

energy. In his essays — most of which are addresses delivered to cultural groups in Germany — he covers a wide range of subjects, sometimes mixing biography with criticism and with aesthetic and social theorising. His poems are a little uneven. A few of them are short personal lyrics — touching but not very memorable — but most of them are directly related to the struggle for liberation. (No harm in that, by the way: a large part of the world's store of art has been associated with struggle or dedication of some sort.) Several of the poems are praise songs to cultural or political heroes. Some of them don't quite achieve a full poetic resonance; they seem to be partly trapped inside the facts which brought them to birth. But the more successful ones do manage to give the *izibongo* form a new lease of life. A poem addressed to the newly independent Namibia, for example, is both praise and litany:

O Mother of mothers  
 Mother Namibia  
 Source  
 Root  
 Spring  
 Precious one  
 Keeper of our navel string  
 Cool shade on the sands  
 Warm current on the seashore  
 Treasured one  
 it is us  
 it were us  
 who emerged from the reed  
 who floated on the lilies of the swamps  
 who ride the back of the Kunene  
 who crush Mopani thorns under our soles  
 us  
 your desperate offspring  
 we season special meat for you  
 we chant Morenga! Witbooi!  
 we patiently perform the rites as it should be  
 we sit facing Christian shrines  
 we sob in silent meditation  
 we invoke the freedom fighting Lamb  
 as it should be  
 still serrated chains sever our wrists  
 bare ribs howl in the desert wind . . .

The book concludes with an interesting conversation between Vusi Mchunu and Lefifi Tladi, recorded in Stockholm in 1987.

*Stronger Souls* is a fascinating pot-pourri, a serious mixture of tones and urgencies, a gift from the outside — or rather, a gift which helps to bring the outside inside. ●

# FW must have known of secret funding

PRESIDENT F.W. de Klerk could not have been telling the truth when he told me at his Libertas Press conference that he was unaware of the Government's secret payments to Inkatha and Uwusa until the Weekly Mail disclosed them on July 19.

Nor did he give an adequate reply when I asked whether he had been aware, as State-President, that his government was violating an international agreement by secretly funding anti-Swapo parties during the Namibian election campaign.

It is "Mr Integrity's" failure to come clean on these two issues that raises serious doubts about his government's ability to be an impartial referee of the transition process, and which gives weight to the ANC's demand for an "interim government of national unity."

*ALLISTER  
 SPARKS  
 CHALLENGES  
 DE KLERK  
 ON INKATHA  
 PAYMENTS*

In reply to the first part of my question, whether he knew about the payments to Inkatha and Uwusa before the Weekly Mail report appeared, President De Klerk's denial was categorical: "As the Ministers involved have stated publicly, and as I believe the Minister of Finance has stated publicly (immediately before the press conference), I was not aware until it was disclosed. And the procedures prevalent did not require me to know."

Yet Mr De Klerk's own speech that very evening (July 30) shows this cannot be true. "I remind you", he said, "of my speech in Parliament on March 1, 1990, when I disclosed information about an investigation of secret projects which I had instituted in November 1989.

"As a result of it, numerous secret projects were cancelled. Uwusa is an example . . ."

So by his own account he knew about the Uwusa part of the scandal!

And since he instituted the investigation in November 1989, it must at least have included a report of the first R100,000 payment to Inkatha made on November 5, 1989.

We don't know when the investigation was completed, only that the President said in his speech to Parliament on March 1, 1990, that "a report on this investigation is expected soon". If it reached him more than two weeks after that, it must also have listed the second payment to Inkatha of R120,000 made on March 15.

What is more, President De Klerk made it clear in that speech to Parliament that the report, when it was received, "would be submitted also to hon members of the Cabinet."

So they all knew.

President de Klerk also told Parliament: "I believe that covert actions should be limited to the absolutely essential minimum. I shall see to this as soon as the inquiry I have ordered has been completed."

Two weeks later the second big payment to Inkatha was made for its King's Park rally. Does that mean it was considered part of an "absolutely essential minimum" category of projects — and if so what price President De Klerk's assurances now that secret projects are to be cut to a minimum.

The President's reply to my Namibian question was equally disturbing.

The question was: "Were you, as State President or as Acting State-President, aware that your Government was secretly funding anti-Swapo parties during the Namibian election campaign in violation of the New York Agreement that the Government had signed on July 20, 1988, which set out the principles for a peaceful settlement in Namibia that included a pledge of non-interference and to ensure that free and fair elections were held?"

De Klerk deliberately obscured the issue by focussing on when the agreement was signed, not when the election was





F.W. de Klerk

held, so ducking the question of his responsibility for what happened while he was President.

"With regard to Namibia," he said, "it was not my line function, but, yes, I was aware as a senior member of Cabinet that monies were expended there to assist parties to participate in the election, as Swapo has been assisted financially, and royally, from across the world.

"Apparently in international ethics there is nothing wrong with governments, if they support the principles of a party and if they think it is in the best interests of their own country, to support financially parties outside their borders."

President De Klerk went on to cite foreign aid paid to the ANC and American aid to various foreign parties, especially in Nicaragua — concluding that South Africa had the same right and there was nothing wrong "in principle" with its aid to the anti-Swapo parties.

What was grossly wrong, both "in principle" and in "international ethics", is that South Africa violated an international agreement in doing this.

What is more, this violation appears to have taken place under President De Klerk's stewardship.

It is true he was only a senior Cabinet Minister and not directly responsible for Namibia when the New York Agreement was signed. But he was Acting President and President when the violation occurred.

De Klerk became Acting President in August 1989. That was the month the Namibian election campaigning got fully under way. Sam Nujoma returned home on September 14. Polling was in November.

So for three months while De Klerk was no longer just a senior Cabinet Minister but the man in charge, carrying full responsibility, South Africa was aiding the anti-Swapo parties in violation of the international agreement it had signed 13 months before setting out the Principles for a Peaceful Settlement in Namibia.

These principles, together with Security Council Resolution 435 which the Government had also accepted, bound South Africa to work with the United Nations to ensure that "free and fair" pre-independence elections were held in Namibia and to "abstain from any action" which could prevent that from happening.

In other words South Africa undertook to be a joint referee with the United Nations of the Namibian independence process.

For President De Klerk to say now that he can see nothing wrong "in principle" with a referee providing secret aid to one side in the game he is supposed to be officiating, that it is all the same as American aid to Nicaragua, reveals a dismal understanding of a referee's role.

Which is why there has been such a collapse of confidence in his assurance that he wants to bring about "an equal political playing field" in the country.

When he was installed as State-President on September 20, 1989, Mr De Klerk singled out five critical areas for his attention — the first being to "bridge the gap of mistrust" obstructing peace negotiations.

Yet even as he uttered those words, De Klerk knew his government was violating the trust placed in it in the Namibian peace process — and that if found out it would widen the gap of mistrust catastrophically.

Why did he allow it?

Major Nico Basson, the whistle-blower on the Defence Force's anti-Swapo campaign during the Namibian election, claims the whole Namibian exercise, codenamed "Operation Agree", was a trial run for a similar but more elaborate campaign to destabilise the ANC and enable the National Party and its black ethnic allies (South Africa's DTA) to win the first post-apartheid elections here.

He claims a National Party study group went to Namibia after the elections to examine the effectiveness of the campaign, reported back favourably to the Cabinet's first *bosberaad*, and that this formed the strategic thinking behind President De Klerk's famous February 2, 1990, speech.

I am reluctant to believe this. The implications are too terrible. But the onus is on President De Klerk to re-establish confidence in the transition process, and the only way is to accept the demand for a visibly even-handed "interim government of national unity."

Let's hope all liberals can get off their fence and add to the pressure for that.

# AFRICA TO ITS

COLIN LEGUM

sees present upheavals on continent as encouraging

**N**OT since the time of the culminating challenge to colonialism, from the late 1940s to the early 1960s, has the African continent experienced the destabilising turbulence which is sweeping it from Cape to Cairo, and from Madagascar to Algeria.

For a change, this turbulence is both healthy and welcome because it marks the beginning of a serious challenge to non-democratic political systems.

If the first African liberation was a struggle against alien rule by the colonial powers, the second African liberation is a struggle against indigenous rulers, mostly the first generation of post-independence leaders.

Their claims that single-party systems were the best way of averting damaging tribal conflicts and giving the newly-independent states a chance to secure political stability and economic development have, for the greater part, proved to be a failure, and in most cases, though not all, these failures have led to an incremental increase in denials of human rights and basic freedoms.

The cup of discontent has now flowed over into an irresistible tide of opposition which has already resulted this year in the overthrow of Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia, Moussa Traore in Mali, Matthieu Kerekou in Benin, Siad Barre in Somalia, Aristides Pereira in Cape Verde, Dr Manuel de Costa in Sao Tome and Principe, and Denis Sassou-Nguesso in the Congo.

This is only the beginning. Already other rulers are engaged in fighting rearguard actions — Didier Ratsiraka in Madagascar, Sese Seko Mobutu in Zaire, Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, Andre Kolibga in the Central African Republic, Paul Biya in Cameroon, Omar Bongo in Gabon, Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo, and even the redoubtable Felix