

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

IDASA's goals are:

- To encourage South Africans of all races to reject apartheid and discover an alternative that is non-racial and democratic in the true sense of the word.
- To assist people to accept and work for a post-apartheid society as a way of allaying their fears.
- To mobilise the skills, knowledge and experience of all those who can assist the communities in the crisis areas of South Africa.
- To provide forums and opportunities on a nationwide basis to find democratic solutions to South Africa's problems.
- To assist in creating a climate for genuine negotiation towards a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

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EDITORIAL

New political space for extending debate

For an institute concerned with a democratic alternative for South Africa, Idasa should observe recent developments in the country with care and interest. Viewed from abroad (specifically Oxford) where I have been since September 8, events seem to be unfolding with bewildering pace. Until the very day of the election, enormous performance pressure had built up on F W de Klerk. Foreign governments, whether for or against sanctions, without exception demanded the same thing of him: to bring about the conditions to negotiate the conflict in South Africa.

The ANC had spelt out in considerable detail what these conditions had to be. These were accepted in the form of "peace proposals" by the Organisation for African Unity (OAU), the Non-Aligned Movement and no doubt also later by the United Nations. On whatever front De Klerk and his government turned, they were met with the same demand: **negotiate**. De Klerk himself said he wanted a mandate from the whites to negotiate and no sooner were the election results out, when he lumped the DP performance with that of the NP and claimed that almost 70 per cent of the whites wanted him to "reform and negotiate". The immediate question became: **Will he deliver?**

FW's difference

In logic there is a simple truism which states: "A difference has to make a difference to be a difference." Whatever the cause — pressure or persuasion, carrot or stick — and whatever the political predisposition — hard line or moderate, right-wing, centre or left — **De Klerk has made a difference.**

It is stupid and foolish not to admit this or to exclude this difference from one's preferred policy or strategy. It is ridiculous to say that there is "no difference between F W de Klerk and P W Botha". To sit in front of British TV and see an ANC flag being draped around the head of Louis Botha with the gates of Tuynhuys in the background, the crowd chanting and cheering and not a policeman in sight, is unnerving — it's eerie. It can also be confusing and dangerously misleading.

sense that it goes to the kernel of South Africa's problem and whites' fears, namely loss of power and privilege).

What I found lacking in the article was how to achieve an economically egalitarian society without alienating those who have the skills (management and technical) — the whites in the main. If we are to have a social democracy in South Africa this could potentially demotivate those who have the wealth and skills at present. Is it really possible for South Africa on its own economic resource base to actually expand economically (growth) without substantial foreign aid in order to avoid widespread poverty and attain justice?

Remember PW?

Barely a month after the election: peaceful marches permitted; police put away sjamboks; political prisoners are released; ANC meetings openly take place; the SABC and NP supporting newspapers stress the need to negotiate with "authentic and representative leaders"; De Klerk and Gerrit Viljoen relax preconditions for talks; the Commonwealth adopt a more relaxed view on the South African situation and the foreign press are generally more supportive. So what is going on — and can anybody still remember what P W Botha looks like?

No panic

It would be totally wrong to see all this as a sign of the "regime panicking, capitulating or collapsing". Regimes who are uncertain about their own security simply do not act this way. It would be a dangerous delusion to think that "liberation, freedom or the transfer of power" is but a heave and a shove away. There is still a declared state of emergency in operation.

It would be completely unrealistic to think that negotiations are now possible or about to begin. Most of the conditions for this are now still absent. The simple fact of the matter is that there is a vast difference between relaxing control and negotiating a democracy. "Liberalisation" and "democratisation" are two completely separate but chronologically interrelated processes. The one does not inevitably lead to the other. "Liberalisation" is a necessary but insufficient condition for "democratisation".

Tough time

To release political prisoners, urban organisations, lift the state of emergency, even removing the last remaining apartheid laws, is absolutely necessary, praiseworthy and a blessed relief but this neither guarantees that negotiations will take place, or even if they do, that democracy will be the result. For those concerned with a genuinely democratic alternative for South Africa, the really tough part still lies ahead.

South Africa is fraught with insoluble problems: it is not simply an issue of eliminating apartheid but ensuring that exploitive elites do not again capture South Africa — a tall order.

**E Morkel
Lahstein (West Germany)**

E Morkel raises some valid questions concerning the problem of maintaining future economic growth and attaining a measure of social justice in the economy after apartheid. These are the big questions about which there is much debate in the country, and many different ideological or technocratic solutions are posited.

The article in question was simply a precis of the proceedings of a half-day seminar. During this

Letters

Address your letters to
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Beware of exploitive elites

In the September issue of Democracy in Action you featured an article by Gary Cullen under the headline "Going for growth — while redistributing the cake". I found the article very pertinent and "radical" (in the



Rules changing

If I can use another bucket of cold water: "liberalisation" is always a dangerous and risky period in an authoritarian and repressive society. When control is relaxed, the rules of the political game begin to change and all kinds of vested interests become agitated and even threatened. In the months ahead a very wary eye will have to be kept on the right-wing and the coercive conclaves of the state apparatus. David Webster and Anton Lubowski did not die by accident. In weather report terms: turbulence and additional volatility from quarters deeply disaffected

with "liberalisation" should surprise no one.

However, "liberalisation" does also create new political space. It is desperately urgent that this space be used to broaden and deepen the debate on, and the organisational infrastructure for a democratic alternative for South Africa. The shift from "liberalisation" to "democratisation" depends on action, not theory. Perhaps the work of Idasa has only just begun.

— Van Zyl Slabbert
Director of Policy
and Planning

Protest marches meaningful

There had recently been rather pointed criticisms and allusions to the "uselessness" of the protest marches that had become a feature of political activity throughout the country, New Nation commented.

"At worst, these criticisms are dangerous cynicism and at best a lame attempt to justify non-participation in the struggle for change.

"It could be that those who criticise this believe that they become the national oracles through which all discontent must be expressed.

"We believe the marches are a fundamental expression of the desires of our people for

democracy, justice and peace."

New Nation continued: "They are by no means the only terrain of struggle, but mark a significant coming together of all those opposed to apartheid.

"Further, they have not occurred because of the benevolence of the government, but because of the growing power of the people, through unity of purpose, to overthrow tyranny.

"There is often a tendency to attribute each step of advance by the people to the regime, when it is the people who are the makers of history."

Opinions expressed by contributors to *Democracy in Action* are not necessarily supported by Idasa.

Youth sincere about future

After attending the Idasa conference on education in Grahamstown last year and the one on the Freedom Charter in Cape Town, I returned to my work as a head of department at Hudson Park High School in East

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Tied in a knot

In the era of Pretoriastroika one would expect a cabinet minister to choose his or her words very carefully indeed. Surprising therefore to read that the Hon Adriaan Vlok, the Minister of Law and Order (he always had a certain way with words, told a criminology symposium in Pretoria recently that the police "will not be deterred by unwarranted outcries in public against so-called police brutality; outcries which are only intended to tie our hands."

— Which same hands are itching to use the sjamboks and batons, perhaps?

The forces of positivism

After his meeting with Archbishop Tutu and two other clerics State President F W de Klerk had much to say about "a gap created by mistrust" that are dogging his campaign to keep everybody in South Africa happy and quiet. "I strongly tried to impress upon them (the clerics) the fact that the time has come for them to change their attitudes from a negative one to a positive one."

— Could one hope that the president in turn promised that his government would abandon their "negative" attitudes as manifested by laws such as the Group Areas Act, the Population Registration Act, the State of Emergency and the random detention of political activists? Be positive, Mr President!

Sê nou net

Rapport se rubriekskrywer Pollux het onlangs vir Dr Verwoerd aangehaal wat in 1948 gesê het: "Blankes en nie-blankes reis saam in trems en treine; blankes en nie-blankes meng in hotels, waar maaltye bedien word, besig om meer en meer besit te neem van die teaters en die strate..." Pollux lewer dan kommentaar: "Die kringloop is byna voltooi. Hoe sou Suid-Afrika vandag gelyk het as ons nie die wye sirkel geloop het nie?"

— Wat Pollux nie durf vra nie is: hoe sou Suid-Afrika vandag gelyk het as die Afrikaanse pers nie die regeringsbeleid oor die afgelope 40 jaar so slaafs nagepraat het nie?

Who's who to whom

The KwaZulu Natal Indaba plans to launch a "Black Who's Who" to help pinpoint achievers and leaders in the African community in the region.

— Now there is a document that will be snatched up by the government, who recently still expressed a need to "identify" representative black leaders.

Ystervrou verbrou

Die vier swart Suid-Afrikaanse koerant-redakteurs wat onlangs vir Maggie Thatcher in Londen gaan spreek het, kon beswaarlik verwag het dat hulle byna dieselfde behandeling sou kry as wat die meeste oorsese besoekers van oud-President Botha te wagte was. Thatcher het die vier glo behoorlik die leviëte voorgelees en volgens koerantberigte nog 'n gratis les in die ekonomie ook gegee. — Met haar party se gewildheid op die laagste vlak (vanweë ekonomiese beleid) in tien jaar wonder 'n mens of sy ook een van die dae in die politieke wildernis gaan wees soos ons eie vingerswaai.

limited time the speakers and participants were able to air different approaches to the issues raised by E Morkel though no complete consensus was sought or indeed possible.

The success of the event was in the range of people it brought together, providing a chance to get to grips with points of consensus and difference, upon which future strategies can be built.

This seminar was in keeping with the general approach of Idasa which is to facilitate dialogue upon which future consensus can be found, rather than to concern itself with the development of policies.

The article as a consequence frustrates with its lack of answers, yet hopefully it has enriched some of the people on whom we depend for answers now and in the future. — Gary Cullen