

THE last two months have been extremely hectic as far as IDASA's programme is concerned. Elsewhere in this issue there are reports on the conference held in Germany involving Soviet Africanists, Executive members of the ANC and a number of prominent South Africans. There were also two very significant conferences inside South Africa, one in Natal entitled "The Right to Speak" and a conference in Johannesburg under the title, "Strategies for Change".

A very encouraging feature which emerged during the Strategies for Change conference was the acknowledgement that there is a distinct difference between principle and strategy and that the latter should never be elevated to the former. This obviously allows for different strategies to be employed by different groups and individuals who oppose apartheid and are working towards the common goal of a non-racial, democratic South Africa. It also means there is considerable room for co-operation between differing opposition groups who share the same goal but have adopted different strategies. One of the factors which have bedevilled and therefore weakened opposition in South Africa is the time devoted to arguing and bickering over strategies rather than focusing on the key areas of agreement. It was my impression that there is a new realism emerging against the background of extreme repression from the state which should make possible greater unity and greater co-operation between the forces of opposition.

Because of the polarisation, suspicion and anger present in the body politic in South Africa, it is not easy to be optimistic about formal co-operation. Nevertheless, I am hopeful that we are nearer now than we have been for a very long time to the establishment of, for the want of a better title, "a Coalition of Democrats". Certainly there was an expressed desire at the Strategies for Change conference that key representatives and leaders of the wider democratic movement should come together to at least explore the possibility of such a coalition. Obviously it will not be enough to talk only about strategy; there is also a need for an in-depth study of what we really mean by non-racialism and democracy. If this is not attempted, these concepts will become empty slogans

From the Executive Director

A coalition of democrats?

DR ALEX BORAINÉ

used by a variety of different groups but meaning many different things.

IDASA will be giving attention to further workshops and conferences on the content of the goals so that greater clarity may emerge.

A disturbing feature flowing from the state of emergency, the recalcitrance of the state and the stubbornness of many whites to accept fundamental change is the growing impatience amongst younger Blacks who wonder if there is any point whatsoever in co-operating even with those Whites who are committed to this change. It is encouraging therefore to read the moving words which were written from prison by Mosiuoa Lekota, who was recently convicted of treason and is now awaiting sentence. Here are some extracts from that document, which has not been published in South Africa but reached the *New York Times*:

"The struggle against racism must not and should no longer be looked at from the side of black people alone. It must be looked at, and fought, from both sides of the colour line. That does not mean that the present set of circumstances should be ignored. A necessary balance must be struck to give sufficient leverage to those who fight the immediate evil of white racism.

But those of us who shoulder the burden of struggle should not be swung around completely. We should not move over to the extreme of employing practices that may prove disastrous on the dawn of a new day.

It is my genuine desire that when freedom day comes, it should not find reconciliation too far to attain. This immediately raises the question of the methods of struggle. The more jarring and shattering the methods, the deeper the alienation of our people and consequently the

more difficult the process of healing the wounds and reconciling the people. It is important to keep in mind what we mean by reconciliation. It does not mean pampering and pandering to the oppressor. Certainly it does not mean tinkering with an evil system. But it would be self-defeating to resort to patterns and grounds of action that trample on principle even though they take us forward faster.

Non-racialism as a method embodies the process of pulling blacks and whites together so that they jointly dismantle apartheid. In the process, artificial suspicions, nurtured by years of apartheid myths and propaganda, are demolished".

This admirably sums up the philosophy and practice of IDASA and one can only express heartfelt admiration and appreciation that such a message should come from the pen and from the heart of one who is certain to be incarcerated for many years to come. It must surely challenge all of us to renew our efforts in working towards that non-racial, democratic ideal for which Mr Lekota has made so great a sacrifice.

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IDASA representatives in the USA

WAYNE MITCHELL

DURING the month of November IDASA representatives toured the United States for the purpose of fund-raising and the briefing of American opinion leaders about the situation in South Africa.

Dr Van Zyl Slabbert, Dr Nthato Motlana, and IDASA's National Co-ordinator Mr Wayne Mitchell tackled the first leg of the visit which included Boston, Chicago and New York. The group addressed several editorial boards of major newspaper groups, the Council on Foreign Relations of Chicago, the World Peace Foundation and facul-

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