilled a feeling of fear throughout the department, ensuring that no questions would be answered before the answer had

The ANC's Polokwane Conference passed strongly-worded resolutions on the role of the media and the battle of ideas that encroach on press freedom.

gone through the time-consuming practice of being vetted by the minister's minions. Many officials in the department have given up on answering questions.

The Health Ministry has also imposed restrictions on officials answering media questions.

A cult of censorship is being nurtured. Departments ask the questioning reporter to call back later, but when they do cellphones are switched off. An increasing complaint from journalists is the actual refusal to answer questions or the withholding of information. Requests for information are often referred to other departmental officials who cannot supply the answers.

Another tactic gaining currency is to request questions to be faxed or e-mailed. They are not answered timeously or are not answered at all. There are also instances of misleading or inaccurate information being given out. Some reporters are asked to request the information via the procedures of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, a time-consuming process that, if followed, would result in whatever information was eventually supplied being hopelessly out of date.

At certain police stations only ``good news'' stories are issued, and news of violent crime grudgingly supplied only when reporters pose direct questions. This sunshine journalism approach has also become the practice of several parastatals.

The latest form of censorship by the police has overtones of tyranny. A reporter or photographer is arrested at a crime scene on the grounds that he or she is interfering with the police in the conduct of their duties. The victim is frequently detained in a police cell overnight, and as frequently freed by a prosecutor the next day as there is no case to answer. This has become a reflex action by some police officers when photographs are being taken of their conduct at a crime scene.

Several months ago Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi announced a restructuring of police information services, intended to prevent police on the beat from giving information to media by limiting this role to officers at provincial level. After the media protested, Selebi amended the system and asked the media to give it a try – but the media say it is not working.

The police have erased images from photographers' cameras. This occurred when President Thabo Mbeki visited a medical clinic in Pretoria for a check-up, and again when Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka had a meeting with the Zimbabwean Vice-President Joyce Mujuru at a Johannesburg hotel.

But perhaps the prime case of police censorship was the eviction of reporters from the magistrate's court when then African National Congress (ANC) Deputy President Jacob Zuma – now ANC President – appeared on a rape charge. Attempts were also made to snatch reporters' notebooks when they covered the appearance of four police officers in a Germiston court on theft and attempted robbery charges.

There have even been physical attacks on reporters and photographers in the presence of the police, who did nothing to counter them.

The legal process is increasingly being exploited to censor the media, the biggest victim being the Mail & Guardian, which has

been the subject of several urgent court applications for interdicts to prevent the paper from publishing exposés about illegal or questionable conduct and corruption. Several of these applications have failed, but invariably the paper had to wait several days before being able to publish, incurring expensive legal fees and costly stop-go production processes. Other papers that have suffered similar attacks are the Sunday Times and Sunday Independent, indicted from publishing the Danish cartoons that offended Muslims, and the Saturday Star, which, however, won when a coin dealer tried to gag it.

Individually, these attempts at muzzling the media do not make much of an impact, but when compiled into a list they constitute a quite formidable indictment of official restrictive conduct.

The antagonistic attitude of some of the country's leaders towards the media provides state employees and others with the excuse for their attacks on the media. Government leaders are particularly sensitive to criticism, and there has been much to criticise under the subject headings of corruption, which has assumed epidemic proportions; misconduct; maladministration, with the Eskom power-generation disaster being a prime example; the deterioration of hospital services; and, of course, poor service delivery at local government level.

Such stories have been highly embarrassing to government leaders who have denigrated critical journalists, accusing them of "lack of responsibility", besmirching South Africa's good name,

Individually, these attempts at muzzling the media do not make much of an impact, but when compiled into a list they constitute a quite formidable indictment of official restrictive conduct

and racism. The latest charge is that the media is engaged in regime change.

Ruling-party ire bubbles over from time to time on the ANC presidential website, ANC Today. One of the most scathing attacks appeared when President Thabo Mbeki held the presidency of the ANC and was probably penned by him. After reference to a claimed inaccurate press report, it stated that "it confirmed the message that the readers of our newspapers are well advised to treat everything that is published with the greatest scepticism, because, in all likelihood, it might be false. For a long time already, we have complained about this phenomenon, according to which some in the media obviously understand that "freedom of the press" means "freedom of the press to invent news".

There is no record of the ANC taking the article complained about to the Press Ombudsman where its accuracy could have been tested.

When he was ANC Deputy President, Jacob Zuma showed his disapproval by instituting libel actions running into some R70 million against The Star, Sunday Times, Rapport, cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro, The Citizen, Sunday Sun, Sunday World, Sunday Independent and Highveld Stereo on the grounds that the publications and broadcasts defamed him. He has subsequently withdrawn the defamation accusation, reduced the amounts claimed, and based his case on his dignity having been harmed.

Minister in the Presidency Essop Pahad, angered by exposures in the Sunday Times about Health Minister Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang abusing staff at a medical clinic and drinking while under treatment, and her previous conviction for stealing a watch from a patient while she headed a hospital in Botswana, threatened to impose a government-advertising boycott on the paper. Appointment vacancies in government departments would not have been advertised in the large appointments advertising section of the Sunday Times. The intention is clear to reduce the paper's revenue, resulting in it cutting costs, which invariably means cutting back on news coverage, if not on staff. It is a pernicious form of censorship which a Botswana High Court ruled unconstitutional in that country.

This has happened to other papers in South Africa. One of them, Grahamstown's Grocott's Mail – which also faces a freeze on contact with the paper's editorial department – is challenging the advertising ban in court.

Another ANC leader, Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, when she was Minerals and Energy Minister, proposed introducing legislation to compel journalists and civil-society groups to "speak responsibly" on sensitive matters, failing which they would be charged in court with incitement. The proposal was forcibly condemned by the media, but though it appears to have been placed on a back-burner, it illustrates the mindset of party leaders.

On the claim that their offices, conveniently situated for nearly a century near the debating chamber in Parliament, were urgently needed for accommodating interpreters and other staff, parliamentary officials removed members of the Press Gallery to another building in the parliamentary precinct. More than a year later, those offices are still vacant, confirming the media's view that the real purpose was to ensure that the press had minimum access to MPs in the parliamentary corridors and their off-the-record briefings.

Opposition politicians vigorously support media freedom, none more so than former Nationalists who happily supported apartheid-era restrictive legislation enacted against the media. Circumstances have changed, and now they see the media as essential to their preservation as a minority group.

Even journalists in Parliament's Press Gallery were moved to accomodate new offices.

In addition to all these efforts to curb media reporting, government departments have been busy devising legislative restrictions. Though anti-terrorism legislation, enacted at the behest of the United States, has not been employed against journalists, it looms on the horizon as a potential threat.

The more immediate legislative threat is the Films and Publications Amendment Bill, which ostensibly seeks to stop children being exposed to pornography or caught up in it as victims. The draft Bill, however, reaches out to restrict reporting on other issues- which journalists say is censorship [– the reporting of propaganda for war, incitement to violence, descriptions of sexual conduct and hate speech]. The media has vigorously protested against this legislation, but ANC parliamentarians are doggedly pursuing it.

Then there is the National Key Points Act, originally introduced by the apartheid government to protect important buildings requiring security. It is being reintroduced in a much broader form and is also vigorously opposed by media and legal groups as unconstitutional.

But the cherry on the top for the ANC, and a corresponding low point for journalists, is the proposal mooted by the party at its Polokwane conference in December that a statutory media tribunal be set up to regulate the media and deal with complaints from the public against the press.

ANC spokesperson Jessie Duarte spelt it out to the Sunday Independent in these terms: "We believe there is a need for a place where the print media can be held accountable for things they say that are absolutely not true." She added that the ANC regards the press's own self-regulatory ombudsman system as "toothless" and inadequate, ignoring the fact that similar ombudsmen adjudicate on press misdemeanours and ethical breaches in 60 democracies in the world.

The ANC view of the ombudsman is based on vague accusatory generalities. When asked to cite specific instances where the ombudsman has not attended to ANC complaints, ANC Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe is silent.

Despite all the protestations by the ANC that it upholds media freedom, journalists believe that such a body would be used to censor and punish the press for inaccuracy and wrongdoing as determined by the ANC. This results in the constitutionally unacceptable – state control of the media.

So much for the external forces ranged against the media. Within the media itself there are constricting influences, including low salaries and lack of resources in newsroms, a suspicion that publishers seeking maximum profits ignore their mission to keep the public informed and a concentration of ownership, which reduces diversity.

Even so, many newspapers, including the Mail & Guardian, the Sunday Times, and even smaller regional papers such as the East London Daily Dispatch, which exposed a baby death scandal at the Frere Hospital, still run expensive and time-consuming investigative journalism. These and other papers' exposés show that South Africa's media is indeed vibrant, despite the gathering restrictions.

Raymond Louw is Editor and Publisher of the currents affairs newsletter Southern Africa Report and African representative of the World Press Freedom Committee.

By Michael Cardo

Blurring the boundary between party and state

A 'non-partisan' civil service has given way to proliferating party power, and despite some indications to the contrary, it is likely that the situation will continue

The tendency to blur the boundary between party and state, which has characterised successive African National Congress (ANC) governments since 1994, seems set to persist and worsen under the leadership of Jacob Zuma.

When the ANC came to power in 1994, it mistrusted the civil service, whose ranks were occupied by Afrikaners from the old guard. As they retired or took severance packages, senior civil servants were replaced by ANC struggle veterans. By 1997, the national departments of Agriculture; Arts, Science, Culture & Technology; Communications; Finance; Labour; Housing; Transport; Intelligence; and Trade and Industry were all led by ANC members.

Despite the fact that these appointments were political, the Presidency publicly maintained that civil servants should exercise their duties without fear or favour. In his opening address to the ANC's 49th national conference in 1994, for example, President Nelson Mandela congratulated "the former cadres of Umkhonto we Sizwe and our Intelligence and Security Services who are now entering non-partisan service in government".

As James Myburgh notes, under Mandela, efforts to extend party control over the state were offset by

©AP Photo/Jerome Delay

What will party-state relations be like under a Zuma/Motlanthe Presidency?

several factors. Firstly, and most importantly, as a 1998 ANC policy document lamented, following the transition in 1994 the ANC had "no comprehensive and coordinated plan to deploy [party] cadres to critical centres". Secondly, there were no formal party structures to which cadres were held accountable after deployment.

All of this changed at the ruling party's 50th national conference in Mafikeng in 1997.

From that point on, as Thabo Mbeki consolidated his personal power in the ANC, the ruling party embarked on a concerted campaign to control the "levers of power" by deploying loyal cadres to state institutions. This went hand in hand with moves to centralise power in the party's National Working Committee (NWC), and to make cadres accountable to the NWC.

In effect, the NWC became a patronage-dispensing leadership cabal stacked with Mbeki's acolytes.

Documents released ahead of the Mafikeng conference shed light on the ANC's rationale. The 8 January statement of that year berated ANC members in local government and the public service for being insufficiently loyal to the party, admonishing them: "You are not ANC cadres only 'after hours'."

The Strategy and Tactics document stated that "in all centres of power, particularly in Parliament and the executive, ANC representatives must fulfil the mandate of the organisation. They should account to the ANC and seek its broad guidance."

Another document advised the party's Commission on Governance to set up party structures "parallel to those of government in all spheres with cadres informed by and accountable to the ANC". This would ensure the "primacy of [party] political structures".

The result of this hegemonic drive for power was that at Mafikeng the ANC passed a resolution on cadre deployment

which enjoined the party to: identify key centres of power in state and society and to deploy ANC cadres to those centres; establish deployment committees at national, provincial and local government level; and draw up a comprehensive cadre policy and deployment strategy. Deployment committees would oversee the deployment of "comrades to areas of work on behalf of the movement, including the public service, parastatals, structures of the movement and the private sector".

Simultaneously, the party amended its constitution to place all party structures, including "parliamentary caucuses" under the supervision and direction of the NWC.

In November 1998, the NWC adopted a "Cadre Policy and Deployment Strategy" and established the national deployment committee, with Jacob Zuma at its helm. The key centres of power, mooted in the conference resolution, were identified as "the army, the police, the bureaucracy, intelligence structures, the judiciary, parastatals, and agencies such as regulatory bodies, the public broadcaster, the central bank and so on".

The Cadre Policy and Deployment Strategy document was noteworthy for another reason: it did not limit itself to party-state relations. It also stated that the ANC must strengthen its leadership in "all other sectors of social activity", such as education, sports, recreation, arts and culture, "mass popular organisation" and mass communication. As such, the document presaged attempts by the ruling party to exert hegemony over civil society, in addition to annexing the state as its private property.

Taken together, the ANC's turn to democratic centralism and its cadre deployment policy have eroded the distinction between party and state and compromised democracy in South Africa, perhaps irremediably in the medium term, in several ways

From the end of 1998 to 2001, when the national deployment committee was disbanded, possibly as a result of incipient tension between Mbeki and Zuma, the cadre deployment policy was assiduously implemented. Cadre deployment continues today, and plans for a "single public service", which in terms of the Public Administration Bill provides for the "transfer of functions and employees between the spheres of government and institutions within such spheres", suggests it may yet become state policy.

By the start of 2000, ANC cadres were in charge of almost every government department, the South African Police Service (SAPS), the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), and most parastatals and statutory bodies. Chief party strategist, and one of the key roleplayers in formulating ANC ideas about the post-apartheid state, Joel Netshitenze, was himself deployed to run the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS).

Taken together, the ANC's turn to democratic centralism and its cadre deployment policy have eroded the distinction between party and state and compromised democracy in South Africa, perhaps irremediably in the medium term, in several ways.

Firstly, they promoted an authoritarian political culture under Mbeki and entrenched one-party dominance. Opposition parties find it difficult to compete on an equal footing with the ANC, which, during elections, campaigns as government. As a mouthpiece of the ruling party, the SABC provides inequitable coverage to the political opposition. State resources are routinely used for ANC propaganda and advertising.

Secondly, they have subverted the spirit and principles of the Constitution. The Constitution guarantees the independence of certain state institutions. The "state institutions supporting constitutional democracy", referred to as the "Chapter 9 institutions", for example, are meant to be "independent, and subject only to the Constitution and the law". The Constitution further states that these bodies "must be impartial and must exercise their powers and perform their functions without fear, favour or prejudice".

Cadre deployment has made that impossible. The Commission for Gender Equality is an extension of the ANC Women's League. The Office of the Public Protector has been notably lackadaisical in executing its duties, which are to investigate maladministration in government and probe corruption with respect to public money. The current Public Protector, Lawrence Mushwana, was an ANC MP and Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces before he was redeployed to the office in 2002. His tenure has been marked by a failure to hold the executive to account.

In December 2003, the state-owned corporation PetroSA advanced R15 million to an ANC-aligned black economic empowerment (BEE) investment company, Imvume Management. Of this advance, R11 million was transferred to the ruling party, allegedly to fund its 2004 election campaign. Mushwana whitewashed the ruling party's involvement in the so-called "Oilgate" scandal. The scandal, for its part, provided clear evidence of the trend to conflate party and state.

A third and related consequence is that cadre deployment has stymied accountable governance. In Parliament, ANC MPs are reluctant to hold their comrades in state agencies and parastatals to account. The reasons for this are twofold. Thanks to the party-list system, they rely on party bosses rather than constituents to retain their seats. The fact that loyal ANC MPs are rewarded for

good service by being deployed to higherprofile and betterpaying positions in state-owned enterprises and agencies provides an additional disincentive.

This touches on a fourth undesirable outcome of cadre deployment, which is that it has institutionalised networks of patronage.

Finally, once the rupture between Mbeki and Zuma had factionalised the party, it became inevitable that cadre deployment would lead to state institutions being used to fight internal party battles. This occurred in the security forces and intelligence services, and is now manifesting itself at the SABC.

One more salient point needs to be made about party-state relations under Mbeki: that is the role of big business as mediator.

Under the guise of BEE, an elite clique of ANC cadres has used their political connections and influence to grow wealthy off the back of state tenders and deals in the private sector. Part of their fortunes have been channelled back into ANC coffers.

Earlier this year, the Sunday Times reported that R9 million of a R1,5 billion empowerment deal involving Standard Bank, Liberty Life and Stanlib was deposited into the ANC's bank account by former ANC MP turned BEE businessman Saki Macozoma. (At one time Macozoma was also deployed as managing director of Transnet.)

At the ANC's national conference in Polokwane last year, Treasurer-General Mendi Msimang acknowledged that the ruling party was deploying its members to big business in return for a "levy" paid to the ANC. And so the lines between party, state and business are blurred.

What of the new guard, led by ANC President Jacob Zuma and his deputy, Kgalema Motlanthe? There are signs that the party's new leadership feels uncomfortable with the sort of crony capitalism that has welded party, state and business together under Mbeki. In February, the new Treasurer-General, Matthews Phosa, announced a forensic audit of all empowerment deals and tenders from which the party's controversial investment company, Chancellor House, had benefited.

Yet, it is questionable whether the audit is driven by genuine concerns or whether it forms part of the backlash against Mbeki in an attempt to besmirch him and his allies. Similar doubts must be raised about the ANC's newfound desire to hold the executive to account in Parliament.

Furthermore, moves to decentralise power in the party – principally by removing the president's right unilaterally to appoint premiers and mayors – have not been accompanied by a commitment to keep party and state separate.

On the contrary, at the ANC's 52nd national conference, in Polokwane, delegates resolved to "develop greater coordination between work of the ANC structures and governance work, to give strategic leadership to cadres deployed in the state and to improve capacity to hold cadres deployed accountable". Another resolution affirmed that "the ANC remains the key strategic centre of power, which must exercise leadership over the state and society in pursuit of the objectives of the NDR [National Democratic Revolution"].

Disputing that two centres of power had emerged after Polokwane, Matthews Phosa stated: "In practice there is only one centre of power and that is the highest decision-making structures of the ANC." He also commented that "the President and his cabinet account to the NEC [National Executive Council] of the ANC, as any other structure of government does."

The new guard's determination to disband the Scorpions, at whose hands Zuma is believed to have suffered unfairly, provides an interesting insight into the possible future of party-state relations. A decision to disestablish the crime-fighting unit was taken by the ANC at a party conference, and the Director-General of Justice and Constitutional Development – a public servant – took his orders accordingly. An ANC-dominated Parliament, whose supposedly independent Speaker is also the ruling party's national Chairperson, likewise undertook to fall into line with the decision.

Finally, once the rupture between Mbeki and Zuma had factionalised the party, it became inevitable that cadre deployment would lead to state institutions being used to fight internal party battles. This occurred in the security forces and intelligence services, and is now manifesting itself at the SABC

Zuma famously revealed his views on constitutional supremacy and the independence of the state from the ruling party when he declared, "the ANC will rule South Africa until Jesus comes." And it is well to remember that both Zuma and Motlanthe were integrally involved in the leadership team that conceived and implemented cadre deployment, as well as the drive for control of the levers of power.

Given the resolutions on party-state relations at Polokwane, the speed with which the legislative and executive arms of government have endeavoured to comply with the ANC's dissolution of the Scorpions, and Zuma's own recent political history, it seems likely that state institutions will be politicised and used for political purposes for some time to come.

Interview by Raenette Taljaard

The Parliament
that looked to the people

Speaker Baleka Mbete looks back on what's been done, what's to be done, in the work in progress that is South Africa's parliamentary culture

Q: Madam Speaker, we're approaching an election. I'm sure it's a time of reflection in terms of the legacy the Speaker wishes to leave behind for the House after her tenure.

A: Immediately after becoming Speaker, I encountered a barrage of questions – what's your plan? what's your vision? – things that, of course, you don't sit and think about. But what came out of me happened to be something that has preoccupied me throughout my tenure: I already knew I wanted to consolidate the question of access to the work of Parliament. And so my preoccupation has always been, how do we bring more and more of the masses of South Africans into the debates? How do we draw them more into what clearly is about their lives, and therefore ensure that we have their input?

It's not something you do immediately. But, number one, we have doubled the resources for constituency work. Secondly, we've brought to a conclusion the work on oversight, which includes issues of public participation. We are thinking about a parliamentary studio, radio, because that's about contact with the public. Recently we came back from looking at other parliaments – Brazil, Mexico, where there's a full-time station that connects the work that's going on directly to the public.

We have launched a video conferencing system which [connects] the whole legislative sector, including the other nine legislatures. There's a place here in the National Assembly where you can sit and see people in the Eastern Cape and talk to them. We are not satisfied, because I think it presupposes that everyone in a province is close to the legislature. We have agreed in the Speaker's Forum that we are going to work on a phase of that project where it's going to be possible to have a truck stop in a village, and have a meeting of villagers that connect to us sitting here.

Q: That's quite a revolution.

A: For me, these things are critical in the long term. We've been able to keep our eye on that ball.

We've started the Sectoral Parliaments, a mechanism that has really enabled us to keep in touch, and to bring youth, women to Parliament once a year, to talk to us here, and workshop with specific portfolio committees.

Also, once a year, as Parliament, we go out to an area. That is the People's Assembly. This year we are going to Bushbuckridge in Mpumalanga. We are going to do work there and certain portfolio committees will then get into the communities and do oversight work on the ground. That's something that didn't happen with the other two Parliaments.

With Sectoral Parliaments we decide on a theme, and suggest to the provinces that they convene meetings at district level to take it as close to the ground as possible, so that the youth in those districts then engage on those matters. From the district discussions, certain people will be sent to a provincial level of engagement and have further workshops on those themes. They then decide on the ten people that will go to the Sectoral Parliament in Cape Town.

Q: So the Women's Parliament and the Youth Parliament worked on that principle?

A: They worked on that principle. A whole lot of South Africans have physically come to Parliament, and engaged with MPs directly. It's been a very exciting experience. Where we are very critical of ourselves is on the question of follow-

up. We send reports on those discussions and the issues that have come out of them to the relevant ministries and highlight things that need to be highlighted. We must send representatives from the portfolio committees to give feedback to a community on what was done since we were there, and to check on the situation. It's an ongoing process.

I was heartened to see the report of the Oversight and Accountability Task Team that came to the Joint Rules Committee [recommending that we] institutionalise the Sectoral Parliaments. The Fourth Parliament will take its own decisions. But I think we have focused quite well on mechanisms to bridge the distance between Parliament and the people. We are not a constituency-based system, and therefore it's not as if we were ever going to be able to achieve that through an individual MP's relationship with the community – not that that's not something we need to look at in the future.

Q: Do you believe a constituency component to the electoral system would enhance the public reach of Parliament?

A: Nothing is ever cast in stone so much that it can never change. I imagine a possible next step is a mixed system. We already have that at local government level.

Q: The work and recommendations that you commissioned from the Task Force you appointed contain a number of important principles for Parliament as an institution. How do you see that as part of your legacy in finding its way into permanent principles for the House?

A: We are adopting that report in principle, subject to further detail. But the capacity must be created to be able to rethink oversight work along the lines suggested by that report. It says there's a level of oversight work that Parliament must take responsibility for that can't be channelled into a specific portfolio committee. The most interesting part is that you would take up an overarching or cross-cutting matter at institutional level, asking how we can monitor it. It's unlike writing to a portfolio committee, saying, "This has come up and it looks like it belongs to you."

We have also now started working as clusters, where a few portfolio committees get together. They find it's very useful to look at things at that level. But we are saying [let's do it] at institutional level.

Part of the challenge is that we have never had full capacity. We need to give the legal services office the capacity to monitor the extent to which Parliament complies with the Constitution, in the quality and the content of the laws we pass. It's one of the things that has always bothered me; maybe it's being a mother, giving birth to a child and you couldn't be bothered what happens to them. You pass a law, somebody else writes regulations.

An example is a piece of legislation [that makes provision for] a structure a Minister has to form, and says the Minister must include two members of Parliament. We are saying there's something odd about a member of the Executive appointing members of the Legislature into a structure that essentially is an Executive structure.

Q: Unconstitutional?

A: Unconstitutional. In the past it could easily have happened, but now that Bill is still around here for us presiding officers to bring it back and say, "Uh-uh, there's something wrong here," and send it back to the committee. This is going to be the very first time that somebody from within Parliament is able consciously to apply their mind on the constitutionality of a product that comes from us. This is something very good for the future.

Q: This is a special legacy.

A: We are asking the Secretary to Parliament to start working on how to boost the capacity of what we used to call Legal Services, which we now call Constitutional and Legal Services. It's going to have to do a lot of work, including international treaties and agreements. We need to scrutinise those things.

Q: The Human Sciences Research Council released a survey that showed a 20 per cent drop in public confidence in Parliament. What were the views in the House about that survey?

A: I don't know that the House has been able to pay attention. This is a particularly pressurised year. I haven't really looked at the basis of that outcome. We are dealing with a society where Parliament is a very new phenomenon, relatively speaking. Not very long ago someone did a survey in which a lot of people showed a lack of understanding of Parliament.

We attended a public meeting in one of the townships. The Mayor was there. An old man got up and said, "I know what Mayor means, but what does Madam Speaker mean?" Some of these things are new in the minds of a lot of South Africans.

People see Parliament in the media, especially in the past few years, more in a controversial context, in particular in relation to the travel voucher issue. So they will take a particular view.

Q: Do you think that floor crossing has also done that to public perceptions of legislators and of the institutions?

A: That's the impression I got. "We send these people through this process, and now we are told that person is no longer

there, they are over there." It's very difficult to argue with something like that.

Q: Professor Kadar Asmal chaired a review of Chapter Nine bodies, which you also instituted. Do you see this being adopted by the House before it rises, or being actioned?

A: The House has to [adopt it]. In my view, it would be very unfair to the next administration, when this work has been done, to start with a blank table before them. It's been with parties and MPs for many months. You will have picked up a lot of the responses, controversies, heated views being expressed. Now we're going to pull it back so that it can be dealt with by the National Assembly. So when the new administration comes in, they already know what Parliament has adopted.

Q: You wear many hats post-Polokwane, and some opposition parties have even called for you to step down. Do you believe there's a conflict of interest?

A: I seriously don't think so. We come into Parliament sent by parties, all of us. So from day one you are in some committee or something of your party. I used to sit in the political committee before. The fact that I didn't chair it was neither here nor there, because I contributed to whatever it did. Now I'm the Chairperson of the ANC. Nothing has changed about the fact that I am an ANC animal, that's where I come from. But that's a totally different thing to my role as Speaker.

One of the things that I like about our Parliament, is that we came here having been through the World Trade Centre negotiations towards an Interim Constitution. We learnt there; certainly I learnt there. I became a member of a panel of chairpersons of the Negotiating Council. It's there that I learnt how to preside outside of my political family in an impartial way.

Back in 1996, the first MP I ruled out of order was an ANC MP. In a nutshell, my impartiality when I am performing my task as a presiding officer in the House, in my view, cannot be questioned.

Q: In the past three years or so, committee chairpersons have become quite active in acting against ministers. In the first Madiba Parliament there was a trend for ministers to come to committees, then through the second Parliament that trailed off. It seems to me there is now a return to ministers coming to committees. Is that part and parcel of internal political dynamics in the various political parties, or is it truly a flourishing of oversight and accountability?

A: Our system develops. There are some developments I'm not necessarily impressed with. For instance, I've been exposed to a discussion where some people in the portfolio committees felt strongly that the people who really know what's going on in a particular department or ministry are the officials. Why should we waste our time with ministers? Others say, but those are the people with the political responsibility. Which is true, which is what I believe.

I think there are things we've got to engage with before the end of the year so that we are able to say, as people who have been in this place for 14 or 15 years, for the future batch of people, these are some of the things that we've experienced.

It might be there's a little bit of the party-political dynamic; you can't rule that out. If I may use the ANC as an example, the very debates that happen as part of preparing and being at conferences, and coming out with resolutions, feed better clarity. Things develop in that fashion, and we must never underestimate that. When people come out and feel more empowered, they are more bold, and it's because of that kind of debated growth.

Q: How do you see a relationship developing with the post-Polokwane ANC and the opposition parties in Parliament. Have you noticed any changes in your relationships in the House?

A: Not relationships. Number one, this is a unique year. It's the last [full] year in Parliament. Next year will be a brief coming here, opening, budget, and we all go to electioneering. And my sense is that, without announcing it, people are in electioneering mode. Fine, that's politics.

Part of what has tended to happen is that this post-Polokwane, pre-Polokwane, is thrown up all the time. I go to an interview with e.tv the week before the State of the Nation address, and I'm expecting to be interviewed about preparations and all of that. The next thing I know, pre-Polokwane, post-Polokwane – what does it have to do with anything? I was asking the President as we were coming up the red carpet, are you aware supposedly I'm pulling this very carpet from under your feet? Because that's what the media had said.

One day it's positive, it's a good thing that this Polokwane thing has happened because now we are seeing Parliament being more bold and blah, blah, blah. Next thing –

Q: Do you see yourself joining the post-2009 Cabinet, Madam Speaker?

A: I met Swaziland's Speaker at the SADC Parliamentary Forum. Two years later they removed him. When I asked them what happened to him, they said he had been promoted to a ministerial post. I don't agree with them that that's a promotion.

WITS platform for public deliberation

In the very halls of government

This speech on "The Arms Deal and the impact on democracy" was delivered by Patricia de Lille, MP and leader of the Independent Democrats, at the University of the Witwatersrand in April this year. In it, she argues that what is required to cure the country of the debilitating taint of Arms Deal corruption is not amnesty, but a judicial commission of enquiry

Since I know that many of you here tonight are intellectuals, I thought it would be appropriate to start with a quote from a philosopher.

Cicero, the famous Roman statesman and philosopher said:

"A nation can survive its fools, and even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within. An enemy at the gates is less formidable, for he is known and carries his banner openly. But the traitor moves amongst those within the gate freely, his sly whispers rustling through all the alleys, heard in the very halls of government itself. For the traitor appears not a traitor; he speaks in accents familiar to his victims, and he wears their face and their arguments, he appeals to the baseness that lies deep in the hearts of all men. He rots the soul of a nation, he works secretly and unknown in the night to undermine the pillars of the city, he infects the body politic so that it can no longer resist."

So it is with corruption. To paraphrase Cicero, it is a treason from within that "rots the soul of a nation".

When I first stood up in Parliament and blew the whistle on Arms Deal corruption in September 1999, I was branded by the ANC [African National Congress] as being unpatriotic. I knew that this was nonsense,

and that my patriotism in fact required me to stand up against corruption and expose those that put their greed ahead of the needs of the people of South Africa. I acted in the way that I did because I am guided by certain moral principles, the principles that are enshrined in our Constitution and the very same principles that informed our struggle against apartheid. However, it seems that we have started to lose our way, and that we are forgetting the values that informed the struggle. We need to ask ourselves some serious questions about where we, as a country, are heading, about the values and morals to which we now aspire, and about what we condone and what we condemn.

The De Lille Dossier that I released to the media named senior ANC officials who allegedly received kickbacks from the Arms Deal, containing specific allegations on the amounts each individual had received and exactly which European companies had paid them.

Like others, I believed that the ANC government would respond to these allegations by thoroughly investigating them and taking action against those who had defrauded the state and the people. However, this was not to be and, in the years that followed, the ruling party's handling of this issue was characterised by denial, interference and the thwarting of efforts to launch an independent and comprehensive investigation. We saw a violation of the constitutional principle of the separation of powers, where the ANC in the Executive and Parliament came together to defend the Arms Deal.

When I first read the information contained in the De Lille Dossier I was shocked. I was shocked that in a few short years so many comrades could go from being involved in the struggle to being criminals that had betrayed the trust of our people. Corruption steals from the poor. It compromises service delivery. It betrays the millions of people that vote for you and put their trust in you. Church leaders, NGOs [non-governmental organisations] and others repeatedly advised the ANC government against signing up to billions of rands' worth of weapons that would divert money from the poor, who were in desperate need of resources for education, healthcare, infrastructure and the fight against HIV/Aids.

But the ANC went ahead with the deal anyway, with the result that for the past ten years a once-proud liberation movement has been in denial and has conducted a dishonest and mischievous

Political commentator Xolela Mancgu convenes the Wits platform for public deliberation.

cover-up campaign. It seems that individuals in the ANC signed the Arms Deal only for their own pockets and for the coffers of the ruling party. There can be no reason other than bribery why, when choosing between two bids, a Minister stepped in and forced the committee to choose the most expensive one.

Without even going through the trouble of investigating my allegations, a number of ANC heavyweights immediately went on the offensive and accused me of being an unpatriotic opportunist. Some Ministers even resorted to calling me names. It wasn't long before I became used to the tall men with sunglasses that followed me everywhere.

I received death threats. Some of my sources in the De Lille Dossier were also harassed. One of them was accused of being a ruthless information peddler with no struggle credentials at all. However, I knew, just as the ANC did, that he was a former Umkhonto we Sizwe soldier who had been trained in the Soviet Union and later worked at the ANC's Shell House headquarters.

Despite the ruling party's best attempts, these allegations did not go away. The cracks within the ANC created by the Arms Deal began to widen right from the very start, with further divisions inevitable. Andrew Feinstein, a senior ANC MP, resigned from Parliament in August 2001, citing his unhappiness with the manner in which government was handling the deal. Feinstein had already been fired as the chairperson of the ANC's parliamentary Public Accounts Committee because he supported my call to government to launch a commission of inquiry into the deal.

Then my vindications came. The first was when the Auditor-General confirmed irregularities in the deal, and the next two were when allegations contained in the De Lille Dossier led to the successful prosecutions of Shabir Shaik and Tony Yengeni. The De Lille Dossier allegations became part of the record of the Durban High Court, the Supreme Court of Appeal and the Constitutional Court.

During the years of the struggle, our vision was to build a society on the principles of justice, fairness and equality before the law. It was not easy, but our burden was made lighter because we knew in our hearts that as comrades we would make certain sacrifices, not because we would gain from them financially later on, but because we wanted to create a caring society, where the needs of the poor and the oppressed were put first. In the first few years after freedom we had the feeling that we were on the right track. There was robust debate in our new Parliament and a willingness to tackle issues across party-political lines. On many occasions Parliament had proved to be willing and able to hold the Executive to account. I had believed that this would be the spirit in which Parliament would tackle these allegations of Arms Deal corruption.

Instead, President Thabo Mbeki himself joined the fray by embarking on a long and painful journey of denial, even pronouncing – live on national television – that there was no prima facie evidence to suggest any corruption in the deal. He did this even after two senior advocates advised him that there was indeed prima facie evidence. Because the ultimate responsibility for the South African Arms Deal rests with President Thabo Mbeki, who as Deputy President presided over the Cabinet committee responsible for the arms acquisition process, we must ask ourselves – what does he have to hide?

Let me read to you an extract from the De Lille Dossier:
"Initially the German bid was not short-listed in 1995. The re-entrance onto the shortlist followed a visit by the then Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki, to Germany. Suddenly the British and Spanish were ousted from the shortlist and the Germans were included. What caused this change of events?'

Besides this, the government has also failed dismally to provide any kind of evidence that the off-sets promised, which it claimed would produce R110 billion in investment and 65 000 jobs, have materialised anywhere near the targets. In reply to a question in Parliament to the Minister of Defence on 6 September 2006, the Minister told Parliament that the Arms Deal had created only 13 000 jobs.

Under President Thabo Mbeki's rule, and largely because of the morally dubious decisions made in the Arms Deal, the power of Parliament to deliver on its mandate to the people has been steadily and painfully eroded. The result of this mass arms acquisition process has been that our young nation, which was once so abundant with noble visions and hope, has slowly lost its way. The ANC has lost its integrity. And while many in government today are dirtying their hands with corruption, the people will one day lose patience with those who fail them and rubbish their trust.

Since the ANC's Polokwane Conference late last year we have seen desperate attempts by the new ANC leadership to protect ANC President Jacob Zuma from having his day in court. There have been numerous trips to Mauritius with the rumoured aim of influencing the decisions of the courts in that country with regard to evidence needed for the Zuma trial in Pietermaritzburg. There have been noises from within the new ANC leadership, although they were later denied, calling on President Mbeki to come clean

on his role in the Arms Deal, and the ANC has even set up an ad-hoc committee to investigate the deal.

However, almost ten years after I first blew the whistle, the ANC in Luthuli House and the ANC in government remain in denial. When I stood up in Parliament late last year and confirmed that the ANC had received a cheque for R500 000 from the German arms company ThyssenKrupp, I was ridiculed by the ANC government. Later, when the Mail & Guardian confirmed what I had said, the ANC remained silent.

Now, at a time when there is desperation in the ANC to save its president from prosecution, an orchestrated campaign has developed to garner support for the idea of an amnesty for those implicated in Arms Deal corruption. I know that this campaign is coming from within the ranks of the ANC. The argument put forward in support of such an amnesty is that this might be the only way that the full extent of Arms Deal corruption can be exposed and dealt with once and for all. This argument is flawed for two main reasons.

It is clear that the truth will finally come out and that, in the long run, as the wheels of justice continue to grind, not one corrupt individual will be able to avoid exposure and prosecution

Firstly, those responsible for Arms Deal corruption do not deserve any form of amnesty because their actions were not about furthering a higher political cause, but rather their own individual greed and the coffers of the ANC. Corruption is criminal, not political. There is no higher moral value and no political cause or struggle involved here. It is simply a crime by those entrusted by the people to represent them. In this instance they are crooks, not freedom fighters, and we cannot provide amnesty for criminal offences, whether or not they have political consequences. If you commit a crime you must pay the price and the law must run its course.

The second issue is one of values and morality. As a country, we are desperately in need of strong moral leadership. Crime and violence are threatening the dream of the South Africa we fought for. We need to create and instil values in our society which encourage respect for the law, for democratic process and for the criminal justice system. We need to say to our people that the law must be respected, and that if you break the law you will be punished. We need to inculcate strong moral values, and as leaders we need to provide moral direction and lead by example.

By granting amnesty for Arms Deal corruption we will be sending entirely the wrong message to our people. Government will be saying that there is a way out for those who break the law. It will be a further blow to our fight against the crime and corruption that continue to plague our country. It will undermine our justice system, which is predicated on the principle that criminal activities, no matter who commits them, must be investigated and the full force of the law brought against those responsible. If amnesty were granted then those in power would have failed in their duty as leaders to provide the moral leadership our country is so desperately in need of. What kind of precedent would we be setting if we pardoned criminals just because they happen to be members of the ruling party?

What really saddens me is that the ANC seems to have forgotten that the struggle we fought against apartheid was informed by a strong set of values and morals. It was a struggle for a country where all are equal before the law. How is it possible that in such a short period of time a party that once fought in the struggle for non-racism, equality and dignity could so easily execute a massive cover-up for those in its leadership that diverted billions of rand from the poor? It is sad that some of those former comrades have now allowed themselves to be corrupted, but they need to face the full brunt of the law.

The people of South Africa should not be fooled into thinking that without the granting of amnesty, the truth about Arms Deal corruption will never come out.

The call for an amnesty is emerging at a time when the investigations by the UK, German and Swedish prosecution authorities into the Arms Deal are starting to uncover massive kickbacks to the tune of millions, and when the ANC leadership is trying desperately to remove all obstructions in the way of a Jacob Zuma presidency. Let the ID [Independent Democrats] make its stance very clear – the ANC president has the same right to a fair trial as any other South African.

There is no doubt in my mind that our people, including the vast majority of ANC members, are against an amnesty for those implicated in Arms Deal corruption. Should amnesty be granted, I can assure Mr Zuma that, in his own words, the anger of the voters will "bite".

It is clear that the truth will finally come out and that, in the long run, as the wheels of justice continue to grind, not one corrupt individual will be able to avoid exposure and prosecution. Instead of an amnesty, the ANC and the government should

ID leader Patricia de Lille blew the whistle on arms deal corruption in Parliament in 1999.

avoid prolonging this process and declare, once and for all, by the appointment of an independent judicial commission of inquiry, that they are determined to come clean and root out the corrupt individuals in their ranks.

Escalating corruption at government level also points to a wider problem – that of political-party funding. As we near the 2009 national elections, the voice of South African voters continues to be marginalised because of the lack of regulations on political-party funding. The impact of this on our democracy cannot and must not be underestimated. Until we get serious about political-party funding, the privatisation of our democracy will continue and we will be plagued by funding scandal after funding scandal. The Arms Deal has been the biggest scandal and has inflicted the most damage on our democracy, but there have been so many others, from allegations that former ANC NEC [National Executive Council] member Saki Macozoma diverted R9 million from a black economic empowerment deal into a trust linked to the ANC's front company, Chancellor House, to revelations that the Network Lounge, which in effect put politicians up for sale at the last two ANC conferences, is owned by the ANC.

Once thing is clear: without the regulation of political-party funding, scandals like these will continue to damage our democracy.

In light of corruption in the Arms Deal, we need to be weary of the possibility of corruption in future government deals. The Chancellor House ANC business front not too long ago was going to tender for Eskom contracts. The ANC said it would exit the contracts, but it is an extremely dangerous and worrying thought that while the country suffers from the current electricity crisis – which by the way is the fault of the ANC government – the ANC would have stood to benefit from contracts running into billions of rands. They create the problem, the rest of us pay for it and they laugh all the way to the bank.

Therefore, in line with my duty to all South Africans to ensure that their interests are put first, the Independent Democrats will keep a close eye on the planned new nuclear power stations, whose cost will exceed R700 billion, which have been put out to international tender. We cannot allow the corrupt among us to derail the dream of a free, democratic and just South Africa for all. How we deal with Arms Deal corruption will set a precedent for our fight against corruption in years to come. Therefore, the ID will accept nothing less than an independent judicial commission of inquiry whose findings and recommendations must lead to prosecutions.

Only then will we be able to stop the traitor who moves among those within the gate freely, and only then will we be able to silence his sly whispers.

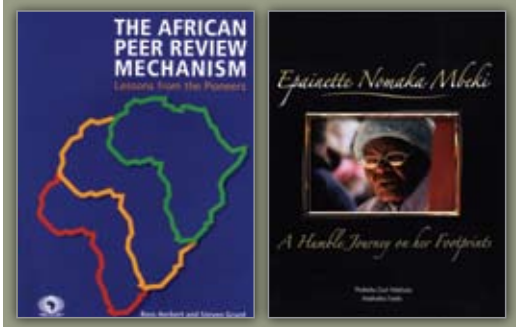
FOCUS BOOK CORNER

The African Peer Review Mechanism – Lessons from the pioneers

By Ross Herbert and Steven Gruzd

SAIIA ISBN 1919969608

Candid and thoroughly informed, this book examines the practical and theoretical challenges surrounding *the* African Peer Review Mechanism, one of Africa's most innovative reform initiatives. Based on a five-year research and training programme, the book draws on extensive interviews with participants from across the continent.



Epainette Nomaka Mbeki

By Thobeka Zazi Ndabula and Mathatha Tsedu

Zazi's Productions ISBN 9780620398480

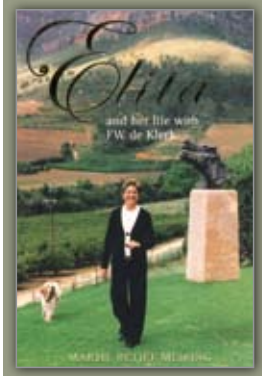
As the foreword to this striking coffee table book notes, "Mama Mbeki" is and has been 'an activist, a struggle veteran, a community leader and, above all, a dedicated mother". A story told mostly through photographs, the book documents the matriarch's life story beautifully, taking us through her community projects, family moments and the celebration of her 92nd birthday.

Elita and Her Life with FW de Klerk

By Martie Retief Meiring

Tafelberg ISBN 9780624043560

Elizabeth 'Elita' Lanaras's story is a search for love and meaning that takes her from a fashionable district in Athens and a marriage to a high-profile millionaire in London to her meeting of soon-to-be president FW de Klerk. De Klerk and Elita walked a difficult path together, set against the political high drama of SA's transition. This book tells the human story behind the headlines.



Land Reform in South Africa – Getting back on track

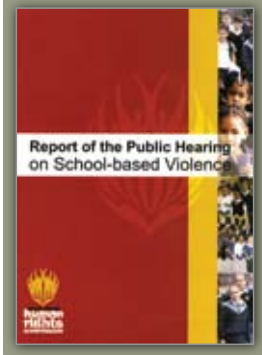
By Centre for Development and Enterprise

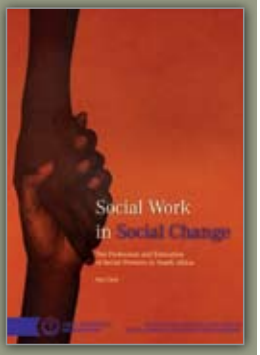
This report, compiled the Centre for Development and Enterprise, analyses the challenges presented by the land reform process in South Africa. The publication addresses the pain and injustice of the past and analyses the current situation of land reform in our different provinces, but is ultimately looking forward; it is about "getting back on track" and providing positive ways to move

Report of the Public Hearing on School-based Violence

By SA Human Rights Commission

Following a number of highly publicised incidents of violence in schools, the Human Rights Commission convened public hearings on the issue. This publication synthesises the complex issues raised and explores the emergence of trends that suggest that the environment necessary for effective teaching and learning is increasingly being undermined by a culture of school-based violence.





Social Work in Social Change

By Nicci Earle

HSRC Press ISBN 9778079692208

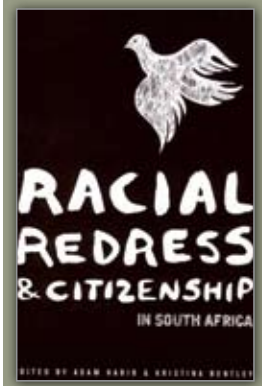
Exploring the profession and education of social workers in South Africa, this book looks at how the changes in government social policy after 1994 have had a substantial impact on social security and social service delivery. The complex issues are explored comprehensively through the indepth studies of social workers, who have been at the forefront of grappling with the practicalities of these changes.

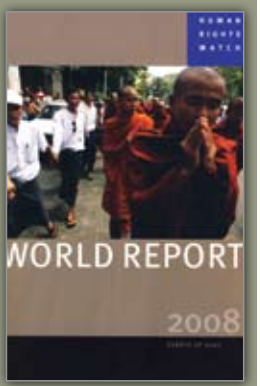
Racial Redress & Citizenship in South Africa

Edited by Adam Habib and Kristina Bentley

HSRC Press ISBN 9780796921895

Our democracy faces a central political dilemma: how to advance, redress and address historical injustices while building a single national identity. This issue lies at the heart of many heated, important debates, and the contributors of this book explore both the racially defined redress that is offered by the government as well as the class-defined organising principle that is supported by critics.

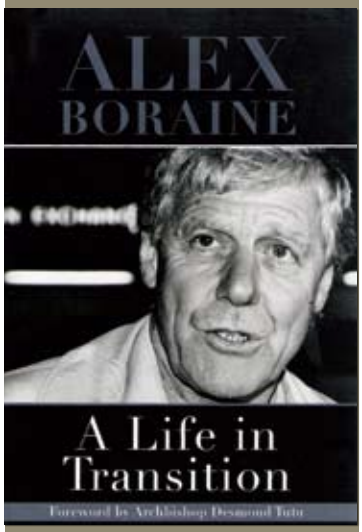




Human Rights Watch – World Report 2008

Seven Stories ISBN 9781583227749

Human Rights Watch is dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world, and in this, the 18th annual World Report, it summarises human rights conditions of 2007 in more than 75 countries worldwide. The key theme in this issue is the misuse of "democracy" and how democratic gestures are used to substitute real reform and human rights issues are not sufficiently dealt with.



By Alex Boraine

A Life in Transition

Zebra Press 2008, ISBN 9781770220126

Review by Michael Cardo

Early on as a Progressive Member of Parliament, Alex Boraine incurred the wrath of Prime Minister John Vorster.

Glowering at Boraine from across the floor in the House of Assembly, Vorster fumed: "Who will deliver me from this turbulent priest?"

Boraine knew that religious conviction was the National Party's Achilles' heel, so he adopted "a strong moral and religious line" in protesting its racist policies.

He pursued that line after apartheid ended, first as Deputy Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and later as a pioneer in the field of transitional justice. This was despite his growing alienation from organised religion.

Boraine is "no longer a believer in the doctrines that lie at the heart of the Christian religion", but, somewhat frustratingly, he never spells out the reasons for his transition from pastor to what he describes as "a Christian agnostic", nor does he adequately explain the term.

Born into a working-class family in Cape Town in 1931, Boraine went on to study at Oxford and subsequently obtained a PhD from Drew University. It was in the United States that his thinking about race and ethnicity was radicalised. Boraine was among the 200 000 people in Washington who listened to Martin Luther King's "I have a dream speech" in 1963.

Back in South Africa, he was drawn into the heart of the liberal establishment. As President of the Methodist Church, Boraine frequently visited mining compounds in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. This brought him to the attention of Anglo-American executives Harry Oppenheimer and Zach de Beer. The result was a two-year stint at Anglo as a labour consultant, followed by election to Parliament on a Prog ticket in 1974.

Boraine writes that the "tension between principle and strategy" was at the heart of his service as an MP. He realised that, in principle, Parliament was "fatally flawed"; that its racial exclusivism rendered it "illegitimate and unrepresentative". Strategically, however, the institution could be used to undermine and attack apartheid.

By the mid-1980s, this tension had become too difficult to manage. In February 1986, following party leader Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, Boraine quit Parliament. Although the departure caused waves at the time, Boraine will probably best be remembered for his extra-parliamentary achievements. As co-founder, with Slabbert, of the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (Idasa), he played a key role in brokering talks with exiled leaders from the ANC.

Boraine offers fascinating insights into the range of individuals and institutions he worked with in a long and courageous career fighting for justice.

In his retirement, he continues to take a keen interest in national politics. He says it is hard to recognise in the current ANC the party that came to power in 1994. Pervasive patronage and corruption suggest its "moral compass has been thrown out the window". There needs to be a realignment of opposition forces – Boraine suggests that Helen Zille and Patricia de Lille should be in the same party – to "offer an even stronger, more coherent opposition to the ANC government".

Laying Ghosts to Rest: Dilemmas of the transformation in South Africa

Tafelberg 2008 ISBN 9780624045793

Review By Raenette Taljaard

By Dr. Mamphela Ramphele

Since the publication of Bed Called Home: Life in the migrant labour hostels, Dr Mamphela Ramphele has displayed a powerfully unique ability to blend anthropology and psychology in grappling with the complexities of our society. In Laying Ghosts to Rest she yet again displays this unique ability in a courageous and relentless political analysis of our past, our transition to democracy, and our present, as well as the ties that bind these phases in our life as a new democracy.

Dr Ramphele is one of our country's most pre-eminent and accomplished women, and her work and activities have straddled the public and private sector and tertiary education in a life lived locally and globally. Her own personal life's inextricable links with our country's torturous past make the messages in her analysis even more powerful.

There is hardly a sphere of South African society where she has not had a ringside seat or been in the ring herself, giving her unique insights into the manner in which our past's umbilical cord to our present has been part of both our progress and our muddles as a country.

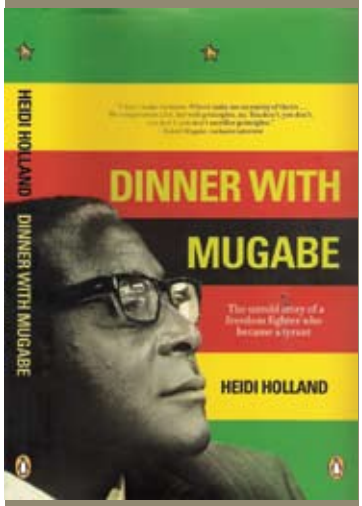
In Laying Ghosts to Rest, Dr Ramphele touches on a wide range of South Africa's difficulties: the continued distrust among us as a nation; reconciliation; violent crime; the failures of the education system and policies, and our consequent skills deficits; how we are failing to find our feet continentally and in an era of globalisation as a principled democracy; the ups and downs of our black economic empowerment (BEE) efforts to alter our economy; and the general malaise of leadership and denialism in our public life. In doing so she has written a book that is such a breath of fresh air that one has to resist the temptation to claim her immediately as South Africa's first female President – and march as you hear the call to action as a South African.

Dr Ramphele interrogates key questions about the longevity and robustness of our democracy and democratic institutions in the context of our socio-economic legacies and "ghosts" of the distant and more recent past.

Among other matters, she thoughtfully interrogates what role electoral reform could play in ensuring the responsive representation that would be capable of inspiring the public's continued trust in our democratic journey:

"Proportional representation has not helped in educating the electorate about the value of different voices on public issues. Constituency-based politics have a better chance of creating a platform for competing voices than our current system. The hybrid model of citizen representation proposed by the van Zyl Slabbert Commission should be revisited. We need to draw on the best from proportional representation and constituency representation. The exemplary constituency work that Helen Suzman of the opposition Progressive Party undertook during the apartheid-era Parliament as a lone voice for nearly three decades is a model young MPs should be learning from."

The book highlights our need to bury some of our ghosts in order to move forward as a society. Perhaps one of these is the current electoral system, which was intended to be an interim arrangement. While it would be unfair to reduce Dr Ramphele's argument in the book to a question of electoral reform, the topic stands strongly as a definitive conclusion on the question of what could move us forward.



By Heidi Holland

Dinner with Mugabe

Revenge may well be sweet – for the avenger, but not for the country he has ruined.
Penguin Books 2008, ISBN 9780143025573

Review by Tony Leon

In his 1998 address to the German Bundestag, Professor Yehuda Bauer, one of the world's foremost authorities on the Nazi Holocaust, observed:

"The most horrible thing about the Shoah [or Holocaust] is in fact not that the Nazis were inhuman – the most horrible thing about it is that they were indeed human, just as you and I."

"All too human" is the subtext of Heidi Holland's self-described psycho-biography of one of the world's most "puzzling and destructive leaders". It is an interesting approach which yields uneven results. A veteran journalist and chronicler of Southern Africa, she provides fascinating, hitherto little-known detail of the Zimbabwean President-turned-tyrant's early and crucial formative years. This provides a rich seam of clues which she mines relentlessly and later uses to explain his transmogrification from the pious, studious, shy schoolboy to the pitiless and ruthless dictator his country, and the world, has borne witness to over the past decade.

By April 2008 there appeared some prospect that the people and opposition of Zimbabwe had managed to break the shackles of tyranny in which Robert Mugabe's 28-year unbroken grip on power had encased them. But the final outcome remains unknown. However, the personal and political factors which formed and shaped the country's liberator-turned-destroyer are well worth examining. They provides a cautionary, even harrowing, tale.

From an early age Robert Mugabe became freighted down with the soaring expectations of others. After the death of his adored older brother, his father Gabriel deserted the family leaving the future president, Holland advises, with "a pathological hatred of his father". These twin calamities, the death of his mother's oldest child and the departure of her husband, converted the young Mugabe, at the age of 10, into a de facto paterfamilias who saw his task as "restoring the light which had gone out of his mother Bona's eyes". The devoutly Catholic Bona – a frustrated nun – sank into a severe depression, saved only apparently by her vision of Robert as God-given possessor of manifest destiny.

Into this swirling emotional cauldron stepped a gifted educationist and priest, Father Jerome O'Hea, who arrived to preside over the St Francis Xavier College in Mugabe's boyhood town of Kutama. He recognised early on Mugabe's exceptional intellect and nurtured it, and him, for a future leadership role in education, which in the arch-segregationist days of the colony of Southern Rhodesia was the highest aspiration of African professional ambition. According to his surviving brother Donato, the dark underside of being his mother's precocious favourite and the priest-educator's pet was an isolated and friendless childhood, mocked and reviled by the neighbourhood children; in short, a playground pariah whose, in his brother's words, "only friends were books".

However, as the American novelist Tom Robbins once waspishly observed, "It's never too late to have a happy childhood." Indeed, other political leaders who underwent forms of juvenile trauma did not, on assuming high office, set out to destroy their own countries. Bill Clinton, for example, suffered from the childhood ravages imposed by an alcoholic stepfather who physically abused

his mother. This developed in him enormous, almost preternatural, powers of persuasion and charm as he became the de facto peacekeeper in a disintegrating household. This had fortunate results for the American economy and polity. According to Holland, however, and the psychologists she consulted for her work, the result in Mugabe was far more baleful: his psyche was irredeemably damaged; in short, he displays a "terrifyingly emotionally underdeveloped persona, incapable of dealing with rejection". When coupled, in the adult man and President, with a violent force at his disposal and a driving desire to avenge a lifetime of slights and rejections, "Robert Mugabe proceeded to run amok."

There are, of course, limits to placing Mugabe on the analyst's couch in this fashion. Not the least of these was Holland's lack of access to her subject. Although in 1975 she provided (and gives the reader minute detail of) a safe house, and cooked a hasty dinner for the then guerrilla leader on the run, she only had one substantive, intensely described, interview with Mugabe as President. This event occurred in December 2007 when Zimbabwe was at its nadir, largely due to the destructive policies and paranoia of its President. And while much of the book reveals Mugabe's fragile sense of self, coupled with extreme narcissism, this final chapter reveals him to be, in addition, deeply delusional. When Holland draws attention to the parlous state of the Zimbabwean economy, he responds, "Our economy is far better, a hundred times better, than the average African economy."

This fantastical, absurdist remark is not simply demonstrative of the cocoon of self-denying isolation in which he has encased his presidency. It also needs to be pitted against the reality of the true state of economic ruination he and his policies have visited on the one-time breadbasket of Africa: according to economist Tony Hawkins, by March 2008 (barely three months after this misstatement) Zimbabwean inflation was running at 200 000 per cent, "set to more than double before mid-year" to the fantastical level of 500 000 per cent. Indeed, Mugabe's lasting contribution to history, his propensity for violence and vote-rigging beside, might be well to set a universal record, of the worst sort, in the annals of economic history.

There are, of course, objective explanations, rather than the pathologies and frailties of human agency, which explain Zimbabwe's implosion. Mugabe has, until very recently, faced a shallow bench of opponents: his most ruinous acts also occurred when the world focus had shifted, after 9/11, to the Jihadist terror from Iran and Iraq, and his country, while symbolically important, is strategically insignificant. ("His luck," as a Western ambassador posted in Harare told me a few years ago, "is that he grows tobacco, he doesn't have oil.") The "struggle solidarity" mindset of most African leaders, coupled with their own unexorcised phantoms relating to colonialism, racism and the Cold War, also gave the dictator a clear run for his destructive policies and practices.

The prime focus of this book (which suffers from needless repetitions and is laced with authorial intrusions to establish Holland's bona fides as a staunch anti-Ian Smith Zimbabwean democrat) is an examination of the personal demons which have driven Mugabe's national self-destruction. But she also, very effectively and persuasively in my view, researches and exposes her subject's almost accidental rise in politics. She traces his seeming contentment as a teacher in Ghana at the dawn of Kwame Nkrumah's presidency in the 1950s. It was there that he met his first wife, Sally Hayfron, who seemed to provide an emotional ballast and serenity in sharp contrast with his helter-skelter emotional trajectory before (or since her death in 1992). More significantly, perhaps, in terms of the fate of his nation, Holland provides serial evidence that he was a reluctant politician, whose prominence in the early African Nationalism in the 1960s owed more to Mugabe's educated cadences and ability with words than any burning political ambition or thirst for leadership.

But when Mugabe's involvement did, indeed, land him with an 11-year sentence in Ian Smith's jails, his rise, while incarcerated, to the leadership of Zanu, also appears to have owed more to the machinations of others than any ambition of his own. His one-time ally Edgar Tekere, who soon fell from Mugabe's graces after independence, provides a riveting first-hand account of how Mugabe refused to cast a vote against the compromised Ndabaningi Sithole. But he landed up with the top job anyway – once again the consequence of the designs of others, coupled, it is suggested, with a life-long tentativeness which the author and Tekere suggest owes more to a cowardly indecisiveness than

to any degree of personal reticence. It is also noteworthy that the feared (in the white community and wider international community at least) Marxism with which Mugabe was so associated during his Mozambican sojourn, when he led the Zanu guerrilla force, was also grafted on by others. According to Tekere, "Mugabe liked the sound of the ideology and before long he had completely fallen for it and began to sing the Marxism/Leninism song. But that's all it was – rhetoric. There was no genuine vision or belief behind it."

This depiction of Mugabe as an educated empty suit or vessel carrying the cargo of half-baked beliefs and strategies, subject to the whims and tactics suggested by others, achieves further salience, later on, when Mugabe is depicted as initially controlled by, rather than controlling, the ruinous activities of the Zimbabwean "war veterans". He is depicted as cravenly and ruinously acceding to their profligate financial demands and even being in the back, rather than driving, seat of the initial spate of land invasions. Yet none of this is suggested to be exculpatory of his own central role in the violence and mayhem which his forces unleashed on the country.

Indeed, his fragile ego and problems of self-esteem were hardly alleviated by the behaviour of his adversaries. The callous and fateful decision of Ian Smith's regime not to release him from prison to attend the funeral of his three-year old son who died in Ghana is a particular turning point. The author elicits from an interview with Smith, recorded shortly before his death, a fascinating detail of how the one-time unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) leader literally and metaphorically rejected Mugabe's hand of co-operation in the early halcyon days after independence. "I sat down (on the sofa)," Smith recalls, "He then sat right up close to me and held my hand … well, I don't like people holding my hand. So I got my hand out of his hand and moved to the other end of the sofa."

Holland describes this prophetic moment: "The black man steels himself to extend a hand of friendship and the white man spurns it." This is seen as a metaphor for a much wider rejection by the white community, by the British Government reneging on its land reform commitments, and by the decision of the commercial farmers initially to fund Mugabe's political nemesis, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). In a more connected and grounded human being, such political slights and political rebuffs would be brushed off. In the poorly integrated mind and soul of Robert Mugabe, they fuelled the extreme need for revenge, heedless of either consequence or the limits of proportion.

In a stronger, longer-established democracy there would have been countervailing forces to check and contain the petulant Mugabe. But when the world initially looked the other way in 1982 when he first provided ample evidence of his propensity for violence and disregard for human suffering (during the "Gukurahundi" Matabeleland massacres, when between 8 000 and 20 000 Zimbabweans perished at the hands of his Korean-trained fifth Brigade), Mugabe realised he could strike back with impunity. This was a full dress rehearsal for what was to follow when the electorate voted down his centralising constitution eight years later. The acquiescence of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in the havoc that followed, the green-lighting by President Thabo Mbeki of subsequent stolen elections, simply reinforced Robert Mugabe's ruinous self-belief and made our government disgracefully complicit in Mugabe's attempts to kill his own country.

Holland's exhaustive research includes interviews with some of the people Mugabe actually liked. These, surprisingly, include his long-time cabinet minister, the white commercial farmer Denis Norman; the Tory toff Lord Carrington; and Winston Churchill's daughter Mary Soames, whose late husband, Lord Christopher Soames, was Britain's last Governor-General in Zimbabwe. She also interviews two of the President's personal bespoke tailors, since the dictator's penchant for natty Saville-row-style tailoring has made him sartorially famous. But when you put aside this strangely compelling chronicle, you are left with the aching possibility that Zimbabwe, and the region, would have been spared much anguish had Robert Mugabe invested some of his fortune in consulting a psychoanalyst rather than a clothes merchant.

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