

HUMAN RIGHTS

Controversy over bill of rights

By Janet Cherry

Stimulation and entertainment were finely balanced at the annual Human Rights Festival in Port Elizabeth, which began with a conference that unpacked some of the issues behind the slogans.

THE director of the Human Rights Trust, Rory Riordan, kicked off the opening conference of the organisation's annual Human Rights Festival with a strong argument for the ongoing need for a human rights movement in South Africa. He began by noting the value and achievements of the movement, identifying 14 strands of human rights work - including legal, medical, educational, church-based and advice office - which he felt had made an enormous difference in South Africa over the years.

The future, however, was another question, he said.

Given that it is likely that there will be an agreed, negotiated constitution for South Africa, including a bill of rights, does this mean the end of the human rights movement?

Riordan argued strongly that it does not; that human rights organisations should remain independent of any future government - even

Faculty, whose tightly argued and provocative paper proved a highlight of the conference and sparked much debate.

He began by questioning whether a bill of rights would work in South Africa, arguing that the conceptions of what is involved are so different that it would be unworkable.

Whites, he argued, see a bill of rights as a "messiah" that will save them from their "fallen state" and protect them against the black majority. They wish to use it to retain control and to "take back with one hand what they are giving with the other".

Blacks, on the other hand, are attracted to a bill of rights not for its own sake, but because it is seen as an "olive branch" which is politically expedient to offer to whites in the negotiation

process. Among

blacks, he argued, there is no real commitment to a culture based on individual



Basic human rights still remain a

"carry out s

Reading reveals this rights design life under b

The ANC second generation and the large comfort. It qualification ethnic or n fascism.

Leyshon undermine parliament, al limited in ti conform to

'Whites see a bill of ri
will save them from th

Op soek na reënboogko

Deur Mark Behr

“OMGEWING vir ‘n Veranderende Suid Afrika” was die tema van ‘n eendaagse seminaar wat onlangs deur bykans 250 belangstellendes aan die Universiteit van die Witwatersrand bygewoon is. Die seminaar het vier dae van filmvertonings deur die Environment Film Workshop Group afgesluit.

Een van die mees verblydende aspekte van die seminaar was waarskynlik die uiteenlopende samestelling van die gehoor en die paneellede wat aan besprekings deelgeneem het.

Insette is gelewer deur sprekers wat gewissel het vanaf die Direkteur-Generaal van Waterwese, Greenpeace-aktiviste, ingenieurs, vakbondlede en regslui tot by die PAC woordvoerder vir omgewingsake.

Dit is na hierdie pluraliteit van verteenwoordigende en besorgde stemme wat dr Jacklyn Cock verwys het met die woorde: “The threat to South Africa’s environment might make a rainbow coalition possible – but we all have a very different experience of what constitutes that threat.”

Terwyl die bedreiging vir die inwoners van Sebokeng gestalte vind in die probleem van riool en vullisverwydering is dit vir ‘n segment van die blanke bevolking eerder te vinde in die voortgesette koalientontginning teen Chapmanspiek. In die woorde van Barney Desai van die PAC, “For whites it is aesthetics. For blacks

Voorts v
van inligti
aan te teke
buiting va
verandering
ekologies s
Terselfde
like inkoop
vakke bin
Hierdie p
hand van
omgewing
word binn
self nie die

Wat ven

**‘Miskien is dit nou dat die
begin brand dat ons kan
om verder te kyk as die k
van mense se vel, politie
ideologieë of sosiale stat
Miskien is dit op ‘n snaal
manier die wêreld se ma
die mensdom se menswa
heid te herstel.’**

Wêreld-ve
aan 400 n
Eerste Wê
Hoëveld,
syfers vir
wyn nie. I
uiteenlope
krisis wat
gesig staar



trade unions and women’s organisations had been the basis for overthrowing injustices in South Africa and should remain independent of the government. If they merged with the state it would mean the demise of civil society, the end, not the beginning, of “people’s power”.

Thirdly, it was crucial for South Africa to be part of the international human rights movement. And finally, human rights organisations and organs of civil society should be involved in the process of negotiations and current constitutional debates. Such issues should not be left to the major political parties.

CURRENT then raised the issues to be confronted by the human rights movement in the immediate future. The most contentious of these, he argued, was the question of second generation rights – that is, socio-economic rights.

If the courts cannot enforce economic justice, he argued, what is the point of having these rights entrenched in a bill? Should a constitution in fact say anything about the economy? Is