



By Raenette Taljaard

THE NEW LOOK FOCUS

W elcome to the new-look FOCUS magazine. It has had a revamp in terms of size, style, content and, the HSF team trust, substance. We hope you will find that our fresh, clean look enhances your pleasure in reading it.

In this edition, we profile our National Assembly, the new leadership of the Democratic Alliance, a novel Private Member's Bill, the outcome of the June African National Congress (ANC) Policy Conference and the Independent Democrats' Party Congress, and many other aspects of our body politic, in keeping with our objective to trace political trends.

Although our magazine reaches its readers slightly later than usual, the delay has allowed us all to get the upheaval of floor-crossing behind us. Though much was expected in the wake of statements that many governments would fall through the cracks of this artificial feature of our democracy, or that hordes of councillors, and members of provincial legislatures and Parliament, would defect, the Independent Electoral Commission's released figures have shown a muted level of activity during this season of floor-crossing. Those governments that did change hands were at the local level – interestingly, the very level of government where we have a mixed electoral system in place, with a combination of “constituency” – the ward councillors – and proportional representation (PR) – the PR-list councillors. This raises questions about the automatic link that is often made between the principle of floor-crossing and the nature of the electoral system. If floor-crossing is retained, some basic minimum changes ought to be made to the legislation, including doing away with the 10% threshold requirement that locks members of larger parties in for proverbial life, while allowing smaller parties to be decimated by

disloyal opportunistic behaviour; and ensuring specific provisions to require by-elections if a government changes hands due to floor-crossing, to allow the voters a faster opportunity to give their verdict on the change of those hands that hold the keys to power. The corollary to this is clearly the adoption of a mixed electoral system for all levels of government – a proposal contained in the Van Zyl Slabbert report on electoral systems and electoral reform, which is yet to be accorded adequate airing and debate.

October marks the starting gun for the final stretch of the ANC succession race, and events ranging from the axing of the Deputy Minister of Health, to the protection of her nemesis, to the recent axing of the head of the National Prosecuting Authority, have certainly increased the temperature of the bid of our current President, Thabo Mbeki, for a third term as party president of the ANC. Equally vociferously, the support of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) for Jacob Zuma and a slate of ANC “top six” candidates has underscored the tense relations in the tripartite alliance that will mark much of our politics until the ballots on the Congress floor in Polokwane are counted, and the leadership race concluded with the new lineup of ANC leaders bracing themselves to take the party into the future, and into future elections in 2009.

The FOCUS team looks forward to covering all these unfolding succession events in our next issue, and to marking the 90th birthday of one of the icons of our history – Mrs Helen Suzman – in November this year. Her values, spirit and energy continue to inspire us all. Please join us in saluting a great woman of our country and courageous fighter for human rights who kept a torch of hope burning in the darkest days of the land she loves.



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COVER PICTURE:

The new mace is 1,196 metres long and weighs 9,86 kg. Though it appears to be a single unit, it was made and fitted in sections on an aluminium core.

At the head of the mace is an 18 carat gold drum, covered with springbok skin which, in turn, is attached to the drum by 18 buttons made from South African minerals and gemstones. On top of the drum rests a book made from gold on which, in raised text, is an extract from the Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The drum itself contains illustrations of South Africans going about their daily business, inter alia a miner, a saxophonist, a machinist, an architect, a builder, a soccer player, a fork-lift driver, a scientist, a teacher, a doctor, a domestic worker, a woman with a baby on her back and a hoe in her hand, a woman driving a tractor, and children reading and working.

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Deepening the debate

Baleka Mbete, Speaker of the National Assembly, talks to FOCUS about Parliament's moves to increase public participation in national debate

What does Masijule Ngengxoxo Mzantsi mean?

MBETE: Parliament, as the country's premier institution, adopted "Let's Deepen the Debate South Africa" as the "permeating factor" for all activities this year. *Masijule Ngengxoxo Mzantsi* is a Nguni expression. We adopted it to inform the conceptualisation of the business of Parliament in 2007 and it is routinely implemented as an integral part of the institution's programme for the year. Legislatures, as part of the co-ordinated network of the legislative sector, use it to inform what they do, in keeping with the specific activities of each legislature.

The aim is to integrate people's perspectives into the business of Parliament. People across political formations, in civil society, are seized with discussing many issues. It is a trend which both reflects and is reflected in what is happening internally and externally to Parliament. Debates are on about politics in political parties, and on policy issues in Parliament and in the country generally, about the economy and human relationships, the environment, social challenges, the whole range.





Madam Speaker presides over the House and its efforts to deepen the debate.

The two largest political parties in Parliament have both held significant debates and conferences. The ruling party continues to prepare for its national congress with ongoing debate on policies.

The theme is informed by these developments, and is also an expression of Parliament’s desire to provide meaningful avenues

“Parliaments are the link between government and its people, thus they should be a barometer of public concerns and opinions and the route through which these are expressed and integrated into policy and law.”

How does Parliament hope to put this theme into practice?

MBETE: The enhancement of public participation, as an empowerment measure for the citizenry through information for people’s robust involvement in debating issues of national interest, is one of our focus areas. We have a duty to make sure that our people engage us to take their issues forward.

We want a nation that engages with deep appreciation of our democracy to identify challenges and assist in the solution-seeking process. We believe any nation can only deepen the debate if they are well informed. Our mission is to put the available information at the people’s disposal; hence the public participation programme. As a way of taking public participation forward we have lined up our usual annual programmes for this year. I can summarise them as follows:

- Youth Parliament: the theme was “*Masijule Ngengxoxo Lutsha LwaseMzantsi*”
- Women’s Parliament: the theme will be “*Masijule Ngengxoxo Makhosikazi Asemzantsi*”
- Taking Parliament to the People
- The People’s Assembly.

For this year’s People’s Assembly we plan to spend three days with the people in one of the most rural parts of the country to include more people in debates on issues. Our approach to

It is important for Parliament to champion the notion that debate is positive even if people disagree. Disagreement must not be construed to represent negativity. Debate is healthy, it leads to growth

for public consideration of issues that matter to all South Africans. It is important for Parliament to champion the notion that debate is positive even if people disagree. Disagreement must not be construed to represent negativity. Debate is healthy, it leads to growth. Everyone must feel free to express their view.

In the words of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) Chairperson, Mr Mahlangu:

it is that it must involve significant political Committee work and interaction with a range of sector structures in the specific locality before and after the event.

In November we are opening Parliamentary Democracy Offices (PDOs) in four provinces: Mpumalanga, North West, Northern Cape and Limpopo. These offices are intended to establish a meaningful and immediate Parliamentary presence in every province to sustain the interaction between Parliament and the people. Debates often leave out people in far-flung localities. We want to go out there and bring those people on board because their views are important and can enrich our efforts.

What steps have so far been taken to deepen debate?

MBETE: We commissioned a process of review of institutions supporting constitutional democracy – known as Chapter Nine institutions. This process was put at the disposal of the people through radio and print media for robust debate. All the planned hearings have taken place.

We have successfully hosted the Youth Parliament. Its main theme, *Masijule Ngengxoxo Lutsha LwaseMzantsi*, was adapted from the main theme. The main focus for this Parliament was for the youth of this country to debate vigorously issues affecting them, and assist Parliament in charting the way forward. The main theme was further broken down into the following specific areas of youth concern:

- youth and skills and skills development;
- youth and economic participation in the context of 2010; and
- youth and drug trafficking.

It was a culmination of Provincial Youth Parliaments hosted by the Provincial Legislatures, at which the provincial representatives were selected to participate in the national event. Thus the Provincial Legislatures play an important role, as our partners, in reaching out to South African youth. Participants are selected with the following criteria guiding the selection to ensure wider participation in this debate:

- gender balance;
- representation of youth with disabilities;
- rural/urban balance and reflection of the demographic make-up of the provinces; and
- other special guests.

Two senior primary school children are selected by each of the provinces to accompany their delegation as observers, and 50 senior primary school children are invited from nearby schools in the Western Cape to attend as observers.

What role is played by other political parties?

MBETE: The theme *Masijule Ngengxoxo Mzantsi* is a Parliamentary one. Parliament is made up of members of all political parties so represented. Therefore their involvement cannot be compartmentalised in terms of political affiliation. Our theme is by

its very nature blind to this. It is about the robust involvement of South Africans for the interest of South Africans, not parties, such that for all our public participation activities we work in partnership with critical stakeholders, both within and outside of Parliament, in order to leverage the best possible political outcomes and to enable the integration of these into the work of Parliament.

This, in turn, helps to ensure that these are more than just events and that they become an integral part of the business of Parliament. During the President's State of the Nation debate, speakers from various political parties made constructive comments and suggestions on the theme. We are looking at implementing them. It also needs to be emphasised that the multi-party committee involvement from concept development through to the post-event follow-up has helped ensure proper political grounding and continuity when resolutions have to be factored into the business of the committees concerned for follow-up and future reporting.

Parliamentary Democracy Offices are intended to establish a meaningful and immediate Parliamentary presence in every province to sustain the interaction between Parliament and the people

What is the role and involvement of the public?

MBETE: Our strategy elevates our Parliament as a People's Parliament that must be responsive to the needs of the people. Our theme speaks directly to this. To service this nation we need to be alert all the time to what their needs are. Having been in government for a decade and three years, we must keep taking stock, consolidate our gains and rectify mistakes that happened along the way. The involvement of the public is critical if we are going to succeed. It is a constitutional requirement that we have the public participation. The programme is a response to that. I have already referred you to the Youth Parliament we have just hosted. By the end of this year we will have reached a number of communities and sectors of the South African society.

Baleka Mbete is the Speaker of Parliament.



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The South African National Assembly in comparative perspective

By Joel D Barkan

Comparison with other legislatures in Africa provides valuable insight for an evaluation of South Africa's National Assembly. In what ways are they similar or different? What does the experience of the National Assembly teach us about the development of legislatures in other new democracies? What lessons does their experience suggest for the National Assembly?

Students of South African politics and political institutions often consider their subjects to be unrelated to parallel phenomena elsewhere in Africa because of the country's unique history. Yet upon considering the National Assembly in comparative perspective, one finds that it is not so unique. Indeed, the factors that have shaped its development since 1994 are similar to those shaping the development of legislatures in other emerging democracies.

The conventional wisdom

Is the National Assembly an emerging legislature that contributes to democratic consolidation in South Africa, or is it a rubber stamp of the executive? The conventional wisdom among South African political scientists, the press, and elements of civil society is that it is weak. They cite as evidence the ANC's 74% of the seats, the centralised structure of the party, and its leaders' lingering commitment to democratic centralism, as well as to the principle of "redeploying" party cadres, including MPs who do not toe the party line. South Africa's electoral system of closed-list proportional representation (PR) is also cited as placing considerable power in the hands of ANC leaders and the executive branch. Above all, they cite the weakness of the National Assembly in legislative oversight – especially the performance by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) during its investigation of the infamous arms deal in 2000 and 2001 – as evidence that Parliament is no match for the executive; that what the ANC's leaders want, they get.

Reasons for optimism?

Those who take a more sanguine view, including many of the Assembly's members and staff, focus on different aspects of the legislative process, particularly the function of legislating and the making of public policy, as well as that of representation. In their view, it is an independent though subordinate player in the political process, likely to gain stature and thus influence over time. As evidence, they call attention to at least six factors that contribute to the emerging and potential power of the institution:

1. For the first time, the National Assembly reflects the demographics and broad array of competing interests that make up South African society.
2. It has amended 75-80% of the legislation it has considered since 1994. The executive proposes most legislation, but it is parliament that reviews, refines and rewrites most of what becomes law and public policy.
3. It has, for the first time, established a viable system of portfolio

committees. Although their capacity varies greatly, at least a third are doing a credible job in scrutinising legislation and engaging in a useful dialogue with the ministers and directors-general of the executive branch. The committee system is also the point of input for civil society and the business community, and the venue for dialogue across party lines.

4. Between a third and a half of all MPs devote substantial time to serving the public, a much greater proportion than during the apartheid era. And despite ANC dominance, there is considerable genuine dialogue and discussion across party lines.
5. Press coverage of parliament is extensive though the relationship between MPs and the press is more formal and restrained today than during the first parliament after apartheid.
6. MPs and the institution itself are well resourced in terms of adequate salaries for members, support by professional staff, office space, etc. Although this does not guarantee the emergence of an independent legislature, no legislature can successfully assert its independence vis-à-vis the executive without such resources.

The comparative perspective

What explains this seemingly contradictory interpretation?

The answer lies in comparing the National Assembly with the legislative experience in other African countries. When we do this we find that there are seven variables or groups of variables that shape the legislative process and the relationship between the legislature and the executive. These are:

The formal rules, both constitutional and internal, that specify the scope, powers and procedures of the legislature. On this dimension, the National Assembly is moderately powerful compared to legislatures elsewhere in Africa, as there are few formal restrictions on what it can do. The fact that most legislation is proposed by the government rather than by backbenchers is a result of the dominance and traditions of the ruling party, not the Constitution. This was also the pattern prior to 1994, and remains so in other African countries since multi-party politics returned in the early 1990s. The absence of constitutional restrictions on Parliament, however, also provides a partial explanation of why the Assembly, via its committee system, amends most legislation it considers.

Notwithstanding its extensive rural areas, South Africa is an urbanised and industrial society. Its MPs face far fewer pressures from local constituencies for pork-barrel assistance (eg funds for schools, health clinics, water supplies, feeder roads) than MPs



© Damien Schumann

South Africa's National Assembly is grappling with the nature of its relationship with the executive.

elsewhere in Africa. Most other African countries are largely rural, so the electorate usually evaluates MPs on the basis of their records at constituency service rather than on the deliberation and crafting of legislation, or oversight of the executive. Yet these are the two core collective functions of all legislatures. Largely free of local pressures, South African MPs are more likely than their peers to devote more effort to these functions and to consider public policy alternatives from the perspective of broad ideological alternatives and considerations of party position rather than from the perspective of specific localities.

The impact of electoral system design.

South Africa's PR system both strengthens and weakens the National Assembly. It strengthens it because the absence of small, territorially defined constituencies reduces the expectations for local constituency service while focusing MPs on broad matters of public policy. But it weakens the legislature by placing great power in the hands of party leaders. Combined with one-party dominance, such power means the legislature is at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the executive branch. PR also reduces the frequency of contact between MPs and the electorate, and thus the accountability of Parliament to the public.

The absence of parity between government and opposition.

The probability for a strong and independent legislature is highest where there is parity in the number of seats held by the ruling and opposition parties. Parity forces bargaining across party lines, because the leaders of the ruling party cannot count on its own votes to decide every issue in the legislature. Parity forces a measure of power-sharing and accommodation between government and opposition, and consequently between the legislature and the executive branch. In Ghana and, particularly, Kenya, the legislatures have emerged significant players in policy-making as a result of the balance between government and opposition. By contrast, the legislatures in Senegal and Tanzania remain weak because the ruling party holds supra majorities in these bodies. They are also weaker than South Africa's because of the greater pressures for constituency service, a single-member system of representation and limited resources.

Resources.

South Africa's national legislature is richly endowed compared to others in Africa. A monthly salary of R30 000 (\$4 700) makes South African MPs the second-highest-paid legislators on the

continent. Only Kenyan MPs receive more. MPs can enjoy a middle-class life without seeking supplemental employment. This is important, because the development of the legislature as an institution depends on its members devoting their full time to their legislative duties. No parliament, for example, can develop a viable system of portfolio or oversight committees unless MPs attend all or nearly all meetings of these committees. Because a viable committee system is the basis of the modern legislature it is also important that committees have adequate space in which to meet, and are supported by appropriate and suitably paid staff. On these counts the South African National Assembly is also well endowed, though committee chairs complain of inadequate research support. All MPs have their own offices and at least one personal assistant. This is arguably the best-resourced legislature on the continent.

Turnover of members

Notwithstanding its ample resources, the rate of turnover in the membership of the National Assembly has been high. According to Richard Calland, only 54% of the ANC's contingent of MPs at the beginning of the first post-apartheid parliament in 1994 returned for the beginning of the second in 1999. That dropped to 40% by the end of the second parliament in 2004. Roughly a third of the members of the present parliament are serving their first term. And while a core group of committee chairs, such as Jeremy Cronin, have served long tenures, many of the ANC's most capable MPs have been promoted to other government posts or left for more rewarding private-sector positions. The turnover in other African legislatures has also been high – in the range of 40% from one parliament to the next. However, nearly all of this has been due to the failure of incumbents to win re-election, a reflection of the electoral system of single-member districts in most of these countries. But the impact is the same. High turnover inhibits the professionalisation of the legislature and the accumulation of valuable experience by MPs, which in turn slows its development as an independent political institution, and a check on executive power.

The final factor is *the presence or absence of a coalition of "reformers" and "opportunists"* who want to enhance the power and independence of the legislature. In African countries where strengthening the legislature has been part of the agenda to limit executive power to achieve democratic rule, its advocates have been leading democratic reformers. They have been joined, on occasion, by MPs best described as opportunists – supporting reforms, but for their own ends. They join reformers in voting for higher salaries, but may not support other reforms. Such

coalitions have nonetheless achieved significant results in Kenya and Uganda, even though the "reformer core" numbers no more than 10-15% of all MPs.

The "reformer core" in the South African National Assembly – to the extent that there is one – is different. It consists mainly of activist ANC chairs of roughly a third of the committees, who lead them aggressively and are supported by a small group of committee members, both ANC and from the opposition. In contrast to most other African countries, most are members of the ruling party, often under pressure to toe the party line. Yet they are committed to the idea that Parliament should be an independent branch of government and, perhaps most important, that they can contribute to and enhance their party's policy goals by playing an activist role. Put differently, they are committed democrats as well as being committed members of

The National Assembly remains a "work in progress." It is not a "rubber stamp", but has yet to become a fully independent branch of government and check on executive power

the ANC. Whether they will be able to hold the line or reverse the recent tendency towards greater centralisation of power in the hands of the executive, however, remains to be seen.

The National Assembly remains a "work in progress." It is not a "rubber stamp", but has yet to become a fully independent branch of government and check on executive power. The variables shaping its development, however, are the same as those shaping the emergence of legislatures across the continent. Observers and pundits on South African politics need to consider this reality by evaluating the National Assembly in comparison to its sister institutions, rather than viewing it in isolation.

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By Judith February

Room for growth

For all its achievements since 1994, Parliament has yet to earn a high degree of trust among South Africa's citizens. Issues of ethics, oversight, accessibility and responsiveness remain problematic – but the time seems to be ripe now for progress on all fronts

Parliament has, since 1994, transformed itself from an arcane institution benefiting a minority, into an institution truly representative of the majority of South Africans. It has changed structurally in an attempt to create a more modern, responsive institution. The Constitutional framework is clear:¹ the legislature's role is to pass, initiate or prepare legislation (except money bills), ensure executive accountability and exercise oversight over organs of state (section 55); and the executive's role is to implement legislation, develop and implement policy, co-ordinate the functions of government departments and administrations, and prepare and initiate legislation (section 85).

All oversight mechanisms laid down in the Parliamentary Rules have their origin in the Constitution. The National Assembly (NA) must provide for mechanisms: to ensure that all executive organs of state in the national sphere of government are accountable to it, and to maintain oversight of national executive authority, including the implementation of legislation.

Section 92 (2) goes on to state: "Members of the Cabinet are accountable collectively and individually to Parliament for the exercise of their powers and the performance of their functions."



South Africa's Parliament has made some strides but executive accountability needs to be improved.

Since the inception of our democracy, Parliament has laudably succeeded in scrapping over 700 pieces of race-based legislation and introducing several pieces of legislation to entrench both equality and socio-economic rights. Its role in this regard can never be underestimated.

However, the past few years have been difficult ones for Parliament, as it has often struggled to define and interpret its oversight role, and has had to deal with a number of high-profile breaches of its own code of ethics. The so-called 'Travelgate' debacle has done a great deal to diminish people's trust in Parliament. Going back a few years, the arms deal, in

Parliament has often struggled to define and interpret its oversight role

particular, tested Parliament's mettle for holding the executive to account, and it emerged with the reputation of its most powerful oversight committee, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA), badly tarnished.

Socio-economic backdrop

There is widespread agreement that South Africa has all the building blocks in place to facilitate democratic development and the realisation of socio-economic rights. In addition, the Constitution provides a strong institutional framework within which socio-economic rights may be realised. Nevertheless, South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world, with an unemployment level of approximately 40% and 20-28 million people living in dire poverty.

If citizens decide that democracy is failing to deliver a substantially better quality of life, they could become sceptical of its value, and the sustainability of democratic development risks becoming seriously threatened. Such great inequality therefore makes it even more important for Parliament, as the articulator

of the will of the people, to be responsive to the needs of those they represent.

The most recent Afrobarometer survey of 16 African countries found a lowering in the level of trust in elected representatives. South Africa was no exception. Asked whether they had "trust" in the NA, 20,1% of the South Africans surveyed said "not at all", 43% "a little bit", 24,5% and 6,7% "a lot" or "a very great deal", and 5,7% said they "don't know". The responses illustrate that much work needs to be done to persuade citizens that elected representatives do act in their best interests.

The perennially posed question is whether Parliament still matters, or has it merely become a rubber stamp in conditions of almost overwhelming executive dominance? As with much in South Africa, the answer is a shade of grey.

The People's Parliament?

The purpose of Parliament is to improve the quality of government. An effective Parliament should be the basis for effective government. Parliament is the most important link between the public and the executive – it should keep government in touch with public feeling and alert to issues about which the public feels strongly.²

Parliament is at the heart of both representative and participatory governance. The Constitution³ envisages not only formal democracy, but also, clearly, an ongoing interaction between citizens and their elected representatives. For all its advantages, the proportional electoral system does not allow for citizens to have much direct contact with their elected representatives. The feeling of being far removed from those who are in power persists, even more so in poor communities. MPs are assigned a constituency and are expected to visit their constituencies and listen to the concerns of citizens, but the system is often dependent on the diligence of the MP involved. In addition, constituency offices are often under-resourced, and there is no clear way for MPs to channel their constituencies' concerns within the Parliamentary system.⁴ However, part of the "Take Parliament to the people" programme is aimed at improving the links between elected representatives and citizens.



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Somewhat unusually, our Constitution provides an opportunity for citizens to be involved in the law-making process. Several institutional mechanisms exist for public participation in the legislature. As in so many instances in South Africa, however, the schism between the formal mechanisms of democracy and what happens in practice is often stark.

The Constitution has created institutional space for participation. The question is how this space is being used, and by whom. Processes to facilitate public hearings, public submissions, and fairly extensive public education and outreach programmes are in place. Citizens who seek to influence legislation fall into three broad categories: the unorganised and weak, the weak but organised, and the strong and organised.⁵ Government's accountability to citizens can best be gauged by assessing their opportunities to influence legislation between elections. There are approximately 100 000 non-profit organisations in South Africa, mostly community-based; however, very few of these engage in formal participatory processes such as making submissions to Parliament.⁶

The ability of the poor and marginalised to participate effectively is often compromised because of four key factors: time, communication, transport and education.⁷ Time comes as a cost to the poor, often precluding active participation in anything but

maintaining their livelihood. The obstacles to accessing information through the media are immense, and it is far easier for better-resourced citizens to make their voices heard. Furthermore, the lack of transportation to Parliament is an impediment, particularly for those living in rural areas.

Through public participation citizens can become true agents of change in a society in which access and "voice" often belong only to the wealthy and powerful; more than merely part of the system, but rather co-creators of democracy alongside the state. The controversial policies of government prior to the Constitutional Court decision in the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) case in 2002⁸ were largely met with Parliamentary silence when the political moment, in fact, required rigorous debate. Parliament did engage with the issue when ANC MP Pregs Govender's Joint Standing Committee on the Quality of Life and Status of Women and Children released its report in 2001 after considerable consultation and representations. Commendably, this report highlighted the plight of women and children with HIV/AIDS and examined the efficacy of the government's provision of anti-retrovirals. Regrettably, this pro-active approach did not extend to other committees. Govender resigned as an MP in June 2001 in principled protest against Parliament's caution on the crisis of the AIDS pandemic. True, Parliament may not always



be in a position to change existing policy, but probing questioning and debate may well serve to expose weaknesses and force the executive to rethink a particular stance.

It is imperative that Parliament sees its oversight role as part of its strategic purpose, for, as Jeremy Cronin recently put it, "I'm not sure if Parliament has a sense of its strategic role and purpose in deepening democracy and in relation to the socio-economic

But it is equally important to acknowledge that the relationship between Parliament and the executive is constantly evolving

challenges in the country ..." And he goes on to ask, "... are we just going to monitor government? What are we going to contribute towards unemployment and poverty?"⁹

What sections 55 (2) and 92 (2) practically mean is that elected politicians are expected to oversee the way in which government implements policy and spends revenue. The executive is accountable to the elected politicians – the legislature – for fulfilling its responsibilities.¹⁰

Of course, Parliament can never be insulated from the broader political debates within which it operates. And so, the ANC leadership struggle has, in part, also influenced the

way in which Parliament has positioned itself. From informal discussions amongst parliamentarians, it would seem as if political space has opened for more robust oversight of the executive, given the political fluidity within the ruling party at present. But will this oversight be maintained? Does it signal a sea-change within the ranks of ANC MPs? It is too early to tell, but certainly interesting examples have occurred in recent months. As examples of weak oversight one might still point to the continued relative inactivity of the health, home affairs, and safety and security committees. Despite this, however, there have been examples of Parliament asserting itself and exercising proficient oversight. Interestingly, they have occurred against the backdrop of the succession debate and the "opening of the public space". For instance:

The Correctional Services Portfolio Committee and the Jali Commission Report. Chaired by ANC MP Dennis Bloem, this committee protested when presented with a 61-page summary of the Jali Commission Report into corruption in South Africa's prisons, insisting that Parliament was, for its oversight purposes, entitled to the full report. After some controversy, the department finally submitted the report.

The Minerals and Energy Portfolio Committee and the Regional Energy Distributors (REDs). The premise behind the creation of the six REDs was to facilitate a more efficient power distribution network in South Africa. Cabinet approved the system, with an additional seventh distributor, in September 2005, after which the decision was referred to the Portfolio Committee on Minerals and Energy. In 2006 the committee, after a process

The entrance of Parliament's Old Assembly wing. It is imperative that Parliament sees its oversight role as part of its strategic purpose.

of consultation and hearings, refused to endorse Cabinet's proposed seventh distributor. Cabinet subsequently accepted Parliament's position.

Examples from SCOPA:

- *The Department of Housing.* SCOPA criticised the Department of Housing after the Auditor-General found that housing subsidies had been awarded to government employees whose earnings exceeded the threshold, to deceased individuals, to people with invalid ID numbers, and to applicants younger than 21.
- *The Department of Correctional Services.* The committee reprimanded the department for having received a poor audit report on the same grounds for four consecutive years.
- Political accountability can never be assured. Government will always seek to hide information that it considers damaging or simply embarrassing. Setting down principles will be the basic requirement. But it is equally important to acknowledge that the relationship between Parliament and the executive is constantly evolving and that the efficacy of this relationship is vital in the fight against corruption and for transparent, accountable and responsive government.

The focus of the third democratic Parliament must, of necessity, be on strengthening committees and their oversight

over implementation of legislation and policy. While the ANC, with its overwhelming majority, bears much responsibility for the way in which this Parliament will shape up, it is not its task alone. The opposition, too, needs to play a constructive role. All too often oversight is viewed narrowly as merely being about "tripping up" the executive.

The test continues to be whether the substance or the "stuff" of our democracy measures up to the Constitutional aspirations of representative and participatory democracy. So, yes, Parliament matters, but it faces some serious challenges – in establishing a culture of oversight, in communicating its role to the nation, and in affirming its relevance against the backdrop of ever-increasing levels of inequality and instances such as the tawdry Travelgate investigation. The way in which it deals with these challenges will set the tone for our collective future. And it would seem that there is no better time than now to prove that Parliament really does matter.

Judith February is head of the Political Information & Monitoring Service at the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa). The chapter, 'More than a law-making production line? Parliament and its oversight role', appears in *The State of the Nation South Africa 2005-2006*.¹¹

Endnotes

1. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996.
2. S Jacobs et al, *Real Politics: The wicked issues*, Cape Town: Idasa, 2001, p 69.
3. Section 1 of the Constitution details the founding values, which are, *inter alia*, "human dignity, accountability, responsiveness and openness..."
4. Gwen Mahlangu-Nkabinde, Deputy Speaker of the NA, interview with Tim Modise, Radio 702, February 2005.
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Parliamentary autonomy – time to review the conventional wisdom

By Richard Galland

With the development of a new political philosophy, what is needed is not an autonomous legislature, but one that is equipped to perform its multi-dimensional constitutional duties in an interlocking system of government

A recent conference on African parliaments¹ exposed the mediocrity of much of the current thinking on the role of the legislature in a modern democracy. In a lead paper, Professor Joel Barkan of the United States reached the right conclusions with (mostly) the wrong reasoning. He concluded that the performance of the National Assembly's various committees is patchy: the best ones well above average, the worst, well below.

My main bone of contention with him and his school of separation-of-powers theorists is that their conceptual foundation needs serious revision. Barkan speaks repeatedly of the "Autonomy of the Legislature". To my mind, this begs a series of related questions: autonomous of what or who? And why? For what reason would you want the legislature to be autonomous?

'Autonomous' suggests that it should operate in some kind of silo, unconnected from the rest of the political world.

This is constitutional as well as political nonsense. The constitution-makers devised a system that, however well or poorly it meets the objective, was intended as one great jigsaw in which the various



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pieces interconnected. Thus, each and every institution is enjoined to serve the aspirations of the Constitution – first and foremost, social transformation.

Far from being “autonomous”, the legislature should be in step with the executive and judicial branches of government in undertaking this momentous assignment. Autonomy implies disjuncture and incohesion as much as anything – potentially harmful as well as distracting.

This does not mean that parliament should be supine. On the contrary, the national legislature should be what the Constitution asks of it: a forum for national debate; an intersection at which interests and interest groups can interact and be mediated; a site, therefore, for serious public participation in the policy and law-making process; and, last but certainly not least, a place where the executive can be overseen and held to account.

To do these things, does the legislature have to be ‘autonomous’? Certainly, it has to have the wherewithal and the wit, and where necessary the political guts, to do what is necessary. And modern life, in all its complexity, requires Members of Parliament to marshal a far wider set of skills than one-dimensionally processing laws and counter-balancing the power of the executive (and on this, Barkan’s research initiates a very interesting and welcome inquiry into the changing education and skills-set of the National Assembly membership).

But in forming this delicate yet robust blend of competencies, the legislature cannot seek to cut itself off from the other bits of government. Take the operation of parliamentary committees. The relationship between the committee chair and the minister at the helm of the portfolio that the committee is shadowing is often decisive. Via the so-called “study groups” that the ruling party convenes where the ANC members of the committee interact with the executive, a “joined-up” version of exposition of the government’s mandate can be formed.

I fully appreciate that it may also be the place where the ANC’s members may be (secretly) nobbled by their elders in Pretoria – in which case, yes, the legislature’s capacity for performing its constitutional remit will have been undermined.

But registering this possibility, and recognising the concern that comes with it, is not to make the case for “autonomy”. The legislature’s constitutional responsibility is to change society, to make it fair and equal where everyone can live in dignity, working alongside the executive to give effect to the ruling party’s (clear) electoral mandate.

To do otherwise – to act “autonomously” – might in practice be both counter-majoritarian and, thereby, undemocratic.

Of course, it may be that I am being obtuse or naive, or willfully or mischievously missing the innate point, which is that what the automatons – if I may conjure them a label – may

really mean when they use the word “autonomous” is that they wish the legislature to be autonomous from the political party and, specifically, the ruling party.

Most of autonomatonans are probably liberals in the old-fashioned sense, which is to say that they fear big government and hope that the legislature will muster the wit and power to stand up to the executive and thereby dilute its ‘overweening’ power.

But while the underlying sentiment may be well meant – that the individual Members of Parliament might in some Burkian sense exercise their duties with reference solely to their individual consciences, without intrusion from their political party – it is wholly at odds with the South African system.

Modern liberals will appreciate that rather than ‘checking’ governmental power, the role of the legislature should be to augment it by finding ways to ensure that public power is not being eclipsed by unaccountable private power

Proportional representation was a key part of the 1994 deal. It has many very important advantages for a society like South Africa. Not only does every vote count, but it ensures that, with a very modest threshold needed to be met for the one percent necessary for a seat (around 70 000 votes), all minorities can find representation in Parliament.

Moreover, the simple list system enables the various parties to engineer a mix of candidates that serves their broader electoral branding. Thus, the ANC matches its talk of multi-racism by ensuring that minorities and women are fully – in fact, overly – represented on their benches in Parliament.

The downside is that the party owns the seat and not the member, hence the inevitable disparity in the power relationship





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that in turn ensures that the party bosses can easily exert authority over “their” MPs.

So, take your pick. In a democracy, each and every choice has an upside and a downside. It is, as Churchill once said, the least bad system available. And having fought long and hard to get it, South Africa has to make it work. In doing so, and in assessing the quality of the constituent parts, each of us has to remember that it was and is a package.

Thus, evaluating any one bit without proper regard to the whole is as fruitless as it is old-fashioned. “Is the legislature doing its job and honouring its constitutional responsibilities?” is the right question to pose.

Asking whether the legislature is adequately equipped to serve such a role, and whether, for example, it has been able to develop the appropriate conventions to enable it to practice meaningful oversight over the executive, is even more useful.

In the context of modern democracy, and the South African Constitution in particular, asking “is it autonomous?” is a red herring. Modern liberals will appreciate that rather than “checking”

governmental power, the role of the legislature should be to augment it by finding ways to ensure that public power is not being eclipsed by unaccountable private power.

Structurally plural, the relationship between state and society and, in turn, the public and private sectors has changed dramatically. To couch the role of the legislature in the framework of a bygone age when governments were relatively omnipotent is to apply an outmoded and outdated paradigm.

Hence, the conventional wisdom about the role of a legislature needs to be shaken and a fresh, contemporary paradigm articulated – one that is no less demanding, and may even, with its imperative of a creative, multi-dimensional role, be even more so. Otherwise, as the title of the chapter on Parliament in my book suggested, Parliament will remain an disappointing mixture of the good, the bad and the simply irrelevant.

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Endnote

1. The University of Cape Town, June 2007.

En route to greater autonomy

By Zwelethu Jolobe

Granting the parliamentary domination of the ANC, the question arises whether this necessarily implies a weak legislature in the long term – especially as it is not as centralised a party as it is made out to be

In response to the question of whether the South African National Assembly (NA) is a mere rubber stamp or an autonomous and significant body, Joel Barkan provides in this issue of FOCUS a relatively balanced, yet non-committal view, concluding that it falls somewhere in between.

I am not concerned with the case that Barkan puts forward in support of the view that the NA is autonomous. This is not because I feel the points raised are insignificant: rather, it is because I'm in general agreement with the relevant arguments that support the view on the relative autonomy of the legislature in the South African political system. Firstly, the NA is an active body that has amended 75-80% of legislation introduced by the executive branch, and this is indicative of an autonomous legislature. Secondly, while the committee system is not fully established, it has developed some observable



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President Mbeki and Speaker Baleka Mbete at the opening of Parliament...how permanent will the ANC domination of the legislature turn out to be?

South Africa's highly urbanised civil society has contributed to the development of the legislatures in general, and the NA in particular

capacity to contribute to the legislative process. Thirdly, South Africa's highly urbanised civil society has contributed to the development of the legislatures in general, and the NA in particular. And finally, South Africa does have a relatively free press, in particular in the print media, that covers the parliamentary process closely, and Parliament does have a high level of financial and other resources, especially in comparison to other legislatures on the continent.

The issues I would like to raise concern arguments made in support of the "conventional wisdom" that the NA is a weak legislature and little more than a rubber stamp for the ruling ANC.

One reason put forward in support of this argument is that South Africa has been a one-party dominant system since 1994. Another is with regard to South Africa's proportional representation system within the one-party dominance context.

A third is that the ANC is a highly centralised organisation, where power has become increasingly concentrated in the hands of the party's leaders.

These arguments raise two interrelated questions. Firstly, do one-party dominant systems inevitably weaken the autonomy of legislatures, their oversight functions and their ability to hold the executive accountable? And, most importantly, following from this, what are the implications for the quality and consolidation of democracies in such polities? Secondly, given that the South African party system is one-party dominant – in which the ruling party has convincingly won three successive elections and currently holds 279 seats to 121 for the combined opposition, where, for now, there is no reasonable chance for regular alternation of governing parties – what implications does this have for the South African polity in general, and the legislature in particular?



The Speaker's position in a dominant party democracy is crucial to the role of the legislature.

The answer to the first question is quite simple: dominant party systems inevitably weaken the autonomy of legislatures as institutions. This is because dominant parties are not just identified by electoral success or supra legislative majorities. A party is

Dominant party systems inevitably weaken the autonomy of legislatures as institutions

dominant, writes political scientist Maurice Duverger; "when it is identified with an epoch; when its doctrines, ideas, methods, its style, coincide with those of the epoch ...". Duverger further writes: "Domination is a question of influence rather than strength: it is also linked with belief. A dominant party is that which public opinion believes to be dominant ... Even the enemies of the dominant party, even citizens who refuse to give it their vote, acknowledge its superior status and influence; they deplore it but admit it."

The dominant party exhibits four key features. Firstly, the party in question presides over the establishment of the polity. Secondly, it has considerably high levels of popular legitimacy,

with meaningful identification by the majority of citizens. Thirdly, it plays a definitive role in the shaping of new institutions. And finally, it develops a sophisticated leadership cadre with a well of experience developed from the dismantling of the old regime and establishment of the new one. Consequently, the presence of the party in the initial formation of the polity allows it not only to shape the new institutions, but also to staff them with members of the party. In so doing, it reinforces the identification of itself with a "victorious struggle" to establish the new regime. This inevitably has negative implications for the autonomy and functioning of legislatures: the balance of power is consequently tipped in favour of the party, and the extent to which any legislature is able to exercise its oversight functions and ability to hold the executive branch accountable is dependent on internal party-political power struggles and relevant political dynamics.

This, however, doesn't necessarily mean that dominant party systems are inherently undemocratic or permanent. Dominant party systems are transitional in nature and their association with the "epoch of change" is thus not permanent: when the epoch is over, its arteries thicken and support for the party eventually wanes. Furthermore, dominant parties preside over relatively pluralistic societies in which there is political competition, civil liberties and regular elections. There are, however, varying degrees in which they play fairly to democratic rules.



The internal party politics in a dominant party system often play themselves out in the hallowed halls of Parliament.

In conclusion, and to introduce issues of debate, how then does the ANC fare as a dominant party? And what are the implications for legislative autonomy that arise from this?

Firstly, it is clear that the ANC qualifies as a dominant party. Secondly, it is also clear that the South African party system is in the process of political transition. And it is also clear that the ANC presides over a pluralistic polity. However, the ANC is not as centralised an organisation as it is suggested to be – though this is not to say that it does not exhibit centrist tendencies. The ANC is a “broad church” composed of groups representing different ideologies (between African nationalists and socialists), different institutional bases of organisation (the youth and women’s leagues, the trade union movement, and the South African Communist Party), and different personalities with different historical experiences (from exile, Robben Island, and the mass democratic movement). Within this broad church, power is consistently and continuously contested within the party institutions (such as the National Executive and the conferences) and frequently spills over into either the mass media or public institutions. Issues of contestation range from macroeconomic policy to leadership succession.

The important question, therefore, is not whether or not the dominance of the ANC weakens the autonomy of the legislature as an institution. Given the nature of the party system, and the overall historical context, legislatures are seldom strong, even though they may from time to time exhibit elements of autonomy,

such as in the South African case. Therefore, given the nature also of South Africa’s dominant party’s system, in which power is continuously contested within a relatively heterogeneous party, what impact will this system have on the evolution of legislative

Within this broad church, power is consistently and continuously contested within the party institutions

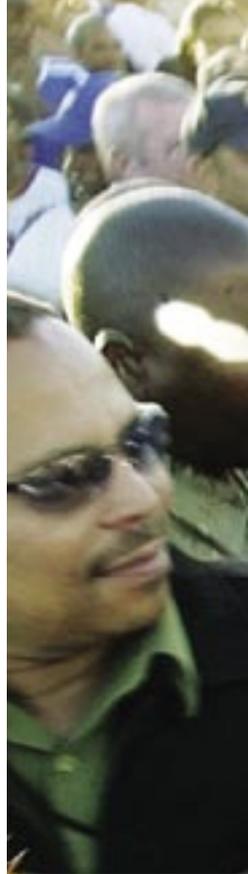
autonomy? That the legislature is increasingly active (amending 75-80% of legislation introduced by the executive), with a functioning committee system, a highly urbanised civil society and relatively free press, suggests that the legislative branch will more likely evolve into an autonomous entity that will to some extent be able to exercise its oversight function and hold the executive branch accountable.

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By William M Gumede

Red light for nation-building



The effort to build a consensus on which to base a unifying South African identity is threatening to stall in the face of multiple attitudes, actions and failures to act that run counter to the very idea of a “national democratic identity”

The succession race in the ANC has opened many fissures in South Africa's politics. One of these is to underscore just how fragile the country's attempts at nation-building really are. Last year Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu warned that South Africa was losing its way, and growing ethnic divisions are threatening to shatter the nation's coherence. Following more than 350 years of colonialism and apartheid – with their ethnic division, conflict and state-sponsored economic inequalities – the great challenge is to cobble together a new South Africanness. Mahmood Mamdani, the great African scholar of ethnicity, observed that difficulty with constructing citizenship as an inclusive concept had been the Achilles heel of many African post-independence and liberation movements.

South Africa obviously cannot base nationalism on shared culture. The ethnic, language and regional diversity must mean that modern South Africanness cannot but be “layered”, plural and inclusive. Furthermore, there cannot be one single definition of who is a South African or even African. South Africa's democracy is based on a compromise among the different political groups and acceptance of our differences.

To argue for the domination of Africans or Zulu-speakers in South Africa because they are in the majority is surely mistaken. Former president Nelson Mandela's 1962 statement in the dock neatly put it that South Africanness cannot be defined in relation to a majority community. And in his autobiography he appealed to the best of African traditions, culture and custom to argue that “a minority was not to be crushed by a majority”.

India's Jawaharlal Nehru argued that because every region, group and community in India had its own specific culture, there could not be one



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President Thabo Mbeki working the crowds. His tenure has been mixed in fostering a collective sense of nationhood.

dominant culture. Mandela, as president, argued in part that ethnic and cultural diversity gives South Africa its South Africanness. Tutu even bestowed divineness on that diversity, coining the term “the rainbow nation of God”.

The important discussion document prepared for the ANC’s December 2007 national conference, *Building a National Democratic Society*, argues that in the quest for nation-building, South Africa must create a new “national democratic identity” – by securing a “social compact of common interests” and promoting “a common sense of South Africanness and shared responsibility for a common destiny”. Thabo Mbeki’s presidency has in part been based on building South Africanness out of a “project of common development”. He has rightly attempted to weave together a national identity centred on a “national consensus” which rests on an inclusive democracy, core shared values and empathy for the vulnerable that cut across the racial and political divide. Yet, nearing the end of his presidency, South Africans appear to have moved further away from a sense of a shared national purpose.

Because the nation is so diverse, a new South Africanness will not be enacted by decree or good intentions alone; continuous persuasion will be required.. Leadership style matters very much. A case in point is the fact that President Nelson Mandela deliberately tried to evoke through his own personality a symbol of all-South African patriotism around which all South Africans

could rally. He saw his role as that of a consensus-seeker and bridge-builder between all South Africa’s groups.

More than 350 years of colonialism and apartheid did not create “gated communities”, with fixed borders, but communities that overlap considerably, beyond just the occasional shared

The ANC’s *Building a National Democratic Society* argues that in the quest for nation-building, South Africa must create a new “national democratic identity”

word or value. Sunil Khilnani brilliantly summed up Nehru’s abiding belief from 1947 onwards that India was a society of “interconnected differences”. The challenge for any South African leader is how to build “a common sense of South Africanness and shared responsibility for a common destiny”, on the basis of our “interconnected differences”.

The undoing of Mbeki's laudable attempts at fostering a national consensus with shared core common interests is in part of his own making. Democracy and the new Constitution are at the heart of the new identity. South Africa's founding myths – based on politics – are that the country managed, out of the ashes of a civil war, peacefully to construct a democratic dispensation, based on a new democratic constitution, anchored in ethnic diversity and a new set of democratic values, rules and political culture. For the ANC to mould a new democratic identity, it will have to remain internally democratic, inclusive and caring.

Yet, the Constitution has often been treated as just one more policy, subjected to the vagaries of the ANC leadership. In 2001, Jacob Zuma, then the head of the ANC's new "super-whip"

The challenge should be how to find the best solution, which is flexible, to balance white fears and black expectations, and police abuse of affirmative action

committee, warned MPs they should remember that they should serve the ANC first, before the Constitution.

Furthermore, the country is too centralised, Parliament is too weak, and ordinary people feel shut out of decision-making. Alarming, even the judiciary is now earmarked for control by the executive. Yet the courts, especially the Constitutional Court, in spite of their limitations, have most probably done the most to secure the values of democracy, when other democratic institutions appear to be more interested in pleasing party bosses. Over-centralisation of power, excluding both traditional allies and those outside the "broad church" from policy and decision-making, threatens to undermine nation-building. Government is often distant and inaccessible. Ministers who don't perform remain in office uncensured. The consequent erosion of trust in government, democratic institutions and political leadership is very dangerous, since this trust should form the basis of the new democratic South African identity.

For the poor, democracy has frequently been a story of dashed hopes, broken dreams and crushing disappointments. The killing of an ANC councillor, Ntai Morris Mokoena, in Deneysville in the Free State recently was a direct result of grass-roots frustration over government's lack of delivery and the refusal of leaders to be responsive to very legitimate grievances. So, too, was the

June public service strike. Both are a sign that the nation-building project is in danger of unravelling.

It was always going to be difficult for government to build a national consensus centred on the new democratic state – unless the state delivers. Because of South Africa's negotiated compromise, many individuals who suffered feel, in the new democratic dispensation, ignored by the state, and are suffering quietly in private. But a combination of lack of delivery, a seemingly indifferent state, and the perception that only a few blacks connected to top ANC leaders, and whites, by virtue of education and pre-1994 policies, benefit economically from the democracy, will sooner rather than later unleash a groundswell of anger that will floor any nation-building efforts.

Wrongly, Mbeki has demanded absolute loyalty to the President, state and government as a prerequisite for promoting a national consensus. Dissent, differences of opinion, or even mild constructive criticisms are not tolerated. Patriots politely offering alternative views are dismissed as racists, in the pay of "colonialists" and foreign "imperialists". Opposition to the idea of opposition within the ANC or outside is dangerous. When internal opposition is not allowed, people will vent their anger outside, often quite violently. The same goes for democratic institutions. If Parliament is seen as a rubber stamp of the executive, its credibility as protection for ordinary citizens and a symbol of South Africanness will be severely undermined.

Under Mbeki vast talents – because government is not sure that they will be "loyal" – in both the ANC and the wider nation have been ignored. Senior governmental positions have remained vacant for months, because government cannot find "loyalists". This leaves those deliberately marginalised or excluded resentful of the new system and leaders. Not surprisingly, many individuals, from whatever colour or politics, feel insecure and many are uncertain not only about their places in society, but whether their contribution counts. Others have withdrawn from public participation or turned cynical.

A leadership style that appears to focus more on the issues that divide the nation, rather than those that unite it – this is not an argument for glossing over differences – is not going to help reconciliation, or nation-building. It often appears that government masks its own service-delivery failure by going for short-term, crowd-pleasing populist gestures – such as name-changing – which inevitably leads to long-term polarisation.

Government's handling of crime has also been divisive. To say rising crime is a figment of white whiners' imagination, as police minister Charles Nqakula has, is not only denialism, but it undermines blacks, who are the hardest hit by crime. Crime undermines the democracy itself, puts nation-building at peril and makes it hard to secure a "national consensus". So does the apparently selective punishment of public corruption.



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Former President Nelson Mandela's presidency signalled the importance of leadership style in fostering unity

serious effort to force them to create jobs or make socially productive investments, given that BEE money is politically sponsored "handouts". But in the midst of a fiscal surplus, demands from the poor for a basic income grant are dismissed by ministers as "entitlement".

Mbeki was correct when he stated that some who had "historically benefited from colonialism and apartheid (whites) wanted reconciliation without anything more than minimal change to the privileged position they had inherited". And that "on the other hand, the victims of the past (blacks) wanted not only reconciliation but fundamental change to their inherited under-privileged position". This is why it is so important to provide leadership that can balance the two extremes, one of the faultlines of South Africa's efforts to build a new democratic identity. On the other hand, to say, like ANC spokesperson Smuts Ngonyama, that coloureds or Indians were "less oppressed", and should therefore stand at the end of the queue on affirmative action, is wrong, and cannot but fuel resentment. Many from disadvantaged coloured and Indian groups were as downtrodden as any individual could be. By the same token, many African families were relatively well off. The challenge is to target the most vulnerable in all communities.

Of course, opposition parties are not providing much leadership on affirmative action either. The Democratic Alliance has eagerly pounced on statements like Ngonyama's to fuel racial passions further; to lure coloured and Indian voters. The party appears to reject affirmative action wholesale, but offers no alternative to undo apartheid's terrible legacy. The challenge should be how to find the best solution, which is flexible, to balance white fears and black expectations, and police abuse of affirmative action and BEE. Like over-centralisation of power, like the undermining of the Constitution, democracy and its institutions for narrow political ends, the appeal to racial identity may well win votes, but it does not cobble together a national consensus.

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Mbeki's penchant for playing the race card to deflect criticism is equally polarising. It trivialises the serious issue of racism, and makes the deep racism still pervasive in society hard to tackle. Over-use of the race card is ammunition to those who, often under the rubric of "defending" Mbeki, retreat into "nativism".

They seek an exclusive definition of South Africanness or who is an African, which over-rides the Constitution's core definition – which argues for multiple identities, diversity and inclusivity as its pillars. By having the "nativists" in his camp, Mbeki stands to dilute his own idea that there can be no retreat into some mystical past African "purity", and that the nation and the future will have to be built as a mosaic of the best elements of our diverse pasts and present, histories and cultures.

Sadly, "national consensus" has been severely undermined by many senior ANC leaders over-emphasising transformation as the replacement of white faces with black, which is only one part of transformation, of which the key component is to change to a new democratic ethos in line with the Constitution. Since 1994, more than R280bn has been spent on black economic empowerment, but the beneficiaries are mostly black oligarchs well connected to the ANC leadership. There has been no

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By Patricia de Lille

The million-voter smile

Celebrating its recent success in by-elections, the Independent Democrats gathered to set the agenda that the party hopes will garner a million votes in 2009

The membership of the Independent Democrats (ID) increased from 45 000 when we met at our first National Conference in 2004, to 160 000 by the time of our second National Conference, this year. The signs are there – written in the results of the by-elections we have fought this year. In last year’s municipal elections in Riviersterand, the ID had 38 votes, but this year we got 401, an increase of 1 000%. After that we won our first by-election victory in the Western Cape – in Drakenstein, Paarl – beating the African National Congress (ANC) and the Democratic Alliance (DA). It has become clear that there are no racial or geographical boundaries for the ID. We have managed to achieve our goal of giving South Africans from all backgrounds renewed hope in our country’s future, and our party has become a meeting place for all.

The ID believes that after 13 years of democracy there is an urgent need for us to protect the gains of the struggle and provide South Africans with a new and positive vision, a vision that will one day bring about economic freedom for all our people; will enable our children to walk safely through our streets; will allow all South Africans to enjoy their constitutional rights; and will give us the power one day to restore the social fabric of our society.

The ID is also the pioneer of a new type of opposition, one that is loyal to our country, an honest opposition with integrity that is passionate and loves our country, and that holds government to account and roots out corruption. It is an opposition that puts our millions of poor citizens first, and engages with





government; one that acknowledges its successes, but is vicious and uncompromising when government messes up our country. The ID fights corruption.

At our Policy Conference in Johannesburg we reached consensus on what makes us better than the ANC and the DA – the ANC wants a nanny state where the state runs everything, the DA wants the market to run everything and believes in survival of the fittest, but the ID believes that the market and the state have an important role to play, with the involvement of our people. The poor are poorer if they do not have a voice, and the ID is providing that voice. The ID believes in people-centred development.

Bridging the divides between the rich and the poor means less crime against both the rich and the poor. As a nation we are struggling every day to rebuild the social fabric of our society and the ID is at the forefront of that struggle.

The government is good at developing policies, but bad at implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The ID has now set its own social democratic agenda, and we have formulated the necessary policies to breathe life into that agenda in order to bridge the divides between the rich and the poor.

On floor-crossing, I have already appealed to all elected ID leaders to consider the following questions: “Do you want to be part of the fastest-growing political party in South Africa; do you want to be part of the victory celebrations as we take by-elections and, lastly, do you want to be there at the front in 2009, when we achieve our one million votes for bridging the divides?”

At the ID National Conference I made it clear that those who planned to leave the ID for purposes of greed should “leave now”.

We adopted a number of crucial resolutions at the conference, some of which I will mention here. The “Resolution on need for legislation concerning party funding” noted with concern “the large number of party funding scandals over the last few years in South Africa”. The conference resolved that “Parliament must set up a multiparty committee to draft legislation concerning party political funding”. In line with the ID’s commitment to the poorest of the poor, the next resolution noted “with alarm” the United Nations report that South Africa would probably not meet its Millennium Development Goals.

One of the ID’s resolutions in respect of the HIV/AIDS pandemic was that “Government must completely overhaul its failed HIV/AIDS prevention strategy and devote more resources and political will to slowing down the pandemic”.

Another resolution involved a people for whom we have worked tirelessly. The fisher people of the West and South coasts are in the throes of “extreme suffering... caused by the implementation of the Government’s unjust fishing policy”. Among the relevant resolutions was to call “on Government to institute immediate temporary relief measures for our devastated fishing communities”.

Our final resolution involved the biggest threat facing Africa and, indeed, humankind – climate change. The ID resolved “that Government must play a leading role in brokering a binding

international agreement to effectively deal with the threat of climate change..., institute a comprehensive plan to reduce our own emissions by substantially investing in energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technologies...”, and “ensure that South Africa is positioned to become a leader in the renewable energy market, thereby creating jobs and building an export industry”.

The leadership group we elected at the conference, meanwhile, has a 50% gender balance and represents the demography of our nation. My two Deputy-Presidents are the selfless community worker Agnes Tsamai, the Chairperson of the ID in North West province, and Simon Grindrod, the Cape Town ID Mayoral Committee Member for Economic and Social Development and Tourism. Our new Secretary-General, Haniff Hoosen, is the hardworking Chairperson of the ID Councillors' Forum. ID MP Lance Greyling remains the party's diligent National Policy Convenor, a position that in the past few months

Bridging the divides between the rich and the poor means less crime against both the rich and the poor

has already produced eight comprehensive, social democratic policies. Rose Gudluza, an ID MPL in the Gauteng Legislature, remains the head of the Women's Agenda. Mervyn Cirota, an attorney and an ID Councillor in Johannesburg, was elected to the position of National Chairperson of the ID. Tarisai Simona Mchuchu, a law student at the University of Cape Town and President of the Black Law Students' Forum, was elected as the Chairperson of the Young Independent Democrats. Our new National Treasurer is Schalk Lubbe, an ID Councillor in the Northern Cape, and Joe Mcgluwa retained his position as National Organiser.

These are not only leaders who were chosen for their loyalty to and hard work for the ID, but they represent exactly the type of managers we need to breathe life into our policies and reach our goal of getting one million South Africans behind our vision of bridging the divides of the past.

Patricia de Lille is President of the Independent Democrats



“Salus rei publicae suprema lex”

If, as Cato averred, the health of the Republic is to be the supreme law, is the institution of the executive presidency the best prescription for South Africa?

For three decades, I have practised the belief that our Republic is guaranteed and protected by adequate institutions of government. A weak system of checks and balances produces a dysfunctional government, which jeopardises the health of the Republic.

There is no need to labour the point that our Republic is in great jeopardy because of a fundamental leadership crisis which undermines the functioning of our government. Our political system is becoming dysfunctional. When this happens, solutions are often found in autocratic involutions which bring together what has been broken or has fallen apart, and do so outside the parameters of the law, and around the personality and initiative of a leader.

The Republic must be healthy, and for it to be so must not depend on the good or evil of an incumbent President, leader or political elite. The system must be strong even when the people are weak or corrupt.

The health of the Republic should now be our primary concern.

I have tried to respond to the present situation through an institutional solution which I have been advocating for 17 years.

I have introduced in Parliament the 18th Constitutional Amendment Bill as a concerned South African and in the interests of our country. This is not a party political matter and should be dealt with above politics.



IFP leader Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi has tabled a Private Members Bill in Parliament to separate the role of Head of State and Head of Government.

This Bill separates the Head of State from the Head of Government, thereby establishing both a President and a Prime Minister; as of the next elections.

I see the need for this in absolute and general terms. It is not about present or future incumbents in the presidency, but about the dignity of the office of the President and the strengthening of our constitutional system.

In our current executive system, our Head of State, the President, is also our Head of Government. He carries final responsibility for all actions of government. When the government is attacked or criticised, he is responsible. The institutional stature of the presidency is diminished whenever the government fails or under-performs; and with nothing stabilising and unifying for people to look up to at all times, people tend to forget that he is the face of all citizens, regardless of political affiliation.

When people strike, they protest against the President himself. The presidency is constantly swung by the ups and downs of

daily governance and the inevitable mud-slinging of politics. This undermines the dignity of the President and weakens our constitutional system.

In any democracy controversy is healthy, necessary and common, but something must remain sacred and reassuring, especially in a fledging democracy, in which people are still unsure about values and have not yet internalised the abstract notion of a State or a Republic which goes on and has dignity irrespective of the incumbents in office.

The great majority of established democracies are based on a parliamentary rather than an executive system. The separation between Head of State and Head of Government has been tested for 350 years. In it, the Head of State rules, but does not govern. The day-to-day activity of government is left to a Prime Minister. This allows the Head of State to be above reproach. The Head of State can be an elected president or a titular monarch, but the role is usually identical. This is not new in Africa. This system exists in some SADC countries, such as Namibia, for example.

I firmly believe that South Africa would be better served by a President and a Prime Minister. The present executive presidency is foreign to our tradition and does not work well. Long before 1994, South Africa had a President and a Prime Minister. From 1994 to 1999 President Mandela maintained this balance to some extent, as he often said he was the de jure President, while the Deputy President was the de facto President. Somehow, even though he has retired, his balancing effect on the political system has continued to be felt since 1999. But what about the future?

My Bill will allow the President to operate above petty party politics, balancing and supervising the dynamics of politics and the functioning of government institutions. He or she will be an umpire, not a player; in the domestic arena. But in the international arena he will represent the entire country. He or she will conduct all ceremonial functions in South Africa.

International commitments and ceremonial functions are very time-consuming. By the President attending to them, the Prime Minister will have more time to deal with hard issues of government such as unemployment, crime, poverty, roads, education and health care. There will be no limit to the role the President will play in the international arena. Our President has to be involved, as he is, in the affairs of the African Union, without any feeling that he leaves a vacuum at home when he does so.

The Prime Minister will serve at the will of the parliamentary majority, making government more accountable and strengthening the centrality, power and relevance of Parliament. At present, Parliament does not do all it could to help in better governing South Africa. Parliament is in dire need of performing a more significant role in our system of government.

The President will have the power to appoint the Prime Minister; subject to parliamentary approval.

All this can be done if there is a political will. Our Parliament has repeatedly adopted important and urgent constitutional amendments in a matter of weeks. This amendment is both important and urgent. But, as I have often said, my role has often been that of bringing the horse to the water without having the power to force it to drink.

We have been involved in a constitutional debate for a number of decades, but the majority of our people have not appreciated the relationship between sound institutions of government and bread-and-butter issues such as employment, crime, social security and prosperity.

In constitution-making, both good and evil are in the actual details. I advocated for a strong federal system because I knew that the present system would turn provinces and their premiers into ineffective lackeys of the central government, with no contribution to make towards improved government and delivery.

At the time, even those who recognised the need for provinces and premiers could not be bothered with understanding and debating the difference between window-dressing provincialism and functional federalism.

I have now put forward a Bill which enables the President to be an actual guarantor of the proper functioning of the institutional machinery, performing all those functions in which the health of the Republic, rather than politics, ought to be the supreme law of decision-making, leaving to the Prime Minister the actual policy-making within the constitutional and legislative parameters.

My Bill gives to Parliament the effective upper hand over government, to give substance to the promise that we are a democracy in which the legislature lays down the law, rather than

My Bill will allow the President to operate above petty party politics, balancing and supervising the dynamics of politics and the functioning of government institutions

merely assenting to it when convened for that purpose.

We need an in-depth debate to ensure that we achieve a separation between the offices of Head of State and Head of Government that achieves the purpose of strengthening our democracy, rather than the agenda of politicians.

I have reached the enviable position of not having a personal agenda when speaking about the interests of the Republic. It is time that a much broader debate on these themes seizes the NGO community and the universities, as well as our Parliament.

The Constitution itself promised an annual revision, which has really never taken place. I hope that people may awaken from the present complacency in the institutional debate to realise the urgency of the time and look ahead with adequate solutions. A better system of government will give us better rulers, no matter who they may be.

Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi MP is President of the Inkatha Freedom Party





Images in this article courtesy © Mark Wessels

By Raenette Taljaard

Interview with Helen Zille

Q: What is your basic vision of how the relationships between you, the Chief Whip and the Leader in Parliament will be structured? How is it working currently, and how do you see it working in future?

A: My style of leadership is to let people be, especially when they are good and able and have strong and dynamic ideas towards our vision. I think I've certainly got Cape Town working on those lines. I appoint the right people in the right positions and, hopefully, the right people are elected to the right positions. And then I let them be. We speak on a regular basis, we decide what the overall message of the party is going to be, but I let everybody filter that through their own particular area of responsibility and find their own voice.

Q: And in relation to managing your own relationship with caucus, do you attend caucus meetings, do you interact with them quite directly?

A: Yes, I attend every caucus meeting. I give a Leader's brief address at caucus and I answer questions to the Leader. I try to meet as regularly as I can early in the morning, at what we call an issue-management meeting, to decide the issues of the day, to spot the issues of the week ahead, to spot the trends in any major developments, to discuss the weekly newsletter *SA Today*, and just to give each other mutual direction

and ideas on where we're going. We meet at least once a day – or I certainly try to do that.

Q: With regard to relationships with the smaller parties in particular, you're in a unique position because you have to manage that kind of relationship in government every day. How do you see those links between what you're managing in the Uncity and similar relationships that may need to be cultivated in Parliament, in order to make the two complement one another?

A: Interestingly enough, today I had two very good meetings, at my request – one with Bantu Holomisa of the UDM [United Democratic Movement] and the other with Kenneth Meshoe of the ACDP [African Christian Democratic Party]. We are looking at how we move towards a broader concept of opposition in South Africa in a way that takes account of deep differences within opposition ranks, and also ensures that that doesn't result in one party, the ANC [African National Congress], becoming stronger and stronger and stronger and more powerful, and propelling South Africa more and more in the direction of a single-party dominant state. And we all have an interest in preventing that outcome, and it is in connection with that interest that we have our most productive discussions. Some very good ideas emerged out of the meetings this morning, and I think you will see the result of those in the months ahead.

Q: So in terms of the day by day operations in Parliament, one can also look towards greater possible co-operation in future, or at least greater co-ordination on certain key policy issues?

A: I really hope so, not only on policy issues but on strategic issues as well. It's true that the DA is significantly the biggest of the various opposition parties and we will keep that vanguard role, there's no question about that, but within that framework, I think there's a lot of room for co-operation. Other opposition parties are not our opponents, that's for sure, and I think we all understand that. That's the point of departure.

Q: There has been quite a bit of movement in Parliament to try to do away with the constitutionally predetermined role of the Leader of the official opposition. It's predominantly a campaign driven by smaller opposition parties, ironically, and not quite as much by the ANC. What are the views and the discussions in the context of that, in the light of what you're saying?

A: We think there is a distinct role for a Leader of the official opposition to articulate the view of the majority of opposition





voters. There's no doubt that more opposition voters vote for the DA than any other opposition party, and it's right to have a role that is seen as articulating or encapsulating that chief opposition role. We think that that is very important.

We think South Africa is also going to move towards a two-party system, broadly, in the future, and it will be very short-sighted to get rid of that role now. If opposition parties fragment to the point that they are targeting each other, more than they're targeting the single-party dominance of the ANC, then we've really lost the plot, and I hope smaller opposition parties won't think that is the big battle to fight.

Q: Given that one of the key possible strategic challenges in the future in that regard is the upcoming floor-crossing period, is there any co-ordination or discussion on the opposition responding to any policy decisions emanating from the ANC June policy conference, or would that be premature?

A: We have very much advocated the floor-crossing legislation being on the agenda for discussion again. But at all places and in all venues, including, we are pleased to see, KwaZulu-Natal

and the Eastern Cape, the issue has been aired. So that has been very encouraging, and we would endorse that strongly. In both of those provinces the ANC has called for an end to floor-crossing.

All of the opposition parties realise that floor-crossing in its present form is going to decimate opposition in South Africa; it is in fact designed to do so. It is designed to favour the largest party and the party who can offer the most patronage, especially in the list system. The incentive of promotion to cross the floor has not been outlawed. This is a very serious set of constraints, and all the smaller parties realise that, and we all have an equal interest in an end to floor-crossing.

Q: I spent quite a bit of time this morning interviewing your team in Parliament, and what struck me was that they're also quite clearly thinking creatively about how one could try to stem the marginalisation of the institution, or how one works within the confines of understanding that, by virtue of various factors, the institution has been relatively marginalised. How do you see

your relationship in that regard with them, in focusing on this theme of the marginalisation of Parliament, given that you are outside of the National Assembly?

A: That kind of assists the marginalisation. I see that. But it is very unusual for an opposition party to have a role to play in the executive government in a country, which is very nice. And because we do have that role, it makes sense for me to be in that role, as the Mayor of Cape Town, demonstrating what we can do in government, not only what we can do in opposition.

Nevertheless, we can stem the marginalisation of Parliament, precisely because we can, through a demonstration effect, show that we're not only talk but we can also be action. And that is useful to give more credence to what we say when we say it, and our major platform from which to say it is Parliament. So we will keep on using that platform to call government to account, to ask the difficult questions and to hold up the four policy alternatives.

We also use it to work more and more with other opposition parties towards the concept of coalition governments all over South Africa. We don't know how that will pan out at national level, but we're certainly starting at local level to build that platform and an understanding of the role of coalitions.

Q: And in that regard, is there any thinking currently in the DA about stimulating a national debate on the electoral change, given that the upcoming election is two years away? And if so, as there is feasibly enough time, potentially, to put new law in place – given that essentially the Electoral Act was revived for the 2004 elections, with no new laws drafted, as such – is there any discussion on specific issues?

A: We think that the discussion that was raised by the Van Zyl Slabbert Report on electoral systems has been sidelined because the ANC will never ditch the proportional system because it gives so much power to the National Leader of the ANC. And at a time where that patronage is more needed by the ANC than it's ever been needed before, as a lever of control of ambitious politicians vying for office, I think there's probably a snowball's hope in Hades of changing that system.

Obviously we'll continue to push for electoral reform. We believe that a mixed system, with a list and constituency of direct representation, is the right way to go so you don't have a winner-take-all situation, but also to have some level of accountability to voters. We believe that that is the way to go. But we can either spend the next two years talking about that, although it's really been very well canvassed and covered, or we can spend them focusing on the other challenges we face, such as transcending race and ethnicity as a tool for political mobilisation; such as forming coalitions and making them work, and what it takes to achieve that.

We think that more and more we have the potential of forming viable coalitions in various provinces and various cities, and ultimately maybe even at national level. And we think that it's very important to explore and lay the foundation for that thrust in politics. That's not to say we'll stop arguing for electoral reform, it's just not the only thing we'll be doing.

Q: If one looks at the succession race in the ANC, obviously one of the more interesting recent developments has been the open declaration by Tokyo Sexwale that he may contend for the Presidency. I was at the lecture at the Wits Great Hall, and if one looks at the speech and at certain of the tenets, certainly of the vision that you've espoused for an open-opportunity society, there are fairly interesting cross-references to do with what he had to say about freedom, about the role of fear in counteracting open societies. What are your views on his speech?

A: I've read about it in the newspaper and I was also fascinated by his focus on freedom versus fear, and the fear factor being the one that drives closed societies. There's no question about it,

We think that more and more we have the potential of forming viable coalitions in various provinces and various cities, and ultimately maybe even at national level

that the fear of being challenged and having competitors take the space is normally the core motivation of politicians. And then, of course, they create fear in the electorate of all sorts of unknown forces to ensure that their fear of losing office is the driving force of the politics of the country. And we all know about how fear works in politics.

But I was encouraged by that, and I thought that it would be a direction that could certainly give South Africa a much greater chance of establishing an open-opportunity society. I think he knows what it's like to have used the opportunities he's had, and I think he knows what it's like to live in the alternative system. So it's useful to have somebody who can so clearly contrast the two. We'll have to see what happens in the ANC's own internal succession race, but there are many possibilities if somebody like Tokyo Sexwale does succeed.

Q: Given that the leadership race in the DA was clearly one marked by open campaigning, the juxtaposition between that and what one is seeing in the ANC certainly has implications

for South Africans. This is one of the more interesting and defining races in the ANC, and ordinary citizens aren't able to interact with the process. What are your views on it, as it is in its current form?

A: The ANC's process gives rise to all kinds of morbid symptoms. It doesn't mean that the fight is not waged, but it's sublimated into all kinds of different avenues and all kinds of different contests. I wrote a newsletter last week, saying that the [public service] strike was actually now marginally to do with wages. Obviously it is do with wages and working conditions and other things, but really it is about the succession race in the ANC.

It's the trade unions and their allies versus President Mbeki and his allies; that's really what's at the root. If it were an open contest with declared candidates and declared procedures for waging that succession battle, it wouldn't have

An open society is, as defined by Karl Popper, the opposite of a society in which the state controls what people may think, say and do. It is a society that maximises individual liberty and freedom

to be sublimated into all sorts of other contests. There would be an element of it, of course, in all the other debates and all the other areas of discourse in politics over the next 18 months. But it wouldn't be that all of the succession battle has to be waged through them, through other contests in our society, and I think it's very, very unfortunate that it has to happen in that way. It creates a context in which we cannot have an open debate on any issues at face value. There's always something happening at a subterranean level which gives every debate an edge and a hidden agenda.

Q: Now, questions on the DA, in particular. You have clearly articulated a golden thread of continuity on the open-opportunity society. But I have no doubt that you have a very specific vision of what that means in relation to unpacking that at policy level and positioning it. Would you share some of those thoughts with the FOCUS readers?

A: An open society is, as defined by Karl Popper, the opposite of a society in which the state controls what people may think,

say and do. It is a society that maximises individual liberty and freedom. But the opportunity corollary is necessary in a South African context, because our histories have been marked by so much disparity, and so much advantage and disadvantage, that it is critical for the state to ensure that everyone has a real chance, a fair opportunity to use the freedom that the society offers.

It's a matter of getting the balance right between the state's role in offering real opportunities, and the individual's right and responsibility to use those opportunities, that would bring all of that together in the concept of the open-opportunity society. I think it's very easy to take the concepts of an open society for granted if one lives in a democracy. One has only to have lived in an authoritarian state, or a totalitarian state, to realise how little one can take for granted the freedoms that are entrenched in our Constitution. The rules have to concede that people can't use freedoms without the wherewithal to use them. We see a crucial role for the state in securing those wherewithals, those opportunities, especially through education, through healthcare, through basic services, through a growing economy, all of those things – in delivering those opportunities, especially for the disadvantaged, that they then should have a right and responsibility to use.

Q: The June ANC policy conference has obviously already got certain policy positions and policy discourses on track that some may interpret as either counteracting, or being in favour of, such an open-opportunity society. How do you envisage the DA taking the policy dialogue with the ANC further in the next few months?

A: We're first going to have the debate within our own party, to really understand what we mean by this phrase, because it encapsulates centuries of political evolution. We've got to understand what it means for every key debate, for every portfolio, for every sphere of government, for every area of contestation in South Africa. There is the response of a closed patronage society, or the racial nationalist approach to things, and then there's the approach of the open-opportunity society.

We've tested a few key issues against those two alternative approaches. One is the reduction in the number of provinces, another is the single civil service, and, of course, those are very good examples of the alternative approaches. If you look at the single civil service in the context of the open-opportunity society, you will see that that is a policy option driven by the closed patronage or nationalist view; centralised control in the hands of a few people at national level to determine the direction and fate of all of the provinces, under the pretext of building capacity, but really for the purpose of control.



We're saying that the answer to incapacity and lack of service delivery is to decentralise, and to have rules in place that ensure the right people are appointed to the right positions, enabling various spheres of government to get on with governing, in a way that will ensure that at least some succeed. Under our model, not all will succeed, but some will succeed, especially if they follow the open-opportunity vision of ensuring that the right people are put into the right positions so they can deliver to the greatest number of people. In the closed patronage model we can be sure that everything will fail.

Q: One last question. Do you have ideas and opinions on the issue of liberalism and who lays claim to it in South Africa? And on whether it is a politically claimable project, purely and solely for one party, or whether it's possible to mainstream it into a value discourse?

A: I think we must mainstream the values that underlie the concept of liberalism as I understand it, because that really is middle South Africa. It should be middle South Africa. I think that should be the mainstream discourse, but I don't use the word "liberal" to do it, because I have a particular understanding of liberal that is shared by almost nobody else who uses the term.

Americans think of liberals as hand-wringing do-gooders who spend other people's money on hopeless causes. The Europeans think of liberals as hard-hearted individualists who say the devil can take the hindmost as long as I'm all right Jack. South Africans think of liberalism in very similar kinds of ways. I think many black people see liberals as hard-hearted individualistic capitalists who care nothing about other people. Many other South Africans see liberals as people who want to legalise drugs and pornography. Quite frankly, it's a completely meaningless term because it means different things to everybody.

So I can either spend a lot of energy trying to rehabilitate the term, or I can try to mainstream the values that underlie it. I prefer spending energy mainstreaming the values that underlie the term, which has absolutely nothing to do with any of the definitions that I've just given, seen from other people's perspectives. So I like to use the term "the open-opportunity society" because I think that encapsulates the values. The notion of the individual's rights to be who he or she is, plus the duty of the state to give people the opportunity to fulfil that potential. That's how I would, in a sentence, summarise the open-opportunity society.

(Helen Zille is the leader of the DA and the Mayor of Cape Town)



Images in this article courtesy © Mark Wessels

By Raenette Taljaard

Interview with Sandra Botha

Q: What is the most important thing you can bring to the job of Parliamentary Leader of the Democratic Alliance?

A: The element of myself which has brought me to here, from the Free State farm, into this particular position, which means expressing what I feel and think, has found resonance with other people, with our constituency and even beyond.

When I was walking here it struck me that something I want to do is to raise, or bring into the open, issues that are very seldom discussed. And I thought back on that Black Label beer photo – it's in the *Huisgenoot*.

Q: Oh, Black Label White Guilt?

A: Ja. I thought it shows you that you must stand on the side of those who need help, not on the other side. That's a politician's role. Primarily we are there to be the voice of the people who can be oppressed; the others can probably speak for themselves.



An issue I'm going to raise in my speech today is the song *Delarey*, because it seems to me that *Delarey*, in a way, has elicited a response from all sides that needs discussion. And it's not something that must be hidden or censored, it must be debated, whether it's a song, or whether it's a political statement, or whether it's a call to the past, or even, as I believe, a call for the future. And that's why I'm going to do it. I need to bring something of myself to this speech. Most of it is DA positions, and expositions of what we think has gone wrong in the Presidency, policy approaches that we disagree with.

But I also have to bring this one element in, which I think I'll be dealing with quite a lot. I've done it in my past. What I've done all along is to bring into polite company issues that people are afraid to speak about, perhaps because they think they'll be censured for it, criticised for it. It's just to give them courage that it's okay to say what you think.

Q: That's going to be quite an interesting development.

A: You know, who knows? I'm very new at this, I'm very inexperienced in the specific field of leadership of the DA, but I'm also quick to learn. So all the mistakes I'll make will stand me in good stead. And I've got a lot of good people around me too from whom I can get advice.

Q: It is a unique situation, to have the Leader outside of Parliament, the Leader in Parliament and new Whippery. How do you envisage those relationships working together; or do you think it's a premature discussion?

A: I think they'll have to be organic, because we can't foresee all the implications of this particular structure. At the moment they're premised on the fact that we want to be of assistance to each other; and particularly I want to support the Leader. So it'll take some time to distinguish the clear borders between who is responsible for what, or whether overlaps are okay. But I don't know of a model that we can actually follow; we'll have to feel our way through.

Q: And it was a major compliment to you personally that the Speaker insisted that you continue in your other role of Chair of the House?

A: Well, I personally found it 'n *regte riem onder die hart*' to hear that said about me, and I'm very thankful to her for that approach. I think it is also that ability that I brought to the Chair; that I will, hopefully, be able to transfer to the leadership of the DA. And I would have liked to have continued in both, but



I can already see the problems that are arising, not only on a practical level, but also on a political/philosophical level. It's a pity, because there are a lot of interesting things to do.

Q: In terms of structuring a new chapter in the party, and a new discourse with the ANC (African National Congress), if that's going to be desirable or possible, how do you see that panning out? You've had one interaction with the President so far, during question time last week, and that looked like quite an interesting, positive exchange. How do you see that relationship evolving in the future?

A: I think we're facing an interesting time in politics, of movement, restructuring, coalitions. All these possibilities have arisen in the light of what is happening in the ANC, and also in the light of what we've seen on municipal and local government level. It is a new phase, and in the DA itself, I think the mere fact of change brings a new phase. It would be very sad if we had to say it's business as usual, when we have this opportunity, perhaps, to reach out to other people in other ways. That's the kind of positive aspect to leadership change. I don't know that we will change anything fundamentally in our policies – although there are things that I would like to see change, I think, mostly in our economic policy.

But I view the relationship that one has with the ANC as essentially one in which you must be able to deepen the debate, to have open dialogue. I cannot see our situation as that of being enemies or diametrically opposed; we are not. We share the same challenges in the future, and we've got somehow or another to come to shared solutions as well. So I'm looking forward to this chapter of politics, heading towards 2009. I think it's going to be very exciting. And certainly I hope that we will be able to consolidate one of the real achievements of Tony Leon, which is to make space for opposition and to keep on establishing its credibility and its value.

Q: Obviously inherent in the nature of what you're saying, change brings change. Is there a change in the way in which the smaller parties are relating to the new Leader of the DA, or is it too soon to tell?

A: It's a bit too soon to tell. In my past relationships I've had only pleasure from dealing with them. I was in discussion with somebody senior in the ANC this morning, and he was saying that the issues that divide us are minimal. Aside from the ACDP (African Christian Democratic Party), which is a party built around a very specific focus, the policy divisions between

others are perhaps smaller than are the divisions of style and leadership. So I don't want to predict what's going to happen, but I think it's important that we talk, and that we explore areas of collaboration – which is not to say that we have to become one party.

I believe it's good to retain some parties to the right and to the left of you, it gives a sharper focus to those who are in the centre. And it is my feeling that that is where the DA is pitching, it's for the centre of politics. A contested area, as you would know, because that's more or less where perhaps the major – is it the major? I don't know – part of the ANC sees itself as well. So who knows what the meeting ground there will deliver.

Q: And both in your capacity as Chair of the House and in your new capacity, perhaps even more in relation to your past role

It is a new phase, and in the DA itself, I think the mere fact of change brings a new phase. It would be very sad if we had to say it's business as usual, when we have this opportunity, perhaps, to reach out to other people in other ways

as Chair, have you had a sense that the succession discussions in the ANC are starting to change the way in which people are conducting themselves in Parliament, or has it had an impact in Parliament over the past few months?

A: Oh, yes, I most definitely experienced that impact directly, and could see it in the way that people were responding in the House to what was happening. You could literally feel the tensions and the differences that had been raised, and probably at caucus meetings, and at the time when events happened, such as several instances around [then] Deputy President Zuma, that had an impact. And I think it will continue, and have more even of an impact on Parliament's functioning, and even more so towards 2009. Because the people in Parliament have vested interests, and it is impossible for them to separate those

from their roles here in Parliament, they will have to choose sides. And those sides will not be based on mere practical considerations of what serves the programme of Parliament, they will be based on what serves the specific member:

Q: And in that regard, how do you see the succession discussion panning out in the ANC over the next few months? Do you see the process being conducted in a way that is exemplary, problematic, interesting, unusual?

A: Well, as opposed to the fact that it's now being done more or less in a darkroom? I don't think that can last. There are obviously people with ambition in the ANC who are chomping at the bit to declare themselves as candidates. They can only go so far and no further pretending that they are just waiting to be called; at some stage they are going to say, "I have been called." And that would normalise the debate in the way that we perceive leadership struggles to take place. I mean, surely it's completely valid for somebody to express their intent to run for leadership?

I cannot understand why, in this instance, it is almost seen as a shortcoming, that you can't say what you want. Surely if you operate in that way it means you are, not the slave, but certainly beholden to somebody else, whereas I think leaders must make their own decisions, and obviously that will relate to whom they think supports them. But it mustn't be dependent on the nomination from your members, it must also be because you see yourself as able to do a specific job.

Q: And in respect of Parliament, it is seen by those in civil society, outside the institution, as increasingly marginalised. This year has slightly changed that perception. Some of the issues you've raised, in how the institution has behaved in the succession discussion, people have seen committee chairpersons taking more courageous positions. Do you see that parliament is going to turn this perception of marginalisation around, and what role do you see for the Leader of the DA in parliament in that process? And what do you think the future trajectory for the institution is?

A: You know, this is not a new question, and it's not the first time it's been raised. I remember Van Zyl Slabbert in '83 saying Parliament has become irrelevant. But I can go further back and look at what Winston Churchill said about it – it's still this little place where the liberties and the values of the world are debated. So there's fluctuation in how strongly it comes across into society. And the ANC came to Parliament



without any parliamentary experience per se; it has needed time to understand the role, and unpack the possibilities of parliament. And I believe that they are taking it more seriously than they did before, and you can see it in exactly the examples you mentioned.

But I can also see, from my role as Chairperson, the positions the presiding officers have taken in trying to demonstrate Parliament's new role, which to a large extent is one of interacting, of being a people's Parliament, and making it more accessible to the people than before. It's not going to remain that ivory-tower debating space. It's going to be a place where members, voters, non-voters will actually, by virtue of going to a democracy office, which is being established, or the numerous fora for public participation, be able to say what they think and to convey it to the members. And I think that's a wonderful advance. It's not the same Parliament as you would necessarily see in Europe, but it's taking on its own African shape and I think that's commendable.

I also think that opposition has a role in this unfolding of events. It's easy for the opposition to isolate itself from what is happening in Parliament. We have to come to grips with the changes that people have not been used to before, and which perhaps are in a way foreign to them, or culturally strange. We have to make that step and embrace the changes, make them our own. And in that way we'll be contributing to Parliament being a really valuable space in our public lives.

Q: I may be pre-empting the answer in asking the question, but I can hear in the way in which you address the issue that your role as Chairperson has given you a unique understanding, which it is clear you will also bring to the role of Leader of the House. So you both have an objective for the House, and as Leader: Do you see a situation arising where those may diverge, and how would you handle that, where the interests of the House and the interests of the Leader of the party may not always coincide?

A: Well, there, I would imagine, although I hope I don't face that particular situation, that your loyalties lie with the leadership of the party to start with. This is the very goal which brought me here, this is why I chose to let go of the parliamentary chairpersonship, if necessary, in favour of the leadership of the party. Because I think both my origins and my destiny still lie with the party.

I think I've matured my views about politics greatly while viewing the real intricacies and difficulties of people who are in power, as opposed to ourselves, who are in opposition

Q: Would you find that divergence problematic? But also, do you think that you bring a unique understanding of the role of the House by virtue of having been the Chair of the House, that would not necessarily have any presence in another leader?

A: Without any doubt. It gave me a perspective which I don't know if anybody else has had. I think I've matured my views about politics greatly while viewing the real intricacies and difficulties of people who are in power, as opposed to ourselves, who are in opposition. We have a different role to play, but we don't have to contend with many of the immediate demands which power brings to you.

Q: What is your view on various aspects of constitutional review?

A: It's done under the guise of many reasons of why there's a need for possible change of the powers and functions, or to numbers. I think we must look very carefully at the political

implications, and also whether the real issue is actually being addressed. If these constitutionally founded bodies are not performing properly, there are ways and means of correcting that. I think that's the route we would take. As a matter of fact I think we keep on tampering bit by bit with our Constitution, and before long we will find ourselves with a long list of amendments, which, had we thought about things more carefully, probably could have been avoided. Because the Constitution, the more I look at it, is such a well-reasoned, subtle document that it's difficult to think why we can't solve any existing problems inside that framework.

Q: Different provinces of the ANC are currently adopting different positions on floor-crossing, and there are different options in the ANC discussion documents going to the Policy Conference. Do you think that there will be any change in floor crossing, and what will the parties' response and/or position be on floor crossing?

A: Well, you would know, as a person who very definitely and visibly differed from the party in its first support of floor-crossing, that the party has now made a complete U-turn. It burnt its fingers very badly with the electorate who immediately saw the right position – we can't do this, particularly not in the way it was drafted. I'm still an adherent of the old-fashioned idea of being allowed to go to the cross benches, which is quite different from what was actually put into statutes here.

So I do believe we are now taking the correct line by opposing it. I don't know when or how it's going to be changed, whether it's going to be merely fiddled with, or whether it's going to be taken off the statute books. I think the ANC has mixed feelings about it. They don't need floor-crossing and the complications involved, purely on the organisational front, with having this administrative nightmare to deal with. I think that is more than enough reason not to keep it. I don't know how much time the table here spends in trying to sort out the nitty gritty of people moving – must they take their Acacia Park house with them, or does it belong to the party? I can give you endless examples.

I think it was a real lesson in what happens to you when you want to do what is politically expedient, and how careful one must be to consider the long-term implications of your present ambitions.

Botha has subsequently resigned as Chair of the House

Images in this article courtesy © Mark Wessels



By Raenette Taijaard

Interview with Ian Davidson

Q: Can you say yet how the relationship between you, the party Leader and the Chief Whip will work?

A: It's early days, and we have to work on that. I mean, I see my own role in a number of ways. The relationship is one of the strategic challenges, but there are other initiatives.

What am I? In a sense I'm the link between Helen and the caucus, and, obviously, between the caucus and Parliament.

As far as my link with her and the caucus is concerned, that involves a good deal of what I would call a leadership role, but one where she's confident that leadership has been played out in her mould. And I think one needs to then interrogate what her mould is, but I have to articulate that as myself.

In terms of what the caucus does, it needs to be managed to ensure that we project the correct image.

I watch the press statements very carefully to make sure that the tone is correct. Helen has always said it's not what you say, it's how you say it. And you can say things equally



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as hard, and equally as tough, but it's the way you say it that is absolutely important. Managing that message, which is very important, I think, as far as the caucus is concerned. In terms of debates and statements, etc, what we need to do is put the alternative on a consistent basis. That is what is critical as far as that is concerned.

Q: How do you create that consistency?
A: What we need is not just intellectual commitment, but emotional commitment as well. And to be passionate about

We can do a lot to try and bring Parliament back into the mainstream. But without the co-operation of ministers and government it's going to be very difficult

things we need to relate to what other people have been through. So we need to start exposing the members of the caucus to that experience. What we're going to be doing prior to our *lekgotla*, in every single portfolio, let's just say housing, for instance, the housing spokesperson has got to get out. He's got to stand with people in queues to find out what is going on, deal with them, interact with them, see what their experiences are, see how they're treated. And go and look at the houses – in other words to get a very hands-on notion of what it's like to be on the receiving end, and be the victim, and also how they can translate it to creating opportunity for these people. And then they must report back to us. That will be part of the moulding of their approach to their portfolio.

Q. What is your feeling about the marginalisation of Parliament?
A. I'm very aware of how important that institution is but I'm also aware of the fact that it has been marginalised to a great



We also need to get out into civil society and start that process of building up relationships with civil society



extent. We can do a lot to try and bring Parliament back into the mainstream. But without the co-operation of ministers and government it's going to be very difficult. What is really important to me in terms of what we have to do now is to get out into the community, and, as a matter of fact, I'm just busy with that now. We're building up a huge database of individuals and organisations pertinent to each portfolio.

We have to make maximum usage of MPs' time. Yes, they need to play their role in parliament, and play it well, and be the opposition – strong opposition where necessary, but also complementary where necessary, and approving. But we also need to get out into civil society and start that process of building up relationships with civil society. It can only help each of them in their portfolio, but also it starts a two-way conversation which must, in the final analysis, enrich the portfolio, and also enrich our policy-making in terms of how we react to issues out there. And it's particularly pertinent in respect of those issues which affect communities other than the white community.

Q: It's a very different approach?

A: It is a different approach. Not only that, I've restructured the caucus meeting. I choose the individual and the subject on the Monday. On the Thursday I require whoever I may choose on the subject, pertinent to his portfolio, to get up and talk about that subject for ten minutes without notes. In the final analysis they have to internalise, they have to have understood the issues. And then it has to end up by saying, this is how we will approach it. So it starts that process of looking at issues, focusing in their minds, internalising what the problem

is, unpacking it, and saying well, okay, this is what our approach would be, by contrast.

Things are actually moving in that regard, to get this caucus working in, I think, a more constructive and a more productive way, and addressing issues on a more timeous basis.

Q: In terms of relationships with the ANC (African National Congress), what was your first meeting as Chief Whip like, what was the atmosphere, how did people respond to you?

A: I think very well. I think they recognise there is a new approach. I have always had a good working relationship with the ANC. I have been very tough on issues that I've had to be tough on, but style and tone has always come into play. And particularly, funnily enough, in the Finance Committee, I've created very, very good relationships. And some debates have been very tough, but we have together achieved, I think, quite a lot. So I think that reputation has more or less spread. Also my style of engagement with Trevor Manuel has been in the context of trying to create debate about what economic policy should be outside of this developmental policy role. And also trying to talk about what role the private sector should be playing, and what type of incentives we should put forward in order for the private sector to play that role.

Initially it started off as tough, but ultimately, because he saw the style that I came with, a kind of spontaneous debate developed between the two of us. And I think the people could see it, and therefore they saw where I was coming from. It was a new style, it was an openness, but nonetheless ideologically sound as far as we were concerned. Trying to encourage debate, but also realising where he was



in terms of his own political spectrum and therefore having respect for that, but nonetheless fostering the debate.

Q: And Ian, on the basis of the experience you've had restructuring the way caucus is functioning, would you ever consider inviting ANC ministers to DA study groups?

A: I have no problem with that.

Q: Would that be something that would be considered?

A: I think it could be very interesting. Look, let's just say this ... on the question of affirmative action, BEE (Black Economic Empowerment), Mark Lowe said to the President, would he consider the possibility of putting together a group which will interact with us as the Democratic Alliance, so that we could advance our ideas? A senior group. And the President said yes.

Some people were horrified because they thought that would mean that we would be going cap in hand; not at all. I think it's excellent because it's opening up a scenario which wasn't there in the past, of an interaction at both a formal and an informal level, feeding off each others' ideas. Because I think you will have noticed, or recognised, that certainly on non-

ideological issues there's a great feed-off from ourselves, because I think they do recognise this huge intellectual capital here which is underutilised. And on non-ideological issues they would like a closer interaction both on a formal and an informal level.

But by the same token, I think one doesn't want it to be seen as running to the minister. It has to be a scenario in which, in a sense, two equals sit down and say look, these are some of the problems ... constructing a kind of common agenda. Although we might differ in terms of solutions, at least there's an agenda which we both recognise we can interact with and offer solutions, and debate those solutions.

Q: On the issue of the relationships with the smaller parties, one does get the impression very often that, whether it's historically founded, or whether it's part of the future in terms of how smaller parties treat the DA as the largest opposition party, there's a difficult relationship. What have you found its nature to be? How do you see it developing over time?

A: I think Helen has made it quite clear, and I think she's right. I always made a point that if there is in the future going to be, and there will be at some stage be, a change of government, and if we still are at that stage – maybe in a different form, different guise – the major alternative, it will be highly unlikely that that change of government would take place between a clean-cut ANC and DA. You'd have a Cape Town scenario, in which there would have to be coalitions, and that I have no doubt about.

The question then arises, can you kick somebody in the stomach one moment and then kiss them the next? It can't work. So you have to start building up relationships with smaller parties, and I think Helen has set the right example. That's why she keeps talking about coalition politics and I think she's absolutely right as far as that's concerned. And my interaction with other whips has certainly been in the context of looking for a co-operative as opposed to confrontational relationship. And I really do want to emphasise "co-operative". My style has always been to take people with me as opposed to either dictating or working against. I would rather work a solution out, taking them into account.

So my relationship going forward with the smaller parties has to be on that basis. The whips said, "Must I make an appointment to come and see you in your office?" I said, "No, no, not necessary, I'll come and see you in your office." I mean, I think that it's very important that we can sit down as individuals and say, how do we make Parliament work better? How do we contrive a situation in which the opposition

parties can, in fact, make a difference in this organisation and have influence?

Q: And lastly, what do you think the succession debate in the ANC will mean in terms of the internal politics of the ANC over the next six months? Do you think that there is going to be a possible split in the organisation, or do you think that's unlikely?

A: I suppose as a liberal democrat, I find it quite interesting because there is just total clampdown on information. It might change after the policy conferences because I think people focus on the end result, the election of the President, but now is the crucial time. This is where the sides are gearing up, and clearly my view of the public service strike is that it's all part of a grand plan. It's COSATU saying to themselves, "We are a force to be reckoned with, we can bring this country to a standstill if necessary." It's a power play.

In a sense what that represents to me is the beginning of a political realignment, because the moment you start, on an issue by issue basis, saying there is common ground here, you can then start defining where that difference is

How it's playing out inside Parliament is something which we are not feeling. One can see that there's intense debate in the corridors. One can see, incidentally, how muted their reaction to the President is. Interestingly, he was President when I first came to Parliament, and when he came into the National Assembly there would be ululating and clapping and stamping and cheering; nothing like that now. So there is clearly – I mean, he's clearly a President on his way out, there's no question about that.

As far as the debate going forward is concerned, I find Tokyo's intervention actually very interesting, in that it starts

crystallising a debate within their own minds because there's a clear policy difference, an almost ideological difference. I mean, I read his speech at Wits University and I could have handed him a DA membership card.

Q: A free open opportunity society?

A: Ja, that's exactly what it was. This is going off on a tangent, but we had a *lekgotla* with the provincial leaders, and we always talk about clear blue water and all the rest of it ... and it was a political analyst who apparently said "Oh gosh, at times I don't see any difference between you and the ANC." And some people were quite dismayed by that statement. You could almost see them going back to pen and paper and saying, "But how do we create that difference?" And I'm saying you don't need to, you don't have to, you shouldn't.

In a sense what that represents to me is the beginning of a political realignment, because the moment you start, on an issue by issue basis, saying there is common ground here, you can then start defining where that difference is.

Also, from a public perception point of view, if you want to break into the new market, people don't like, I think, to be confronted by too stark a choice. I always call it middle South Africa. What are the values of that middle ground, and how do our values marry with those? Obviously there are clear issues of principle, but to what extent can we start weaving our party into that middle ground in order to reflect and resonate with people more accurately?

And so when key political analysts say there isn't much difference, to certain people it raises alarm bells. To others, like myself, it says well, perhaps the lines are beginning to be a bit blurred now. And it makes people of colour, or people who didn't previously support us, suddenly say well, perhaps this is an alternative that we need to consider, because the difference isn't as stark as we thought it was.

It feeds into a number of issues. I think one of the problems that we had in the past was a sense of cynicism with the political process and politics in general, and I think that's changed, which I think is positive. And I think there was an element of feeling that empathy was being contrived. You don't have that any more. I firmly believe politics is about image. You know, one can do all sorts of things, but it's the image that is important, people want to resonate with that image.

You have to emphasise the fact that you are still very firm on your principles, but then I think you have the beginnings of something interesting.

By Lance Greyling

Tackling climate change from a seat in Parliament

South Africa has substantial emission rates that contribute to global warming. Shining a light on these matters in the House is critical

Climate change has come to be recognised by many as one of the greatest challenges facing humanity in the 21st century. It is no longer seen as simply a concern of environmentalists, but as an issue that will impact on all our lives, albeit in vastly different ways. At the World Economic Forum this year, business leaders from across the world identified climate change as the number one global issue that needed to be tackled. Heads of states from countries in both the north and the south are, in word at least, starting to focus their attention on this problem, with even President Bush changing tack from his original denialist stance. Public awareness and concern on this issue has also grown phenomenally, as witnessed by the recently held Live Earth campaign, which saw millions of people from more than 130 countries use various multimedia forums to unite in their call for action to be taken on the climate crisis.

Unfortunately, though, despite all this international attention and concern, our global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. The challenge the international community now faces is how to turn this groundswell of concern into a workable global agreement that

Lance Greyling on his green machine tackling climate change directly in Parliament.



will ultimately stabilise greenhouse gas concentration levels in the atmosphere below 450 parts per million. This is the level accepted by most climate scientists as the limit beyond which destabilising climate change becomes unavoidable.

Achieving this goal is not going to be an easy task. It is going to require substantial investments in terms of both financial and technological resources to transform our present fossil-fuel-dominated energy infrastructure into one powered by clean energy sources. As the now famous Stern report on the economics of climate change argues, however, the financial investment required to avert dangerous climate change is far smaller than the cost to the global economy of its catastrophic impacts. This fact has prompted Sir Nicholas Stern to argue that climate change in fact represents one of the worst cases of market failure. I would argue that this market failure is almost entirely due to political failure. It is not the financial nor the technological challenges on this issue that are proving to be the most difficult to resolve, but rather the enormous political challenges.

Climate change is quite simply one of the most complex political issues the world has ever had to grapple with. Every country in the world is affected by it, in terms of both its causes and its impacts. On the one hand, there are countries such as the Maldives, who are responsible for a minuscule amount of greenhouse gas emissions yet risk losing their entire nation to sea-level rise as a result of the world's cumulative emissions. At the other end of the spectrum you have countries such as the United States, who are responsible for a quarter of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, yet they are able to refuse stubbornly to commit to any mandatory reduction targets. In the middle of all of this are countries such as China, India, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa, whose emissions are high and increasing rapidly as a result of their need to develop and lift their populations out of poverty. Developing countries like South Africa have constantly claimed that at present we cannot be expected to take on emission-reduction targets as our scarce financial resources need to be directed at poverty eradication. It is also argued that industrialised countries have an obligation to act first, as they



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The Live Earth Concerts for a Climate in Crisis took to the global stage. A Johannesburg concert attracted large crowds.

are responsible for the vast majority of the world's historical greenhouse gas emissions and they have the financial resources to transform their energy systems.

It was basically this mix of political interests and power blocs that gave birth to the Kyoto Protocol, which the United States and Australia then simply refused to ratify. Ever since then the world has hobbled along with little pockets of cities, companies, countries and even some American states trying to implement their own emission-reduction targets. As noble as these ventures might be, they are clearly not enough. The only way truly to address this problem is through a binding international agreement that clearly defines and mandates each country's role in bringing about the deep emission cuts that are going to be required over the next few decades.

Such an agreement is going to have to take into account the vexing global issue of equity, both in terms of historical and financial responsibility for emission reductions, and also in providing assistance to those countries who are going to have to adapt radically to a changing climate. At the moment international negotiations are proceeding along a two-track process, with developing countries thrashing out the type of actions they feel they will be able to commit to without compromising their development needs, and developed countries, on the other hand, considering the emission reduction targets that they are willing to commit themselves to over the long term. It is hoped that these two processes will culminate in 2009, with a binding international agreement that will produce the post-2012 global framework this issue needs to spur real action. Without such an agreement there will, for instance, not be the much-talked-about global carbon

market required to fund clean energy technologies throughout the world.

The GLOBE climate change dialogue

As this is first and foremost a political challenge, the role of legislators in fighting climate change is pivotal. Although legislators are not directly involved in the negotiating process among countries, we are, as representatives of the people, responsible for ensuring that the public's concerns are taken into account by our respective governments. It is for this reason that the GLOBE climate change dialogue was initiated, which brings together legislators from all the G8+5 countries to consider ways in which we can push our common agenda forward on climate change. At each of these events we produce a position statement, which is then forwarded to our respective heads of state, outlining the type of agreement that we would like to see them reach on some of the most controversial issues.

The GLOBE climate change dialogue has also provided us with insights into some of the internal political challenges that countries are grappling with on this issue. At our legislators' forum in Washington, for instance, we were treated to the spectacle of vastly different standpoints being expressed by United States congressmen and senators. Congressman Inslee proudly sermonised that "the sleeping giant has awoken from its long slumber and is preparing to lead the world in a second American revolution; the clean energy revolution". In stark contrast, though, Senator Craig bluntly told the assembled legislators: "I am not going to make any apologies for my country, a mandatory Cap and Trade system will never get political support in the US. It is

a question of how urgent you think this issue is. We believe we have time!" Despite this sobering statement we were definitely left with the overall impression that there has been a shift in American politics on this issue, and that there is an attempt being made to find a way of re-inserting the United States into the global debate on climate change.

The GLOBE climate change dialogue also offers an opportunity to share ideas on different types of domestic legislation that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Japanese parliament, for instance, has passed a novel piece of legislation entitled the Cool Biz initiative. This legislation outlaws the wearing of jackets and ties in summer, thereby reducing the need for air-conditioning in office blocks. The Japanese example reveals the way in which climate change is forcing all of us to rethink every aspect of our lives and institute any changes that could bring down our levels of greenhouse gas emissions.

This is the other important role that legislators have to play in tackling climate change, namely in providing personal leadership. For example, a group of United Kingdom parliamentarians have initiated a challenge whereby they have committed to halving their personal carbon footprint. The carbon footprint of South African parliamentarians is particularly high, especially given the large number of flights we are expected to undertake in order to serve our constituents and the fragmented parliamentary calendar. Reducing these emissions is going to require both personal commitments and institutional changes. In recognising this, a small group of parliamentarians across parties recently formed an informal network through which we will be looking to institute actions on personal, parliamentary and constituency levels to reduce emissions.

When it comes to climate change, no one should be exempted from taking personal action. It has become a common refrain in this debate to shift blame on to the global level, and specifically to use the intransigence of the United States as an excuse for our own inaction. South Africa is one of the top 20 producers of greenhouse gases in the world, and on a per capita basis is an even worse culprit. While we might be able to escape binding emission-reduction targets on a national level due to our developing-country status, this should not in any way prevent us from implementing personal lifestyle changes, as well as "no-regret" measures. These measures include energy-efficiency strategies such as replacing all conventional light-bulbs with energy efficient CFL or LED lights. After years of government inertia we also need to move with haste in installing solar water heaters in every household in South Africa. Building codes must be changed to include energy-efficient building methods, which would have the added benefit of reducing household energy costs. Finally, we need to provide the right financial and regulatory incentives to encourage the growth of a renewable energy industry in South Africa.

Renewable energy has never been given a real chance in South Africa, as it is usually dismissed on the grounds of being either too expensive or ill-suited for our large-scale generation needs. It must be borne in mind, however, that conventional energy sources, in particular nuclear power, have benefited from billions of rands in government subsidies over the years, while the annual allocation to renewable energy by the Department of Minerals and Energy has never exceeded R20 million. Globally the costs of renewable energy are being reduced exponentially and it will simply be a matter of time before they are able to compete with conventional fossil fuels in terms of price. To my mind, renewable energy represents a potentially exciting international growth market that South Africa should be looking at as an arena in which to position ourselves as world leaders. Our solar radiation is double the world average, and we have already produced a cutting-edge solar panel at the University of

The GLOBE climate change dialogue also offers an opportunity to share ideas on different types of domestic legislation that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Johannesburg which holds the promise of being four times more efficient than conventional panels. South Africa should now be looking to develop mass-production capabilities, as the panels offer one of the best solutions in terms of supplying energy to the more than 700 million people on the African continent who currently do not have access to electricity.

Einstein once said that we cannot hope to solve a problem by using the same type of thinking that created it. South Africa therefore needs to think creatively on the issue of climate change, and plan for a global energy future that is necessarily going to be radically different from our present one. This presents us with both opportunities and threats, but, as a country that has hosted the World Summit on Sustainable Development, South Africa must be at the forefront of pioneering a new form of development that does not compromise the natural resource base of future generations.

Lance Greyling is a Member of Parliament for the Independent Democrats



Tokyo Sexwale, presidential contender, speaking at WITS University.

Towards a common future: public conversations on leadership

Tokyo Sexwale publicly announced his intention to join the ANC Presidential race on the BBC's Hardtalk. He subsequently Co-chaired the World Economic Africa meeting and delivered a number of public speeches - including a talk at WITS on Leadership.



Public Lecture Series - Hosted by The Platform for Public Deliberation
in collaboration with the Public Intellectual Life Research Project
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
07 June 2007

A more than candid public conversation on leadership in South Africa as we enter the second decade of liberation can only be realistic if it is contextualized. Therefore, what is the context?

Firstly, South Africa is not only experiencing the nascent stages of its second decade of national emancipation but finds itself within an increasingly competitive environment in a rapidly globalising international economic arena, accompanied by a variety of challenging political circumstances.

Secondly, at the turn of this century, leaders of the world, all hopefully representing this various peoples, converged at the United Nations Summit to map out the fundamental tasks confronting mankind around global development issues. The Millennium Development Goals, aimed at confronting the question of extreme poverty in our world where close to two billion people are forced to exist on fewer than two dollars per day, were the collective goals chartered by the Millennium summit. These goals, to be reviewed in 2015 and finally in 2025, include, amongst others, the following:

1. The eradication of extreme poverty.
2. The achievement of universal primary education.
3. The reduction of child mortality.
4. To improve maternal health.
5. The promotion of gender equality.
6. The combating of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. To ensure environmental sustainability.
8. The development of global partnerships for development.

Our country is co-sponsor and signatory to the UN declaration on these noble Millennium goals because not only do we crave to live in a better world, but most importantly, we desire to have a better quality of life for our own citizens. The electoral manifesto of the ANC, our governing party, was and remains "A better life for all".

A better quality of life, a much better life presupposes sustained economic growth – or better still, sustainable high economic growth rates. In our situation, this implies an economic GDP growth rate beyond the current 4 to 5% to compete with the population growth figures.



Tokyo Sexwale was welcomed on stage and introduced by Moeletsi Mbeki.

Notwithstanding that the South African year 2006 – 2007 growth rates are in positive territory, it should be recalled that the envisaged target was 6% for the year 2001.

Therefore, there is a deficit in our targets, a situation that will require continuous improvements.

Economic growth rates are by themselves meaningless unless they touch the lives of ordinary citizens. Our greatest challenge is therefore that of wealth creation for all. The concept of shared growth after all needs to be understood not in the context of what Karl Marx referred to as “egalitarianism”, but in a situation where, through the creation of equal opportunities, citizens shall prosper to varying degrees of success.

In a nutshell, the task is that of growing a strong and sustainable economy and to undertake wealth creation opportunities for all. The poorest of the poor do not wish to remain entrapped in their marginal position for a moment longer; they also need to enjoy material wealth. Therefore, being pro-poor is not about sloganeering or poverty entrenchment but about engaging in strategies for wealth creation and enhancement.

While the process of economic growth in our situation is premised upon the uneasy partnership between labour and

capital in the production processes, it is nevertheless the function of the State to create the enabling environment for growth.

An additional role of government together with its partners in the economy – workers and capital – is to put in place a social plan to support those who are on the fringes of the economy, far away from its centre-stage, and to have a safety net to catch those – the poorest of the poor – who fall through the cracks. This is aimed at providing them with housing opportunities, a public health system, education and skills development, as well as providing electricity, water and other crucial basic social services.

But it is the corporate sector that is the primary creator of jobs and work opportunities. The extent to which this sector is treated or maltreated, welcomed or unwelcomed, by far determines their continued appetite and commitment to capital expansion and job creation.

It should also be emphatically stated that at the same time, it is the workers who are the primary creators of value, for without them, natural resources, tools and machines cannot by themselves create commodities. It therefore stands to reason, that the capital-labour partnership is uneasy for the reason that it is the quintessential example of the unity and struggle of the

opposites – where both are united in the production process and contradictory in respect of the distribution of surplus value. Where labour's objective is to maximise wages, capital aims at the maximisation of profit. Growth of our economy therefore lies in the ability of all parties to manage these production tensions while government develops and maintains the requisite climate.

Our country is not an island. It is part and parcel of the globalised world markets, which are highly punitive upon those who place much emphasis on internal feuds where contradictions are left to degenerate into antagonisms. Foreign competitors simply love such nations. The notions ought to change. We need to bear this in mind as we continue to engage with each other.

PROGRESS THROUGH AN OPEN SOCIETY

If it is a given that the national endeavour is that of creating a sound basis for the provision of a better quality of life for all South Africans on the basis of a solid and highly growing economy to create wealth and wealth opportunities for all our people for the elimination of poverty, then it is presumed that these major challenges can only be realisable in a constantly changing and improving climate of freedom. Freedom is indivisible and a more free and more open society is a fundamental pre-requisite.

At every twist and turn in the quest to achieve our desired objectives, our best tools or weapons remain more debates, more discourses, more discussions, dialogue – all based on dialectical understandings. In the world of natural science, the strength and quality of one element is usually tested against another in laboratories. On the contrary, in the world of social science – where human consciousness is the highest – the quality of one idea is tested against another idea and the tested method is that of dialectical examination. Thus may the best idea prevail. That is the essence of democratic discourse.

The opposite is also true – under the climate of fear, of less democracy, less sincere debates, less frank discussions, less than good ideas prevail and mediocrity wins the day.

Fear is a state of mind which can be externally or internally imposed. Relatively, the former is easy to deal with as it is objective and the imposer is known and can thus be challenged.

But organic fear, which is self-imposed, is much harder to tackle since it is subjective, corrosive and self-destructive, no matter how much its owner may try to put up a brave face!

In an open society, an open democracy where there is a free flow of ideas, one where “a hundred flowers” are blooming, as

Mao said, or as one ANC writer intimated, where we ought to be celebrating in a “festival of ideas”, we all must be free to state:

ITHINK. or I THINK NOT. ITHINK SO. or I DON'T THINK SO.

The classical example on free thinking and debate is summed up in the discussion between Karl Marx and one of his critics on the question of the causality of poverty. This critic wrote extensively on the theme: *The Philosophy of Poverty*, arguing that it is as a result of natural differences amongst people. Marx retorted

Our country is not an island. It is part and parcel of the globalised world markets, which are highly punitive upon those who place much emphasis on internal feuds where contradictions are left to degenerate into antagonisms

by writing on the *Poverty of Philosophy* regarding the failure of philosophy in explaining poverty! Hence his classical conclusion that all along philosophers have been busy interpreting the world – the task, even of philosophers, is to change it!

Therefore in the challenging endeavour to address the issues of providing a better quality of life and the creation of a better country in a better world, a free-thinking, more tolerant and open society is a primary pre-requisite, where dissent is never to be regarded as disloyalty.

“Thinking requires no one's approval – implementation may. Be not fearful”.

CHARACTERISATION OF LEADERSHIP STYLES

Our contribution to this conversation on leadership as provided by the Platform for Public Deliberation led by its executive chairman, Xolela Mangcu, would be incomplete without a word on developments around the ANC, the governing party's much talked-



Sexwale's WITS speech juxtaposed a free and open society and a fear-driven society.

about forthcoming December conference where a new set of leadership is to be elected.

Analysts, commentators and also some of us members of the ANC are missing the point to an extent. More light needs to be shed upon the ANC June conference which shall be engaged on critical policy issues affecting the entire country than the heat being generated under the December conference. In a way, we, the ANC, must first go through the eye of the needle in June in order to see December through.

However, it is understandable that there is much being made about the leadership succession issue in December. This is a common phenomenon in the world where policies are seen as less exciting than personalities.

The crucial point on this matter that needs to be clearly understood is that the ANC – is not only going to elect one person – in this case the President but it is also an election of the entire leadership of the National Executive Committee. Such a leadership is expected to conduct itself as a collective, mandated

to take forward the work of the National Conference for the continued implementation of ANC policies especially as pertaining to government.

Such a collective leadership, as always, shall be expected to prioritise the question of political and socio-economic development with special emphasis on the development agenda affecting the poorest of the poor who emanate particularly from the ranks of the working people.

This approach, however, does not in the least make the ANC a working class organisation.

The ANC is a multi-class organisation of the people of South Africa. While its policies are biased towards the working people in general and also towards the African majority in particular, it nevertheless caters for all peace-loving, democratic South Africans who believe in its objectives and the National Democratic Revolution for the advancement of the developmental state on behalf of all our citizens – black and white.

We go into both conferences with an open mind as exemplified by the various policy discussion documents already distributed to enable robust debates. Contrary to speculation from critics, the ANC is open to acknowledging even some of the most difficult issues around existing antagonistic tensions which threaten to undermine our organisational unity.

Let me quote from our organization review vol. 3: "However many challenges remain, across the organization and the broad democratic movement there is a growing tendency to carry out dirty character assassination and (the) dissemination of lies about other Comrades has reached uncontrollable proportions".

A last word on leadership: The essential ingredient of leadership is courage. Hence the saying: "the courage of one's convictions". All of us do have, in one way or another, convictions. But it is when courage fails us that convictions never see the light of day. Here a clear distinction on the leadership quality of courage should be made from that of bravado. To be brave is one thing. Bravado is entirely a different story that can lead to failure. Pallo Jordan in his April tribute to Chris Hani said that of all the qualities attributed to Chris Hani, he had one in great abundance, i.e. courage. If we can only learn from particularly this attribute, we shall never fail.

It took enormous courage on the part of ANC leaders over more than nine decades to handle various crises confronting the ANC and the people of South Africa.

These moments of courage include inter alia; the response to the betrayal of our people at the formation of the Union in 1910 which was followed by the formation of the ANC in 1912, the response to the 1956 arrest of 156 leaders of the Congress Movement, the 1960 banning of the ANC, and the launching of the Armed Struggle, right through to the conclusion of the Armed Struggle via the Codesa Constitutional breakthrough.

It took great courage on the part of 20 000 women in 1956 to march on the Union Buildings protesting against pass laws – *Malibongwe*.

It took great courage by the Youth League, particularly under the leadership of Peter Mokaba, to stare down apartheid troops as the Young Lions made apartheid unworkable and racist South Africa ungovernable.

It took personal courage on the part of OR Tambo to lead the ANC for close to three decades of difficult challenges culminating in paying the highest price with his life as a result of a stroke.

It took a great deal of personal courage for the 27 year old Chris Hani, following the Wankie Operations setback in then Rhodesia, to put pen to paper in a memorandum to the leadership which culminated in the groundbreaking Morogoro conference – a turning point for the ANC.

It took great courage for Madiba, isolated and alone in prison, to stare the enemy in the face and call upon him to initiate discussions with the ANC outside prison which led towards the demise of the apartheid regime.

It has taken personal courage on the part of President Mbeki to challenge the negative and distorted global perspective on Africa and to identify this as the African Century for the African Renaissance.

Leadership is not about walking behind the people, pushing them forward to save one's skin. This is called tailism.

Leadership is not about hiding amongst the people and not taking leadership decisions hiding behind the slogan "the masses say".

Leadership is not about running too far ahead of people where they cannot see or hear you.

Such leaders can lose touch with the people and their reality. Leadership is about being sufficiently ahead of the people but near enough to be seen and heard by them, and to see and hear them to co-ordinate strategy and tactics. At the end of the day, courage is about learning to unlearn our fear.

Let me conclude by quoting from a film called "*Good Night and Good Luck*" which provides us with insight into the United States' experience of a society which was grappling with its own fears during the era of McCarthyism.

I quote: "It is necessary to investigate before legislating but the line between investigating and prosecuting is a very fine one. (Don't overstep it). We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. We must remember always that accusation is not truth, and that conviction depends upon evidence and due process of law.

"We will not walk in fear of one another. We will not be driven by fear into an age of unreason if we dig deep into our history and our doctrine. And remember that we are not descended from fearful men (and women) not from men who feared to write, to associate, to speak and to defend causes

Such leaders can lose touch with the people and their reality. Leadership is about being sufficiently ahead of the people but near enough to be seen and heard by them, and to see and hear them to coordinate strategy and tactics

that were for the moment unpopular. This is not time for men who oppose (McCarthy's) methods to keep silent or for those who approve. We can deny our heritage and our history but we cannot escape responsibility for the results. We proclaim ourselves and indeed as we are the defenders of freedom wherever it continues to exist in the world, but we cannot defend freedom abroad by deserting it at home."

He concluded his comments by quoting Cassius from Shakespeare's rendition of: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in our selves."

I thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Good night and good luck.

By Michael Cardo

The status remains (more or less) quo

The claimed “shift to the left” is hard to find in the evidence from the ANC’s policy conference, where the developmental state nudged aside any challenge from the socialist revolution

Observers searching for clues from the ruling party’s policy conference in June as to whom might be elected president of the African National Congress (ANC) in December, or for evidence of an ideological shift in party policy, are likely to be disappointed. The conference did reveal the intellectual paralysis of the left, insofar as the ANC’s communist and trade union allies singularly failed, as promised, to impose a new economic vision on the party. Successful attempts to build consensus around the desirability of a hazily-defined “developmental state” showed that President Thabo Mbeki’s policy mandarins are still very much in command. Whether this translates into a third term for Mbeki as ANC president come December, an option which the conference kept open to him and to which he appears very much alive, only time will tell.

Addressing the Wits Business School on the eve of policy conference, Joel Netshitenzhe, Head of Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services in the Presidency, had to fend off leftist critics unhappy with the ruling party’s draft Strategy and Tactics (S&T) document.

That document, his detractors claimed, eschewed the traditional bias of the ANC towards the poor and the working class; yielded too much to monopoly capital; and failed to connect the national democratic revolution (NDR) to its ultimate goal, namely socialist revolution.

Netshitenzhe conceded that, historically, monopoly capital was the principal antagonist in ANC policy documents, but insisted that times had changed and the ANC had moved on. In the same way





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Jabu Moleketi, Max Sisulu, Kgalema Motlanthe and Jeff Radebe at the June policy conference of the ANC

that the South African Communist Party's current definition of socialism differed from what it was in the 1960s, there had been an evolution in the ANC's approach to monopoly capital and the private ownership of wealth.

Likening the South African government's mission to that of its counterpart in the People's Republic of China, Netshitenzhe argued the case for a developmental state. Such a state, he said, would promote development by identifying winning economic sectors, by intervening strategically, and by "mobilising" domestic and foreign capital towards those sectors.

Netshitenzhe failed to specify what those sectors might be, although he did suggest that with 80% of the world's platinum resources, South Africa would become increasingly important for global energy resources in years to come.

The question of which industries might expect more dirigiste policies aimed their way was also left hanging, although, tellingly perhaps, Netshitenzhe singled out the manufacturing industry

for having failed to appreciate the "tsunami of black middle class growth". This was evidenced by recent shortages of pasta and beer bottles, among other favoured bourgeois commodities.

Netshitenzhe berated manufacturers for the recent cement shortage: "Why is there a shortage [of cement] when government announces its intentions to spend billions on infrastructure?" Answering his own question, he continued: "One of the reasons is lack of trust between those in the political leadership sphere and the economic sphere".¹

Conceptually, for all that it has been dressed up and wheeled out as the *plat du jour* on the policy trolley, the developmental state is an old dish reheated. It has been on the menu for the past few years, and certainly since 2004, when the government indicated that its growth strategy would hinge on a large-scale public infrastructure investment drive.

If the leftists in the audience took issue with Netshitenzhe's nebulous developmental state, if they viewed it as a palliative to



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mask the unpleasantness of the state's pro-business policies, and if they had an alternative vision to it, they certainly weren't letting on.

Instead, their discomfort with the ruling party's economics was expressed in tired (and tiresome) rants against "monopoly capital", arcane and outdated arguments about the "two stage theory" of revolution, and the hackneyed socialist vocabulary of yesteryear.

Perhaps, after all, they had found they could live with the developmental state. Perhaps they had found they were bereft of new ideas.

Just over two weeks later and cut to Gallagher Estate in Midrand. It is the first day of the ANC policy conference and President Mbeki is delivering his opening address.

It is necessary, he says, "to restate some of the fundamental conclusions that have informed the functioning of the broad movement for national liberation for many decades already".² One of these conclusions is that there is a "distinct, material

and historically determined difference between the national democratic and the socialist revolutions".

In its march towards the NDR, the ANC "had never sought to prescribe to the South African Communist Party (SACP) the policies it should adopt, the programmes of action it should implement, and the leaders it should elect". By the same token, the SACP "had always understood that it could not delegate its socialist tasks to the ANC", nor "impose on the national democratic revolution the tasks of the socialist revolution".

Coming to his point, Mbeki reminded delegates: "As we consider our policy positions during this conference, these realities about what the Alliance is and what the Alliance means, are some of the fundamental considerations that must inform our work."

There are two reasons Mbeki felt compelled to tread such familiar ground. Firstly, he was positioning himself as defender-in-chief of an ongoing alliance (on terms acceptable to the ANC)

Delegates at the ANC policy conference had succession on their minds

between the ruling party and its tripartite partners, the SACP and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu). The alliance, he said, was a social and historical "imperative" and it would "survive and thrive and continue to combine and coalesce" in pursuing the goals of the NDR.

Secondly, and more importantly, he was reissuing a warning to those "ultra-leftists" whom he denounced at the ANC's policy conference in September 2002, albeit now in less acerbic terms. Then, Mbeki delivered a withering attack, accusing the hard-left of waging a "struggle to win hegemony for itself and its positions over the national liberation movement".³ Now, his language was more temperate, although his message was equally clear: the SACP and its backers in the civic and trade union movements should know their place. They were welcome to fight for a socialist revolution which, according to Mbeki, the ANC had never adopted as its own cause. But they should not attempt to project their objectives on to the ANC, nor, crucially, mount a campaign within the ANC to change the course of its economic policy.

Mbeki need not have bothered. Like Netshitenzhe's critics at Wits, the leftists at Midrand hardly posed much of an intellectual challenge to the centrist economics that underpin the draft S&T and other policy documents under discussion.

Cosatu Secretary-General Zwelinzima Vavi claimed that the decisions taken at Midrand indicated "a shift to the left".⁴ It is a difficult claim to substantiate, given that the left failed to put any fresh ideas on the table, let alone have these ideas translated into workable proposals or resolutions. Feebly, the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) put forward a resolution condemning "monopoly capital", but this was rejected by the conference.⁵

Cosatu's proposal for a basic income grant was debated, but discarded. Instead, delegates suggested raising the qualifying age for the child support grant from 16 to 18, and agreed that welfare grants should be tied to work programmes.

The left's failure to pin down its own plans for a comprehensively reviewed social security net, or to marshal ideas for improvements in this regard, is evidence of its intellectual bankruptcy.

Draft reports compiled by various commissions that sat during the conference affirmed that the government "must play a central and strategic role" in building a developmental state, by "directly investing in underdeveloped areas and directing private sector

investment" towards reducing unemployment.⁶ What this might mean in terms of specific interventions in specific sectors of the economy was left unaddressed.

Some of the resolutions gave an indication of where increased interventions might be expected.

Delegates called for "strong interventions in the private land market". Among those proposed were regulations on foreign ownership of land, although conference-goers stopped short of insisting on a moratorium. There was also an urgent need, they agreed, "for a detailed strategy reformulation, major institutional reform and significant budget adjustments" if 30% of agricultural land was to be transferred into black hands by 2014. In the health sector, the establishment of a state-owned pharmaceutical company that would "respond and intervene in the curbing of medicine prices" was counselled.

Like Netshitenzhe's critics at Wits, the leftists at Midrand hardly posed much of an intellectual challenge to the centrist economics that underpin the draft S&T and other policy documents under discussion.

None of these recommendations is new, nor is any of them the ideological preserve of the left wing of the tripartite alliance. In the circumstances, Vavi's claim that there had been a policy "shift to the left" seems somewhat exaggerated. In fact, the status quo that emerged over economic policy was neatly captured by Netshitenzhe and SACP Deputy Chairman Jeremy Cronin (both ANC national executive committee [NEC] members) jointly giving a press briefing, and acknowledging that there was "broad consensus" on the need for a developmental state.

No war of words here; no slugging it out for the soul of the ANC. Instead they both sang, from the same hymn-sheet as it were, the praises of the developmental state. And they both called for interventionist state measures to be incorporated into ANC policy – surely a case of the policy cart leading the horse.



ANC President Thabo Mbeki campaigning during polls. December's Conference will bring its own campaigning and marks a different election.

If contestation over economic policy failed to serve as a proxy for personalised battles around presidential succession, which it has in the past, recommendations on "organisational review" might provide more useful clues as to what is happening on the succession front.

Delegates were asked whether the person elected to lead the ANC should automatically be the party's candidate for the state presidency. Their answer was that "the ANC president should preferably be the ANC candidate for the president of the republic".⁷

According to Secretary-General Kgalema Motlanthe, the "roof almost came down" during discussions on the matter but "there was also a strong view that this must not be made a principle".

In the end, the "Consolidated report of commissions on organisational renewal" reaffirmed the status quo. Delegates agreed that there was "no need to synchronise the term of office of the ANC leadership with that of government". The existing procedures for electing ANC leadership were deemed "adequate". In sum, there was "no need to change the current procedures and provisions of the ANC Constitution".⁸

That Zuma's backers and Mbeki's detractors succeeded neither in obtaining official rejection of a split party and state presidency (the "two centres of power") nor in imposing constitutional term limits on the party presidency should not be viewed as an unmitigated victory for Mbeki. However, their failure did extend a lifeline to Mbeki for a third term as ANC president.

During the conference, Mbeki felt comfortable enough to announce on national television that he would, if asked, make himself available for re-election as ANC president in December. He said: "If leadership said, 'Look, we believe that [the] interests

of the ANC and the country would be best served if we had somebody else', that's fine. But if they said, 'No, you better stay for whatever good reason', that would be fine. You couldn't act in a way that disrespected such a view."⁹ Amidst all the obligatory qualifiers about being a servant of the movement, Mbeki's intention is clear: he is ready for, perhaps even wants, another term as ANC president.

Some commentators believe there was a backlash at the conference against Mbeki's perceived authoritarianism and centralising tendencies, and suggest that this might indicate the unlikelihood of his securing a third term come December.

Specifically, the commissions on organisational renewal recommended stripping the ANC president of his right to appoint mayors and premiers unilaterally, and suggested that this power should be devolved to party structures.

According to the report on organisational review, "All commissions agreed that the REC [regional executive committee] should make recommendations on a pool of names of cadres who should be considered for Mayorship." The provincial executive committee (PEC) would make the final decision on the matter based on the pool of names submitted by the REC.

Similarly, where the appointment of premiers is concerned, the PEC would submit a list of names to the NEC for consideration. The NEC would, in turn, make the final decision.

The move to make regional and provincial structures responsible for nominating and electing mayors does place an important check on the ANC president's current powers, and it does send a pointed message to Mbeki. However, it is doubtful, at this stage, whether much more should be read into it than that.

To be sure, the move seems not to have stemmed from a genuine desire to promote popular democracy by involving grass-roots party structures in decision-making processes, but more from a desire to reprove and penalise Mbeki. After all, both mayors and premiers will continue to be appointed from on high, and national and provincial structures will be free to disregard the preferred candidates of structures lower down the party hierarchy.

Yet several other recommendations of the draft discussion document on organisational review were approved without much fuss. And, as Anthony Butler argued before the conference,

far from seeking to clip Mbeki's wings, that document signalled "one of the most audacious factional drives for power in the history of the modern ANC".¹⁰ It did so by proposing five key institutional initiatives and changes which place the ANC Secretary-General at helm of a "machine curiously reminiscent of Mbeki's state presidency".

The initiatives are: a new policy institute; a new "political school" to train cadres in revolutionary theory and statecraft; a new ANC department controlling political communications and cadre deployment; an enlarged but downgraded NEC, whose policy subcommittees would be subordinated to the policy institute and Secretary-General's office; and, finally, an expanded Secretary-General's office that would have "the requisite capacity to co-ordinate and manage the work of all the departments or units".

To Butler, the document implies "that it should be possible for Mbeki's inner circle in the state presidency to continue to rule SA after 2009". The national headquarters of such a transformed outfit would require skilled staff, most of whom currently work in the office of the state presidency. It is likely that the new national office, should it come about as envisaged, would draw heavily on the current presidency's policy co-ordination and communications expertise, as well as its legal and political advisers.

For their part, the commissions on organisational review agreed "on the need to strengthen the SGO [secretary-general's office] in accordance with the organisational management responsibilities of this Office". There was "unanimous agreement on the proposals on political education" and "general agreement with the proposals" on political management, on the one hand, and policy formulation, evaluation and monitoring on the other. There were "substantially different views" on restructuring the NEC and "further debate [was] required".

If he manages to secure himself a third term as ANC president in December, and if the draft document on organisational review is endorsed (as developments at the policy conference suggest it might be) the proposed removal of Mbeki's powers to appoint mayors and premiers will be remembered as an interesting sideshow. Mbeki and his inner circle, centred on Netshitenzhe, would be in control of government policy and appointments, and, in effect, they would control the State President too – a compliant candidate of Mbeki's choosing.

December will be a very different
beast to June, and there will be
much bloodletting between now
and then

That is but one scenario. December will be a very different beast to June, and there will be much bloodletting between now and then. The left may yet rally around Jacob Zuma and mobilise support for his presidential candidacy. If they do, it will not, as Midrand made clear, be on the strength of their or his ideas for a radical economic turnabout.

Michael Cardo is a Visiting Research Fellow at the Helen Suzman Foundation. He is currently writing a biography of former Liberal Party National Chairman Peter Brown.

Endnotes

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Media alert causes a flurry

By Raymond Louw

Unintended side-effects of the Films and Publications Amendment Bill raise questions about the state's approach to legislation

The Films and Publications Amendment Bill, which the Ministry of Home Affairs is determined to see enacted into law, is having a wildly erratic passage through parliament, causing unintended side-effects which are disturbing the media and placing strains on internal government relations.

Its passage has shown up serious deficiencies in the conduct of the ruling party when drafting legislation, and has raised searching questions about the real agenda behind this legislation. The bill has had profound reverberations throughout the media industry, which was baffled by the timing and manner in which the government went about introducing it.

The Ministry published the draft legislation in a Government Gazette shortly before the holiday period last December and



The process of passing legislation came under scrutiny during the Film and Publications Amendment Bill deliberations.

called for representations by the public for submission during the holidays. It may have been coincidence, but some observers thought the timing was designed to enable the Bill to slip through with the minimum of opposition.

The news media industry has been exempt from the Film and Publications Act for more than 40 years, the reasoning being that there should be no question of this legislation being used to censor the media.

The industry was not informed that that protection, a vital necessity for the practice of media freedom, especially since South Africa adopted its enlightened Constitution in 1996, was to be removed. Later, it emerged that some 35 bodies and institutions had been told of the Bill, but print media, who are directly affected, were not among them. This was described by the Home Affairs department as an oversight.

The Act regulates the ages of film audiences and the manner in which bookshops display “adult” material on their shelves so that it is not readily available to children and sensitive adults. A lawyer holidaying on a South Coast beach and idly paging through that Gazette spotted that the 1962 exemptions for the news media in the legislation had been removed. He alerted the industry, which was horrified to discover that it was now confronted with pre-publication censorship under the Film and Publications Board’s “classification” procedures.

Removal of the exemptions meant that the news media would be required to submit certain news reports “for classification” by a Film and Publications Board committee before they could be published or broadcast. Classification officials’ translation into censorship.

The stated purpose of the Bill is to protect children from child pornography or from exposure to adult pornography, both objectives supported by the media, but it goes much further: It includes prohibitions on propaganda for war, incitement to violence, and hate speech, material certainly far removed from protecting children from pornography.

No newspaper or broadcaster in SA (South Africa) has been charged with publishing child pornography, so the industry was puzzled why legislation should now be focused on preventing newspapers and broadcasters from publishing such material. It was the addition of the three other types of information that stirred suspicions that perhaps there was a much wider agenda in mind – that legislation that had full public approval was being used to introduce forms of censorship that would otherwise be banned.

Though the Constitution places limitations on the publication of propaganda for war, incitement to violence, and hate speech, the Bill’s phraseology on these issues was much wider than that in the Constitution, thus limiting Constitutional protection for such publication.



Beyond the Film and Publications furore the Sunday Times and Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang squared off in court about the role of the media – a matter that will be scrutinized at the ANC's December Conference.

The news media's editors, publishers and on-line publishers mounted a stiff protest and requested proper consultation so that they could explain why the new legislation infringed on media freedom principles and, indeed, would physically have been impracticable to implement. Broadcasters stated that the law would have a "devastating effect" on TV and radio broadcasts.

There had been no consultation with the industry, so the Ministry called a meeting where members of its team stated they had not read the protests put forward by the industry, but would do so. The discussion was by no means satisfactory, as it was clear that the officials did not think there was any offence against the Constitution or media freedom. Some media representatives came away with the impression that the government officials did not understand the media's concepts of press freedom or its complaints.

The industry had engaged lawyers to go through the legislation with a fine-tooth comb, and they came up with the view that it constituted pre-publication censorship, contravened the Constitution, and was likely to prove impractical to implement.

On the eve of the Bill being considered by the Cabinet before being placed before Parliament, two media organisations wrote to President Thabo Mbeki requesting that it be postponed so

that there could be proper consultation. The Cabinet ignored the request. The Bill was sent to parliament and the Portfolio Committee for Home Affairs started a process of what it regarded as consultation – by talking to the communities who were deeply worried about attacks on children.

Members of the public attending these meetings were naturally pleased to see a law directed to curb child pornography, and considerations of media freedom or how the media would be affected – even if they thought about them – did not trouble them. They were understandably only concerned about the safety of their children, and if a parliamentary committee said this was a way to combat the dangers surrounding their children, they were right behind it.

Then Minister in the Presidency Essop Pahad called a meeting of the Home Affairs Ministry and the media to discuss the issue. It was clear that he recognised the danger of censoring the media. He also acknowledged that there had been a lack of consultation.

What emerged was a proposal put forward by Pahad that the Bill be postponed for proper consultation, one that was readily agreed to by the media. But here came another unintended consequence: Patrick Chauke, chairman

of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs, protested that the executive was improperly interfering with the parliamentary process. The way forward, he said was not Pahad's consultation, but hearings by the portfolio committee, which eventually occurred.

But there is a vast difference between consultation and the submission of representations by institutions or non-governmental organisations to a parliamentary committee. The media's representatives believed the committee process inadequate and unlikely to achieve proper discussion, while Chauke believed this was the appropriate parliamentary process for honing legislation into shape.

The two sides and the two approaches were light years apart.

The committee made a concession: it decided to reinstitute the exemption of the print and broadcast media from the legislation, thinking this would appease the media. But it did not.

The exemption for the print media had always been deficient, because it applied only to members of Print Media SA (PMSA) and there are hundreds of publications that are not members of PMSA, but require protection from classification. Also, there were new additional requirements under the Bill to which the exemption does not apply, and which place the media again at risk.

So the print media industry is still ranged against the legislation, regarding it as an instrument of censorship.

One of the big surprises during the parliamentary hearings was the criticism of the Bill voiced by parliamentary legal adviser Refilwe Mathabathe. She said that requiring newspapers to submit material before publication amounted to censorship. She added that if enacted in its current form, the Bill would see the Films and Publications Board become a broadcast-media regulator, usurping the role of the Independent Communications Authority of SA (Icasa) as a regulator, and was thus unconstitutional.

Many in the media wondered how the Department could have proceeded with the Bill in the face of that advice, which must have been echoed by its own legal advisers.

Another surprise admission during the hearings was by Films and Publications Board Chief Executive Shokie Bopape-Dlomo, who conceded that the board did not have the capacity to go through all the newspapers' stories before they were published. This, however, she said, was not the intention and the

"misunderstanding" must have been created by the wording of the legislation.

She disagreed with Mathabathe, saying the board could complement the work of Icasa, but Mathabathe said her interpretation of Icasa's functions were "too limited". Neither referred to the constitutional requirement that Icasa was an independent body that could not be interfered with.

There was further confusion when it was disclosed that a Cape newspaper was being investigated by the police for publishing pictures of young girls related to the smashing of a child porn ring.



Some media representatives came away with the impression that the government officials did not understand the media's concepts of press freedom or its complaints.

This raised the question, why the need for this legislation when legislation already existed to deal with the subject?

The Bill in its amended form has been passed by Parliament and is now due for consideration by the National Council of Provinces in August – which provides a further opportunity for the media to make representations against it.

However, in the meanwhile a meeting between President Mbeki and some of his cabinet ministers and members of the SA National Editors' Forum (Sanef) on June 17 resulted in yet another process for the Bill, at the suggestion of Pahad – a legal examination of its contents by government lawyers and those representing the industry, followed by a "political discussion" on the Bill between the Home Affairs Ministry and members of Sanef.

These meetings are on the agenda.



Raymond Louw is Editor and Publisher of the weekly current affairs briefing newsletter, Southern Africa Report, and chairperson of Sanef's Media Freedom Committee.

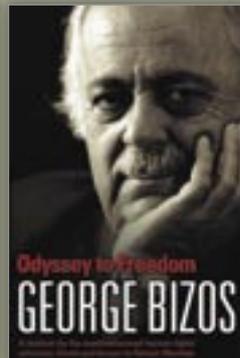
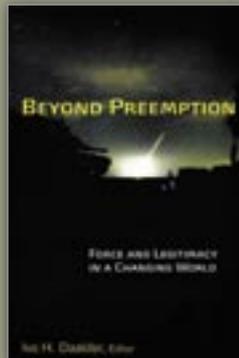


FOCUS BOOK CORNER

Beyond Preemption

edited by Ivo H. Daalder
 Brookings Institution Press
 ISBN 9780815716853

America's recent wars in Kosovo, Afganistan, and Irag have raised profound questions about military force: When is its use justifiable? For what purpose? Who should make the decision on whether to go to war? Beyond Preemption moves this debate forward with thoughtful discussion of what these guidelines should be and how they apply in the face of today's most pressing geopolitical challenge.



Odyssey to Freedom

by George Bizos
 Random House (Pty) Ltd:
 ISBN 97809584195

Today George Bizos is a legendary name, renowned throughout the legal profession and a figure recognised in townships across South Africa. As an advocate, Bizos is associated with the Treason Trial of the late 1950's; the subsequent Rivonia Trial where his colleague, client and friend Nelson Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment; the trial of Bram Fischer; that of Namibian Toivo ja Toivo and of major human rights trials.

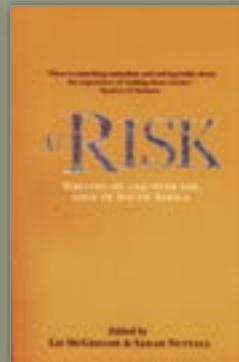
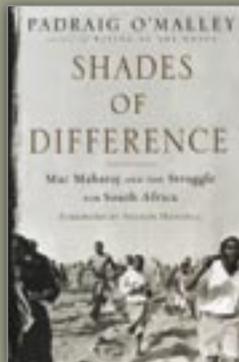
Shades of Difference

by Padraig O'Malley

Penguin Group:

ISBN 9780670085238

The worldwide movement to force South Africa to abandon apartheid and secure the right to vote for black South Africans was one of the great moral crusades of the latter part of the twentieth century. This is the inside story of the war black South Africans waged to destroy the apartheid state, told through the voice of its most unsung hero.



At Risk edited

by Liz McGregor & Sarah Nuttall

Jonathan Ball Publishers:

ISBN 9781868422715

Living with risk is now part of everyday South African life. Violent crime and AIDS pose threats in huge numbers. Shifts in race and class jolt one's sense of identity. Ethically, we are challenged daily by rampant need in the face of plenty. In fact, our society as a whole feels as if it is a giant experiment that could very well go wrong. But it could also succeed.

Visions of Black economic Empowerment

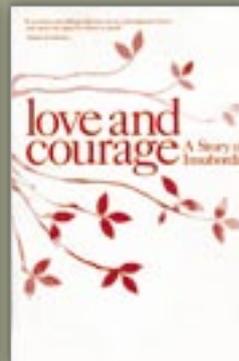
edited by Xolela Mangcu, Gill Marcus, Khehla Shubane & Adrian Hadland

Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd:

ISBN 9781770093584

Visions of Black Economic

Empowerment achieves what the debates on empowerment have thus far failed to do – examine the sociological foundations of BEE. Its appeal goes beyond technical discussions of BEE, examining the political economy of BEE, and the debates about capital concentration in a land still characterised by mass poverty and inequality.



Love and Courage

by Pregs Govender

Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd

ISBN 1770093427

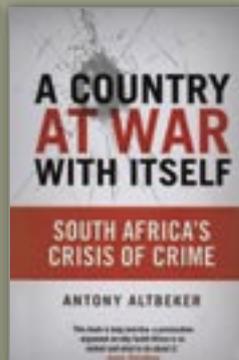
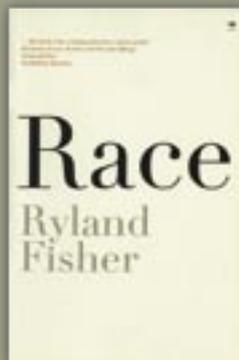
Pregs Govender is widely admired for her feisty courage, radiance of being and integrity of purpose. These qualities have inspired her contribution as an activist and feminist, teacher and trade unionist, and, from 1994 to 2002, as a member of South Africa's democratic parliament. *Love and Courage*, told with spirit and humour, offers us a refreshing vision of true power, both personal and political, based on the love and courage within each of us.

Race by Ryland Fisher

Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd:

ISBN 9781770093737

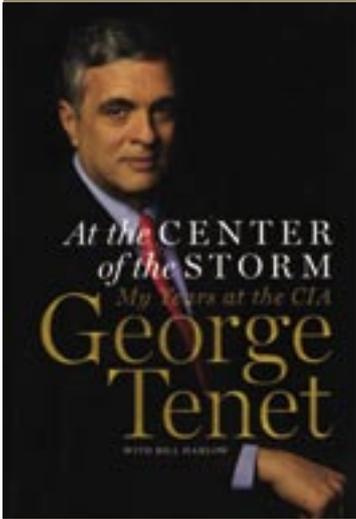
In this timely and highly readable book, Ryland Fisher, former editor of the Cape Times, interviews some South Africans of different hues on the idea of race, what it has meant to them and how they envision a future South Africa, steeped as the country and its people are in highly charged and often unacknowledged world of racial sensitivity.



A Country at War with Itself

by Antony Altbeker ISBN 978868422845

Violence is an everyday happening in South African society. Whether it is hijacking or rape, a robbery, or a violent domestic rage, we have all been affected, directly or indirectly. We are a society in fear, and *A Country at War with itself* explores South Africa's crime problem beyond the statistics, analysing the weakness of the criminal justice system and moving us from 'fighting crime' to 'fighting criminals'.



By Richard Steyn

George Tenet - At the Centre of the Storm: My Years at the CIA

As Director of the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) from 1997 to 2004, George Tenet became unenviably embroiled in the United State's reaction to the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre, and is consequently seen as a central figure of support for George Bush's decision to invade Iraq.

Harper Collins 2007. ISBN 978-06-114778-4. Pocket Books 2007

Hard though he might try, George Tenet cannot avoid going down in history as the man who told George W Bush that it was a "slam dunk" case that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD). For that he has to thank Washington's premier "inside the Beltway" reporter Bob Woodward, who used a hitherto-forgotten phrase of Tenet's to publicise *Plan of Attack*, Woodward's forthcoming book on America's misadventure in Iraq. The book lit a media bonfire and, in Tenet's words, "I was the guy being burned at the stake."

Yet, as Tenet points out in his long and, it must be said, self-serving account of his stewardship of the CIA, Bush and co had decided to go to war in Iraq long before his unguarded (and bitterly regretted) utterance. In his opinion, even if WMDs had been discovered after the invasion, the lack of planning and the inter-departmental infighting in Washington over how to run post-war Iraq would have had the same disastrous outcome.

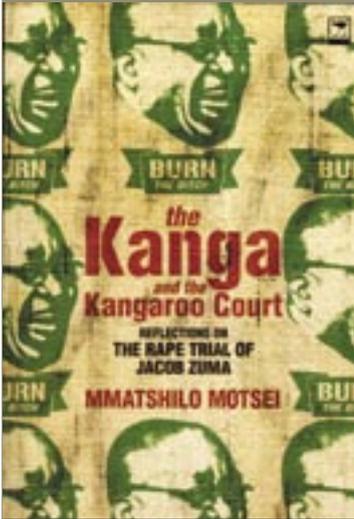
Tenet was initially appointed by Bill Clinton to head the CIA and, by all accounts, did a good job in raising the morale and enlarging the budget of an agency that had lost much of its credibility for failing to anticipate the collapse of the USSR and the fall of the Berlin Wall. To the surprise of many, the incoming president Bush retained Tenet as intelligence chief, the two men hitting it off to such an extent that Tenet managed to survive the fallout from 9/11. This was probably because he, along with Richard Clarke, the national counter-terrorism co-ordinator, had repeatedly but unavailingly warned both the Clinton and Bush administrations of the imminence of an attack by Osama bin Laden. What

is more, no one in the military had a clue about how to deal with al Qaeda or invade Afghanistan.

Tenet's book falls into three distinct parts. The first deals briefly with his experiences in support of Clinton's peace making-efforts in the Middle East, thwarted by the deviousness of Yasser Arafat. The second recounts the build-up to and aftermath of 9/11, the counter-strike in Afghanistan and the "war on terror". The third, and most controversial, covers the war in Iraq. Here, to judge by the book's reception in Washington, the author has managed to outrage supporters and opponents of the war simultaneously. Republican loyalists are angered by his scornful comments about Vice-President Cheney, the Pentagon under Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. Critics of the war charge Tenet with failing to speak out, or to resign, when he came to realise that the agenda in Iraq was being dictated by an ideologically driven group of neo-conservatives.

A notable though not unexpected omission from the book is any serious discussion of the CIA's programme of 'rendition' – Tenet is clearly of the view that the threat to the United States is such as to justify bypassing age-old rules for protecting the innocent while in pursuit of the guilty.

What comes across most strongly in Tenet's book is the alarming dysfunctionality of the current American government, where battles over ideology and turf seem to have overridden the national interest. The weaknesses of the world's only superpower may be a source of satisfaction to her enemies, but should be of great concern to her allies and friends.



By Lerato Tsebe

Mamatshilo Motsei The Kanga and the Kangaroo Court

This title is inspired by the courage of a young woman, known variously as “Khwezi” and “the complainant”, who took a principled decision to lay a charge of rape against Jacob Zuma, a man who was to her a father-figure, a family friend, a comrade, and the Deputy President of South Africa. She took on the fight against considerable odds. Zuma is one of the most popular and powerful political leaders of his time. She could not have known, however, the immense strength she would need to face the prolonged public attacks on her. This title aims to speak truth to power - not just male power, but political power, religious and cultural power, imperial and military power.

Mmatshilo Motsei 2007. ISBN 978-1-77009-255-6. Jacana Books 2007

Mamatshilo Motsei’s book *The Kanga and the Kangaroo court* was released shortly after the acquittal of Jacob Zuma, and allows us to take stock of where we are as a nation, after that trial. It mainly interrogates for us, as South Africans, *botho ba rona* (our humanity). Motsei calls for the trial to be examined not only through its legal meaning, but through its moral implications.

She regards the trial as a modern-day illustration of the apartheid “kangaroo trials” in townships, where people were burnt to death at the slightest suspicion of being a spy. The language used by elderly women in the Zuma camp outside of the courtroom – “burn the bitch” and the like – is, she argues, a manifestation of how the Zuma trial stood at the intersection of political power, cultural power (infused with gendered hierarchy) and sexual power.

The research is extensive, as evidenced in the flood of quotations from feminist and pan-Africanist scholarly literature. Motsei weaves together ideas and arguments by highlighting that the trial was significant to the broader global women’s movement, showing how sexual power is constructed through the vehicles of media, war, politics and religion. A specific vehicle she focuses on is the media, in an attempt to illustrate how the derogatory portrayal of women – and she refers specifically to rap music in the United States – is internalised by both men and women, and therefore plays a factor in gender-relation dynamics.

At times Motsei is overly reliant on superfluous illustrations of this media phenomenon to broaden and not deepen her argument. The book is also at

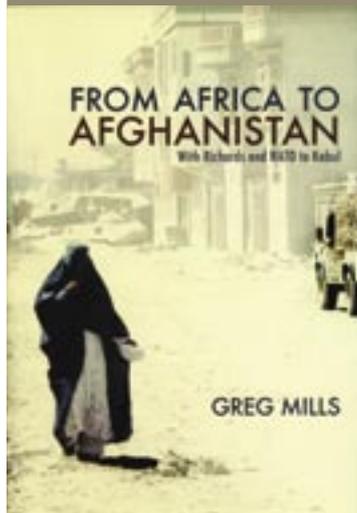
times overly congested with generalisations about feminism, and adds nothing new about what the Zuma trial means to the women’s movement. And it is only briefly, in conclusion, that the author argues that we should try to reconnect with our humanity as a nation, as a way of healing.

Much of the content is quite detached from the central subject, which is the Zuma trial. The book seems to be addressing too many things at once, while continuing to keep itself anchored in the global women’s movement. The author uses the Zuma trial only as a reference point, when she should perhaps have been speaking directly to it and not around it.

She also does not sufficiently explore the residual impact of the Zuma case, whether it be legal, cultural or, especially, political. The critical component of women using culture to oppress other women is only briefly tackled, and no light is shed on what the elderly Zulu women standing at the forefront of Zuma’s defence mean to the women’s movement in South Africa. One waits in vain for a refreshing perspective on the issue.

Motsei frequently visits the common insinuation that “women ask for it” in relation to rape and sexual offences, and her debunking of this argument is far too frequently revisited. The book successfully opens up new avenues of research that need to be explored in order to deepen and broaden the conversation on gender, sexual, political and economic relations both locally and globally.

Specific to the South African context are the intergenerational cultural relations that occurred at the forefront of the Zuma trial.



By Michael J Ward

Greg Mills - From Africa to Afghanistan: With Richards and NATO in Afghanistan

For four months in 2006, Dr Greg Mills led the Prism Cell, a strategic analysis group assigned to the NATO-led International Security and Assistance Force Headquarters (ISAF) in Kabul, Afghanistan. The group's role was to study the insurgency and advise General David Richards on how to merge the military effort into the complex international community collaboration to build a stable Afghanistan. Mills's latest book neatly portrays this most complex and unprecedented challenge and stimulates thought on how, at last, to succeed where all others have previously failed.

ISBN 1-86814-450-X (10 digit ISBN).

978-1-86814-450-1 (13 digit ISBN) WITS University Press Books 2007.

From *Africa to Afghanistan* is a superb review of the seeds of the conflict and the multiple intractable and seemingly insurmountable obstacles that yet face the stakeholders.

Coming from a fresh perspective of being neither diplomat, military commander, aid worker, bookish academic, nor someone who has even lived for any length of time in Afghanistan, Mills instead brings a wealth of parallel experience and argues forcefully that success can be achieved.

If one lesson is worth repeating frequently, it's that a stable Afghanistan cannot be built by military means alone. Students of conflict, nation-building and development will learn new best practices in terms of how multinational, interagency, diplomatic, military and developmental partners must collaborate in a more novel manner than ever before to achieve complex and ambitious goals. The stakes are high. The credibility of all concerned is at enormous risk.

Mills does not pretend that it will be easy to accomplish all that he recommends. Nevertheless, incrementally pursuing any of the many recommendations would monumentally improve conditions and reinforce momentum toward an eventual solution. Expectations must first be tempered. Our Western cultural time clock inappropriately envisions much faster progress than is achievable. Our goals are impatiently measured in months and short years, when in fact we should be measuring irrevocable momentum in terms of generations.

Fuelled by the media and various opponents, the Taliban included, numerous perceptions combine to erode confidence in the mission. The messaging is overtly

pessimistic. Central government is corrupt and failing. Western non-Muslim forces are occupying Afghanistan. Taliban strength is increasing while a divided NATO's strength is decreasing. The security situation is worsening. Illicit opium production is growing, undermining a fragile society. Development assistance is imperialistic and falling far short of the need.

To the committed participant, however, the reality is different and much more complex. Elections have been enthusiastically supported. Human rights are improving. Afghan National Security Forces are increasingly numerous and effective. Militias have been disarmed and demobilised, if not fully rehabilitated. Access to education is widespread and expanding. The international community and London Compact have assured unprecedented unity of effort and financial support. Credible sources report that 85% of the population feels safe in the evolving security environment, since the conflict is limited to only five of the 34 provinces.

Mills's assessment is that the glass is half full, "and getting fuller". However, he cautions that this impressive enterprise could nevertheless fail.

Afghanistan is unique in many respects. The insurgency in the south and east could defeat the legitimate government of Afghanistan. Mills' recommended military strategy includes building and sustaining the supporting coalition of the willing, and avoiding conflating Afghanistan and Iraq, where the conflict is entirely different in its makeup. His Ten Counter-Insurgency Commandments provide a useful checklist. The book is extremely timely. Its global perspective provides a neat dissection of the issues facing Afghanistan and the international community.