

Bargaining, negotiation deserves more attention

STATE RESISTANCE AND CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA,

Edited by Philip Frankel, Noam Pines and Mark Swilling (Southern Book Publishers, Pretoria, 1988).

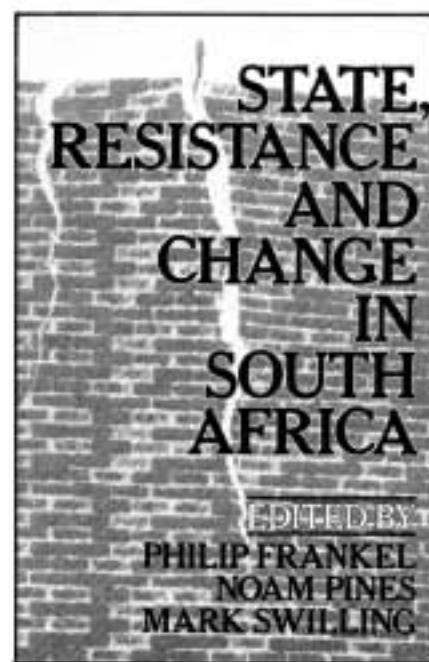
This recent edition on South African politics covers areas such as the current political stalemate, business and "reform", local government (in crisis), the role of Inkatha, township mobilisation, the role of the ANC, the Freedom Charter and strategies for change. Contributors are Cobbett, Evans, Frankel, Glaser, Grest, Hindson, Hudson, Lodge, McCaul, Mann, Philips, Seekings, Swilling and Webster.

Most of the contributions deal with contemporary politics and reflect a well planned inter-disciplinary approach. For readers who are interested in any of the above-mentioned topics, this book will be an excellent starting point. Both articles as well as the bibliography on South Africa by Noam Pines can be put to good use in the academic field and in the working place. Even dealing with fairly "conservative" books, topics are listed in the bibliography — such as Arend Lijphart's *Power Sharing in South Africa*. The biblio-

graphy also includes books which give an excellent historic background to (black) politics in South Africa. For example, André Odendaal's *Vukani Bantu!* (1984), Paul Maylam's *A History of the African People of South Africa from the early Iron Age to the 1970s* (1986) and Lodge's *Black Politics in South Africa* (1983).

The increasingly important role of the military in upholding minority rule is dealt with by Michael Evans and Mark Phillips. Eddie Webster deals with the trends in the trade union movement and Tom Lodge's contribution on the ANC is of much value. The chapters are fairly representative of current issues in South African politics and the book succeeds as a good descriptive and fairly successful analysis of current South African politics.

However, one feels that it erred on the side of too much description and too little analysis (not that there is no analysis — but it could be even better). The chapter on local government could have made much more use of the interactive influence between the new parallel structures and the possible development of "strategic gaps" in the system (an approach which receives some attention



in the work of Doreen Atkinson (Stellenbosch) and Chris Heymans (Rhodes).

Perhaps more attention could also be given to the issue of negotiation and bargaining. It is dealt with in some detail, but one feels that more could have been said on this important topic. Lastly, the role of South Africa in Southern Africa perhaps deserves some more attention.

To conclude: This book is indeed an important contribution to the South African debate and dialogue. It can be seen, despite some minor points of critique against it, as a very necessary acquisition for the serious student, observer, and participant in South African politics.

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Monde: why we went on hunger strike

Monde Mtanga, IDASA's regional co-ordinator in the Eastern Cape, went on hunger strike with detainees around the country and was released in April after spending 497 days in detention.

I was detained near my home in New Brighton on the morning of December 10, 1987. Two black policemen took me to Louis le Grange Square where I was questioned before being transferred to St Albans Medium Prison in the afternoon.

It was my first experience of detention and of being "inside" for a long time, but at St Albans I met many comrades who had been in detention since June, 1986.

That was why the hunger strike took place. Many people had been kept in prison under the emergency regulations since 1986 and there was no indication that we were going to be released or be charged.

We contacted our lawyers to tell them that they must do something about us — but we were told that the State of Emergency could not be challenged, and that there was very little chance, from a legal point of view, of securing our release. So we contacted the Black Sash, the National Association of Democratic Lawyers, the National Medical



Monde Mtanga flanked by IDASA colleagues Dr Alex Borraine and Keith Wattruss on his release from prison in Port Elizabeth.

and Dental Association and the South African Council of Churches, preparing the ground for any future action that we might take.

After this, we all agreed that we should embark on a hunger strike, starting on 6 February. There were 105 detainees at St Albans at the time and we set up committees to co-ordinate the action we were planning to take. We drafted a memorandum, with copies to the prisons authority, the security police and Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok. We also sent copies to the Black Sash, Nadl, Namda and the Human Rights Trust to see what role they could play in assisting us.

Our demand was simple: we must be released immediately. We were on fast for 11 days and during our strike a team of lawyers went to see Mr Vlok about our plight. He promised to release us, but not

while we were on hunger strike. He would also review our cases on an individual basis, and asked not to be pressured on this.

We decided to continue with the hunger strike until we got positive results. The lawyers met with Mr Vlok for a second time, pointing out the seriousness of our case. The minister responded with the names of the people who would be released immediately, and we suspended the hunger strike shortly afterwards.

My family was very surprised and jubilant at my release and I received a warm welcome-home from family members, friends and neighbours. I want to thank my lawyer and IDASA, and all the people who gave me moral support during my detention, including the Black Sash and other progressive organisations.