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#164

6 August 1995

MAIL & GUARDIAN

July 28 to August 3 1995

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission: South Africa can learn important lessons

Firing up the truth machine

Eddie Koch and Gaye Davis

WHEN the Mothers of Plaza De Mayo gather at 3pm every Thursday to bang pots in the centre of Buenos Aires, they highlight a paradox that marks the 15 truth commissions that have operated around the world since 1974. Each commission was driven by the need for collective healing in a country riven by past atrocities. But many left behind a class of victims who continue to live in the shadow of poverty and unsolved murders.

Instead of applying the balm of truth — a Russian saying says injustice is to have an eye gouged out, to look away is to lose both — many commissions have rather served the narrow interests of ruling parties, who use evidence of past atrocities to discredit political rivals. It is a prospect we may face in South Africa.

Strategic compromises during negotiations that led to last year's freedom elections also meant amnesty being guaranteed to the perpetrators of apartheid crimes. They will have to confess if they want pardon, but once amnesty is granted, there will be no further sanction: no trials or civil claims, nor will they lose their jobs.

Many have criticised the apparent special treatment this affords those responsible for past atrocities. "What about the victims?" they ask.

An answer is slowly emerging as we move towards the truth commission's establishment — and it is one that has won the admiration of those involved in the truth machines that have run in Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America over the past two decades.

It is that South Africa's truth commission will afford meaningful relief to victims and survivors because, for the first time in recent history, ordinary men and women have the power to make the apparatus work to their advantage.

"Experiences in Argentina (where the mothers protest every week because they still do not know what happened to their children who disappeared under military rule), Chile and El Salvador show that the restorative and healing powers of truth processes can be a myth," says Paul van Zyl of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg.

"In most other countries, victims' groups emerged as a result of weaknesses in their truth commissions. The survivors are often disempowered and frustrated after being put through a legalistic process by hack-handed lawyers that only reinvokes the pain.

"Experts from these countries who visit here are astounded by a major difference. In South Africa, victims' groups were set up before the truth commission and have the opportunity to influence the way it works."

Around the country, a network of survivors' groups has already begun to form, preparing those who want to tell their stories before the commission for what to expect and ensuring that their needs and interests are promoted. It is a healing process in itself.

Organisations involved include the Trauma Centre for Victims of Violence, in Cape Town, with its counselling services for victims; the Johannesburg-based Khulumani Support Group, set up to encourage survivors to make effective use of the commission; the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, which runs workshops to inform people of the impact the commission may have on their lives; the Association of Victims of Unsolved Apartheid Atrocities, which is demanding legal action against the people who murdered activists like Griffiths Mxenge and Matthew Goniwe in the 1980s; and Justice in Transition, which has run seminars and distributed pamphlets telling people how to use the commission.

Scores of paralegal personnel and mental-health professionals are being mobilised to brief victims before they go before the commission and, more importantly, says Van Zyl, to debrief them afterwards so they don't suffer the anxiety and sense of worthlessness victims in other countries have experienced after going through the truth mill.

A coalition of about 30 human rights groups is building a computerised database recording thousands of incidents and naming names that survivors will have access to and that can be used to cross-check amnesty applicants' testimony, to ensure they reveal all.

These organisations have already shown a robustness, a legacy of their opposition to apartheid, that sees them exercise real power over the truth process. The political deal struck in cabinet that allowed for amnesty hearings to be in secret was returned after human rights organisations threatened to withhold their crucial co-operation if it went ahead.

"The truth commission could be a psychologically healing process by aiding a much-needed truth recovery, giving survivors the space to recount past abuses and by providing some form of reparation," says Brandon Hamber, a researcher at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

"Nevertheless, lessons — particularly from Latin America — teach us that establishing a truth commission is not sufficient in itself to meet these psychological needs. The commission does run the danger of being overly involved in legal and political issues at the expense of key psychological aspects of reconciliation."

But he notes the country has a "remarkably strong" network of human rights organisations pushing the Justice Ministry to back "a range of

non-government psychological structures and strategies that will run parallel to the commission". Hamber says these should provide:

- Training for a network of mental-health professionals to offer counselling backing up the therapeutic effects that victims, if properly supported, may get from having their stories heard;
- Training for fieldworkers, investigators and other commission staffers so that they

have a situation in some parts of the country where victims of torture live around the corner from a police station where the torturer is now the commanding officer," says Hofmeyr.

He says most ANC members — bar those whose own human rights violations or collaboration with the security forces may be uncovered — want the commission to be the instrument that will redress the imbalances that arose from the pre-election settlement.

refer people to professional help where needed;

● Pre-testimony briefing and debriefing so victims feel confident giving evidence and can better deal with revisiting fraught emotional terrain.

ANC MP Willie Hofmeyr, a member of the justice committee in the National Assembly, acknowledges the commission is the product of a strategic compromise during the negotiations that led to last year's freedom elections.

"As a result, the commission generally extinguishes the right of victims to make civil claims against members of the security forces who apply for amnesty. The negotiated agreement also ensured that all civil servants would keep their jobs for five years — so we

It is very important that there should now be a focus on the victims and that perpetrators will not get off scot-free, that at least they are named and they say what they did

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"Another aspect is the possibility of reconciling perpetrators and victims face-to-face. There are a significant number of people deeply and genuinely sorry, who would welcome the opportunity provided by the commission to come to terms with their own consciences."

agents movement will play a key role in ensuring this.

"It is very important that there should now be a focus on the victims — that they have an opportunity to say what happened to them and that there be government recognition of this, after all the denial of the past — and that there be the understanding that perpetrators will not get off

Alex Boraine of Justice in Transition says this effect was apparent, even before the truth commission was legislated into existence. Security force operatives, fearing colleagues coming forward would identify them, have already testified before the Goldstone Commission or gone to the media in the hope of bolstering their appeals for pardon.

Although the amnesty provisions have been criticised, it is important to remember they do involve a measure of punishment. The security forces wanted a blanket amnesty, but our commission is different to most others in that it demands disclosure on an individual basis.

"In acknowledging that they were part of an inhumane act, these people may well experience a measure of healing themselves."

A comparative survey of the world's 15 truth commissions, published by the American *Human Rights Quarterly* last year, says most were fatally flawed by the lack of any popular discussion about their scope and methods of operation. South Africa offers the "first example of a process officially opened to encourage public debate and input on the terms of a truth commission", it says.

NGOs' involvement from the start has helped mould the process, offering the best chance for the truth commission to achieve its aims — so that the mothers of our own "disappeared" don't have to bang pots.

How the commission will work

Gaye Davis

ONE certainty about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: its potential for sowing division equals the promise it holds for healing. Another is that it will develop its own dynamic, with unpredictable results.

The Promotion of National Reconciliation and Unity Act provides the framework which must still be fleshed with detail. What is clear so far is that whether the commission becomes an instrument of reconciliation or reopens wounds barely healed will depend on how the process is managed.

This is one reason for emerging consensus that, whatever the cost in terms of delay, potential commissioners should undergo public interviews. The decision lies with President Nelson Mandela, but the feeling is that locking the public out of the process will damage the commission's legitimacy.

Another debate is whether the commission should operate as a single body roving the country, or a centrally co-ordinated operation with regional bases. Again, there is growing agreement the latter option will be the best.

NGOs will be in place to monitor and help

drive the process and offer support to victims. Investigative teams will operate on known terrain and there will be access to regional databases," says Paul van Zyl, a researcher at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR).

A more complex issue is reparations. "Most people who have worked on the process are convinced it would be a disaster if reparations are driven by monetary compensation," says ANC MP Willie Hofmeyr, a member of the National Assembly's justice committee.

"We just don't have the money. Also, the truth commission will focus only on gross human rights violations. We could face a dangerous backlash in communities where activists and their families are compensated and nothing is done for ordinary people who also suffered under apartheid."

Hofmeyr sees people's dignity being restored by official recognition of what they went through and by erecting monuments or re-naming schools and hospitals after people and incidents. He sees material compensation limited to pensions, bursaries and similar salves.

"People want different things," says Brandon Hamber, a CSVR researcher in psychological services. "Some want a proper funeral. Others

want the perpetrator brought to book. What is important is creating an environment where people can express their anger over perpetrators getting amnesty."

The commission will work through three committees and can set up sub-committees in various regions. Hearings will be open, but commissioners can decide to bar certain details being published, in the interests of justice.

The Committee on Human Rights Violations will hear victims' stories of injuries suffered. It must establish whether violations were planned, by whom and for what reason.

Chaired by a judge, the Committee on Amnesty will consider politically motivated acts committed between March 1 1960 and December 5 1993. Amnesty will bring protection from civil or criminal action and will only be granted for acts admitted to, details of which will be published. Victims will attend hearings and the Committee on Reparation and Rehabilitation must decide how victims should be compensated.

The commission will sit for 18 months, though Mandela can extend this by six months. He must receive its final report within three months of the commission completing its work — after which it will be made known to the nation.

S. Africa's Front For Apartheid

Think tank said to be part of ruse to prolong power

This article was reported by Delo Olojede in South Africa and Tim Phelps in Washington, and was written by Olojede.

Johannesburg, South Africa — A respectable Washington foundation, which drew into its web prominent Republican and conservative figures like Sen. Jesse Helms and other members of Congress, was actually a front organization bankrolled by South Africa's last white rulers to prolong apartheid, a Newsday investigation has shown.

The International Freedom Foundation, founded in 1986 seemingly as a conservative think tank, was in fact part of an elaborate intelligence gathering operation, and was designed to be an instrument for "political warfare" against apartheid's foes, according to former senior South African spy Craig Williamson. The South Africans spent up to \$1.5 million a year through 1992 to underwrite "Operation Babushka," as the IFF project was known.

The current South African National Defence Force officially confirmed that the IFF was its dummy operation.

"The International Freedom Foundation was a former SA Defence Force project," Army Col. John Rolt, a military spokesman, said in a terse response to an inquiry. A member of the IFF's international board of directors also conceded Friday that at least half of the foundation's funds came from projects undertaken on behalf of South Africa's military intelligence, although he refused to say what those projects were except that many of them were directed against Nelson Mandela's African National Congress.

A three-month Newsday investigation determined that one of the project's broad objectives was to try to reverse the apartheid regime's pariah status in western political circles. More specifically, the IFF sought to portray the ANC as a tool of Soviet communism, thus undercutting the movement's growing international acceptance as the government-in-waiting of a future multiracial South Africa.

"We decided that, the only level we were going to be accepted was when it came to the Soviets and their surrogates, so our strategy was to paint the ANC as communist surrogates," said Williamson, formerly a senior operative in South Africa's military intelligence, who helped direct Babushka. "The more we could present ourselves as anti-communists, the more people looked at us with respect. People you could hardly believe cooperated with us politically when it came to the Soviets."

The South Africans found willing, though possibly unwitting, allies in influential Republican politicians, conservative intellectuals and activists. Sen. Jesse Helms, now chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, served as chairman of the editorial advisory board for the foundation's publications. Through a spokesman, Helms said that he did not know anything about the foundation.

"Helms has never heard of the International Freedom Foundation, was not chairman of their advisory board and never authorized his name to be used by IFF in any way shape or form. We never had any relationship with them," Marc Thiessen, a Helms spokesman, said.

Rep. Dan Burton, who was the ranking Republican on the House subcommittee on Africa, and Rep. Robert Dornan were active in IFF projects, frequently serving on its delegations to international forums. Alan Keyes, currently a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, also served as adviser. (He did not return a call seeking comment.) The Washington lobbyist and former movie producer Jack Abramoff, and rising conservative stars like Duncan Sellars, helped run the foundation.

All those contacted denied knowing

that it was controlled and funded by the South African regime.

Although there are strong indications that U.S. laws may have been broken — some IFF officials have admitted in interviews that they knew that South African military intelligence money helped pay for the foundation's activities in Washington — there is no clear evidence that the politicians associated with IFF either took campaign contributions or otherwise directly benefited financially from the foundation.

Under U.S. law, anyone who represents a foreign government, or acts under its orders, direction or control, has to register with the Justice Department as a foreign agent. Asked if a "think tank" set up and supported by a foreign government has to register, a Justice official said, "If the foreign [government] has some say in what they are doing — and, obviously, if they are funding it they probably do — then they probably do have to register." Violation of the law carries a fine up to \$10,000 and a prison term up to five years.

Several key figures involved in the IFF and contacted by Newsday denied any knowledge that the foundation was a front for the political agenda of a foreign government.

Duncan Sellars, now a Virginia businessman, said, "This is nothing I ever knew about. It's something that I would have resigned over or closed the foundation over. I would have put a stop to it."

"The Congressman didn't know anything about it," said a spokesman for Dornan, Paul Morrell. "This is all news to him if it is true." Morrell described Dornan's impression of the IFF as simply 'pro-freedom, pro-democracy, pro-Reagan.'

Phillip Crane, another U.S. representative listed as an IFF editorial adviser, joined the board in 1987 at the request of Abramoff, said an aide, and by 1990 had quit. "He never attended a board meeting that he can recall," said the aide, Bob Foster. "He had no idea that any such situation [intelligence connections] existed."

Williamson said that the operation was deliberately constructed so that many of the people would not know they were involved with a foreign government. "That was the beauty of the whole thing — guys pushing what they believed," he said. Helms, for example, voted against virtually every punitive measure ever contemplated against South Africa's white minority government, however mild. And Burton was nearly hysterical in arguing against sanctions that a large bipartisan majority passed in 1986 over President Ronald Reagan's veto, at one point warning that "there will be blood running in the streets" as a result.

But in some cases, such as Abramoff's, the relationship with the South African security apparatus was more than merely coincidental, according to Williamson and others. A former chief of intelligence, now retired, said emphatically that the South African military helped finance Abramoff's 1988 movie "Red Scorpion." The movie was a sympathetic portrayal of an anti-communist African guerrilla commander loosely based on Jonas Savimbi, the Angolan rebel leader allied to both Washington and Pretoria. Williamson also said the production of "Red Scorpion" was "funded by our guys," who in addition provided military trucks and equipment — as well as extras.

Abramson reacted with anger when told of the allegations Friday, saying his movie was funded by private investors and had nothing to do with the South African government. "This is outrageous," he said.

Details of South Africa's intelligence operations in the last years of apartheid have begun to rapidly emerge with the imminent establishment of a Truth Commission by the Mandela government. The commission will elicit confessions of "dirty tricks" by apartheid's foot soldiers and their commanders, in exchange for immunity from prosecution. Williamson, for instance, recently revealed that he was involved in the assassination of Ruth First, wife of the ANC and South African Communist Party leader Joe Slovo, and other anti-apartheid activists.

In South African government thinking, the IFF represented a far more subtle approach to defeating the anti-apartheid movement. Officials said the plan was to get away from the traditional allies of Pretoria, the fringe right in the United States and Europe, "some of whom were to the right of Ghengis Khan," said one senior intelligence official. Instead, they settled for a front staffed with mainstream conservatives

who did not necessarily know who was pulling the strings.

"They ran their own organization, but we steered them, that was the point," Williamson said.

"They were very good, those guys, eh?" said Vic McPheerson, a police colonel who ran security branch operations and participated in the 1982 bombing of the ANC office in London. "They were not just good in intelligence, but in political warfare."

Starting in 1986, when Reagan failed to override comprehensive U.S. economic sanctions, the South African government began casting about for ways to survive in an international environment more hostile to apartheid than ever. A very senior official in South African military intelligence, to whom IFF handlers reported at the time, said the operation cost his unit between \$1 million and \$1.5 million a year. The retired general said the funds represented almost all of the IFF's annual operating budget, although the foundation gained such legitimacy that it began to attract funding from individuals and groups in the United States.

On at least one occasion, the IFF had trouble accounting for its money. It was unable to comply in 1989 with a New York State requirement that it provide an accountant's opinion confirming that its financial statements "present fairly the financial position of the organization." It was eventually barred, in January, 1991, from soliciting funds from New York. According to financial records provided by Jeff Pandin, the foundation's last executive director in Washington, IFF revenue in 1992 dropped by half of the preceding year's, to \$1.6 million. It just so happened that President Frederik W. de Klerk ended secret South African funding for the foundation in 1992, in response to pressure from Mandela to demonstrate that he was not complicit in "Third Force" activities.

Pandin expressed shock that much of the organization's money had been coming from clandestine South African sources. "I worked for the IFF from Day One to Day End," he said. "This is complete news to me." He said he once had met Williamson when he was in Mozambique, but was unaware of any official links.

On the surface, the IFF's headquarters was in northeast Washington, D.C., at 200 G Street, next door to the Free Congress Foundation, another conservative institution. From that base, it launched campaigns against communist sympathizers and perceived enemies of the free market. It broadly supported Reaganism, and its principal officers ran with the Ollie North crowd. But it always paid special attention to the ANC. When Mandela made his first visit to the United States in 1990, following his release from prison, the IFF placed advertisements in local papers

designed to dampen public enthusiasm for Mandela. One ad in the Miami Herald portrayed Mandela as an ally and defender of Cuba's Fidel Castro. The city's large Cuban community was so agitated that a ceremony to present Mandela with keys to the city was scrapped.

The IFF published several journals and bulletins, in Washington and in its offices in Europe and Johannesburg. One of its contributors was Jay Parker, an African-American who was a paid public relations agent of successive apartheid regimes throughout the 1970s and 1980s. People like Henry Kissinger were invited to IFF seminars to deliver keynote speeches. The foundation brought together the world's top intelligence experts at a 1991 conference in Potsdam, Germany, to mull over the changing uses of intelligence in the post-Cold War world. Among those in attendance was former CIA director William Colby and a retired senior KGB general, Oleg Kalugin. The IFF also waged a major but not surprisingly futile campaign for U.S. retention of the Panama Canal.

But its main purpose was always to serve the ultimate goals of the South African government, according to those who helped nudge it in that direction. The former senior South African military intelligence official said he traveled to the United States and Canada in 1988 as a guest of the IFF. But the real reason for his trip, he said, was to try to strengthen South African intelligence operations on the ground, at diplomatic posts and the North American offices of Satour, the country's tourism promotion agency.

"I was surprised at the kind of access the IFF operation provided us," said Wim Booyse, who went by the title of Senior Research Fellow at the Johannesburg office of the IFF. Booyse said when he visited Washington in 1987 to attend IFF-sponsored seminars, part of the propaganda training he and other visitors received came from a disinformation specialist at the United States Information Service, an official he identified as Todd Leventhal. Leventhal said in response that he remembered meeting with Booyse and possibly a few other IFF people, but gave no formal talk and, at any rate, talked to them only about countering disinformation, not spreading it.

The IFF maintained a particular interest in Africa, repeatedly sending delegations to countries like Mozambique and Angola, battlegrounds of the Cold War and targets of South Africa's numerous military incursions against ANC guerrillas. Russel Crystal, who ran the IFF's Johannesburg office, said that South Africa's foreign ministry helped pay for an IFF observer mission to the Namibian elections in 1989. The delegation was led by Burton.

Through a spokesman, Burton denied any improprieties. "We were certainly involved with the Freedom Foundation in that we received material from them and we knew the people over there," said Gil Kapen, a Burton assistant. "We never received money from them. We participated in forums they sponsored. They were anti-communist and we were happy to work with them to that extent."

var from being a mere branch of the IFF, Crystal's Johannesburg office was in fact the nerve center of IFF operations worldwide. According to Martin Yuill, who served as administrator of the "branch," he began to realize that perhaps Johannesburg was not just a branch office after all, since it was always deciding how much money the other offices, including the Washington headquarters, should have. "I guess one would have to conclude that that was the case," he said.

Although he insisted that the IFF was no clandestine operation, Crystal also said the Johannesburg office was vital to the foundation. He said Friday in an interview that "jobs" for South Africa's military intelligence provided at least half of total IFF revenue, and that he sometimes asked military intelligence to send the fees from these "jobs" directly to the Washington office of the IFF.

"The military intelligence, there were certain things they wanted done — tackling the ANC as a terrorist-communist organization," Crystal said. "The projects we did for them, they paid for." He added that it was not impossible that South Africa accounted for far more than his estimated 50 percent of IFF revenues.

As an example of this "tackling," Crystal cited the targeting of Oliver Tambo, whenever the late exiled leader of the ANC traveled around the world. Once, when Tambo visited with George Schultz, then secretary of state, the IFF arranged for demonstrators to drape tires around their necks to protest the "necklace" killings of suspected government informers in black townships in South Africa.

"The advantage of the IFF was that it pilloried the ANC," said Williamson. "The sort of general western view of the ANC up until 1990 was a box of matches [violence] and Soviet-supporting — slavishly was the word we latched on. That was backed up with writings, intellectual inputs. It was a matter of undercutting ANC credibility."

By 1993, the IFF effectively shut down after de Klerk pulled the plug on many politically motivated clandestine operations. But the IFF did not go down before one final parting shot.

In January that year, the foundation financed a one-man investigation into alleged human rights abuses during the 1980's at ANC guerrilla camps in Angola. Bob Douglas, a South African lawyer, concluded there was evidence of torture and other abuses, forcing the ANC to acknowledge some abuses. Douglas said Friday he did not believe that the IFF worked for military intelligence. "I did a professional job for which I charged professional fees," he said crossly. "I did my job of work, I finished my work, and had nothing to do with it since then."

Medical association finally says it is sorry

Without going into any details, Masa has apologised for its past errors, reports **Pat Sidley**

THE Medical Association of South Africa (Masa) last week apologised, seemingly out of the blue, for its attitude during the apartheid years.

The apology has been a long time coming, and it did not directly address the issues for which the organisation has become infamous, being aimed rather at "persons within and outside the medical profession who might, in the past, have been hurt or offended by any acts of omission or commission on Masa's part".

Masa stated that it had always been open to members of all races but confessed: "... the Association remained silent on race-based public policies affecting the medical profession and the community.

The apology came during a speech made by Masa chairman Dr Bernard Mandell at a banquet last Thursday night, during the organisation's annual conference — held behind closed doors as usual. The apology was adopted unanimously as a resolution the next morning.

Rather than rake up the past, Masa tried, by lightly brushing over the territory, to let the skeletons in its cupboard rest in peace.

No mention was made of its disgraceful behaviour in the aftermath of the death of Steve Biko, nor of its failure to defend any of the doctors who were subjected to state harassment as a result of their work with tortured detainees.

Masa's problematic history includes its refusal to do anything about the banning, in 1967, of Cape Town medical academic, Dr Raymond Hoffenberg — who was later knighted for his distinguished work in the UK, where he was forced to flee, unable to work in South Africa.

It was the Biko affair, more than any other event, which focused the international spotlight on South



Steve Biko: Masa's apology made no mention of its disgraceful behaviour after his death

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

Africa's doctors and their ethical behaviour in an apartheid environment. Although the event was primarily a failure of the justice system, part of the focus fell on the three district surgeons who had attended to the dying Biko and to the statutory disciplinary mechanisms of the South African Medical and Dental Council, as well as the voluntary association, Masa, to which one of the three, Dr Benjamin Tucker, belonged.

Tucker was exonerated by the council, and Masa refused to condemn his behaviour, cancel his membership or dissociate itself from the council's findings, resulting in the resignation of several prominent members and precipitating the formation of

the rival, more politically attuned, National Medical and Dental Association (Namda). The Biko affair resulted in Masa having to resign its membership of the World Medical Association.

In the same year, with the death in detention of activist and doctor Neil Aggett, the focus of attention was again Masa's attitude towards political issues.

One of its members, however, continued to draw attention to the issues which plagued the health of the nation, but which Masa as an organisation failed to notice. The late pathologist, Dr Jonathan Gluckman, who remained a Masa office-bearer, but whose work on behalf of dead detainees' families brought him into contact with the

issues of the day, pointed in a speech to the wider-ranging problems brought by segregation of health facilities and fragmentation of hospitals.

In 1983, with criticism mounting, a report, commissioned by Masa, on the medical care of prisoners and detainees, was adopted. It finally drew attention to the serious problems surrounding detainees and prisoners, and made recommendations on how to deal with the issues.

However, in 1985, Dr Wendy Orr, then a young district surgeon in Port Elizabeth, brought an interdict against prison authorities to stop them assaulting "her patients". She used the term deliberately to focus attention on the fact that they were not merely "detainees" or "prisoners", but patients who required medical attention. The case won her instant infamy within government circles and she was effectively stopped from doing her clinical work as a district surgeon.

During the State of Emergency, however, Masa again blotted its copy-book by failing to take up the case of Dr Paul Davis, who had refused to hand details to police of young detainees he had visited and of whom 83 percent had been tortured.

In the court case which followed, the Supreme Court upheld the view that patient confidentiality did not apply under those circumstances and Davis was required to hand the documents over. As it happened, they had mysteriously evaporated and the case was closed — but not before Masa had issued a statement referring to a police raid on Alexandra Clinic and which again stated that, while patient confidentiality was a high priority, the law compelled doctors to hand records to a higher authority.

Davis had, at the time, drawn up, with colleagues, a protocol designed to help district surgeons examining detainees to detect and deal with signs of torture or other abuse. It was submitted to the *South African Medical Journal* for publication but, along with several other letters dealing with the issues of the day, had its publication blocked.

Perhaps the most stunning indictment of the country's doctors during those years, was the fact, uncovered by the previous Minister of Health, Dr Rina Venter, who wanted to desegregate hospitals, that there was no law on the statute books which had forced the segregation of hospitals *per se*. In the end, hospitals had been segregated by the willingness of doctors and other health professionals to comply with an insane and inhuman policy — and never to raise a murmur of protest.

By Ian MacKenzie

1995

JOHANNESBURG, July 17 (Reuter) - Life-long anti-apartheid fighter Archbishop Trevor Huddleston returned to South Africa on Monday, 39 years after he was forced out of the country for his battle for racial equality.

"It's wonderful to be home...this is not a trip, I'm home, this is my home. I am a South African citizen," the 82-year-old Anglican prelate told a news conference at Johannesburg airport on his arrival from Britain.

Taken from the plane in a wheelchair, the white-haired priest was met by Deputy President Thabo Mbeki and Walter Sisulu, another anti-apartheid veteran who retired as deputy president of the African National Congress (ANC) last December.

"As you see, Trevor Huddleston has come home," Mbeki said.

"I think for all of us it's a very special day, a very special day because...these (Huddleston and Sisulu) are veterans of our struggle.

"They are the ones who defined 40 years ago where the struggle ought to be going...it is very inspiring for us to have them with us," Mbeki said.

Educated at Oxford University, British-born Huddleston entered the Church of England as a deacon in 1936 and in November 1943 was appointed priest in charge of Anglican missions in Johannesburg's Orlando and Sophiatown black and mixed-race areas.

He ran foul of the National Party (NP) government, which took power in 1948 and imposed apartheid on the country until another NP leader, F.W. de Klerk, released Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990 and announced an end to a system that was internationally abhorred.

Before he left South Africa in 1956, Huddleston - known to black Africans as "the dauntless one" - challenged the government from the pulpit, in the law courts and through the press.

"Comfort and security are the rewards of whiteness, hunger and insecurity are the curse of blackness," he said in one sermon.

He returned to work in Africa twice over the years. From 1960 to 1968 he was Bishop of Masasi, an impoverished bush diocese in what is now Tanzania, and from 1978 to 1982 he was Bishop of Mauritius and Archbishop of the Indian Ocean, where, he joked, most of his congregation were fish.

Huddleston said he would live at an Anglican retirement home north of Johannesburg, but asked if he had retired, he replied: "No, that is one of the many advantages of being part of the church."

A long-time anti-nuclear campaigner, he said his interests now lay in ecumenicism and the need for all the great religions of the world to fight the curse of war.

He also condemned fundamentalists of any religion.

"Fundamentalists say we know what God wants. That's blasphemy, only God knows what he wants...fundamentalism is a curse and we must not let ourselves fall for it," he said.

Trevor Huddleston wishes all his friends to know that he is returning to South Africa permanently on July 16th.

He is going to live at St. Michael's Retirement Village, Cornelius Street, Weltevreden Park, Johannesburg. It is an Anglican retirement village next to St. Michael's Anglican Church, north west of Johannesburg, about twice as far as Sophiatown was from the city centre. The village was completed and opened in May this year. It is made up of small houses, packed closely, with small attractive gardens. There is also a centre where Trevor will have a large room with a French window, making it possible to sit outside. Main meals are served in a large attractive modern dining-room, and there is a large lounge. Visitors are welcome (though there is no overnight accommodation). There is a matron and team of nurses on call, and a section of the centre is available should special care become necessary.

c/o St. Michael's Care Centre,
Private Bag X4,
Weltevreden Park,
1715,
South Africa.

His telephone number will be:

27-11-475-3935 (private line)

and general fax number: 27-11-475-3799

Trevor will be delighted to hear from you, or to see you if ever you visit South Africa. However, I know you will understand and forgive him for not being able to reply to letters; he is unable to hold a pen easily, and finds writing physically painful.

the namibian

Vol.3 No.100

N\$1.50 (GST Inc.) Thursday June 1 1995

Top award for Gwen

THE EDITOR of The Namibian, Gwen Lister, has been awarded a Nieman Fellowship to Harvard University for 1995/96.

She is the first Namibian, and one of 12 international journalists who have received the prestigious award this year.

Established in 1938 through a bequest of Agnes Wahl Nieman in memory of her husband Lucius, founder and publisher of the Milwaukee Journal, the Nieman Fellowships are the oldest mid-career fellowships for journalists in the world. They are awarded to working journalists of particular accomplishment for an academic year of study in any part of the University. The first international fellows in the programme were members of the Class of 1952. Since that time, 272 journalists from more than 60 countries

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Gwen Lister

Prestigious award for Gwen

FROM PAGE 1

have studied at Harvard as Nieman Fellows.

Lister plans to focus her studies on democracy, human rights and related issues such as press freedom, freedom of speech and the me-

dia. She also intends to pursue courses in political philosophy, ethics and writing.

Lister's husband, Mark Verbaan, and children, Shane, 14, and Liberty, 6, will accompany her.

The award comes at a

time when The Namibian celebrates its 10th anniversary in August. Lister will be away from September 1995 to June 1996.

From The Namibian Friday July 7

Political Perspective by Gwen Lister

WHEN are Namibians going to activate themselves? This applies to a number of organisations in this country who were gung-ho when it came to fighting apartheid, but who seem to have been totally neutralised by independence. This post-apartheid paralysis is also a sad reflection of the state of grassroots and community-based organisations in general.

THERE are exceptions of course, but few of them. Generally speaking, Namibians take what is dished out to them without question and unless they organise themselves, they are going to be the losers in the long run.

One can take almost any example. The Council of Churches for example, were vocal and active in the pre-independence period. Not so today. One is forced to ask whether all injustices came to an end on March 21 1990 and why the churches are not speaking out on issues of national concern? It's been a long time coming but just yesterday the Council of Churches broke its silence and issued a statement on the taxi strike. It's about time too! Hopefully this means they too have realised that they carry responsibility for the general state of apathy on the part of most Namibians to things which affect them directly. One of the areas in which they could be active is in bringing about Aids awareness, and encouraging Namibians to cease those attitudes which tend to completely alienate an HIV/Aids sufferer, to the extent that we are lying about ourselves by virtually pretending it doesn't exist because no one can come forward in this hostile climate to admit they have it.



Take even the examples of this newspaper hammering away at corruption, writing editorials about the boreholes, requesting that certain people be made to account for their wrongs, particularly those who have abused positions of responsibility and funds earmarked for the needy. What is the reaction of the public in general? Negligible! Either they don't think this is an issue or they accept that corruption must become a way of life. No one spoke out on this matter, not the unions or the churches or anyone else for that matter. So much can be achieved when there is unity. The pre-independence struggle proved this. But it appears that today there is less unity than ever before, and shockingly, perhaps, people are actually bereft without the struggle against apartheid and seem unable to take any action in post-independence Namibia.

There are many issues which are being neglected because of this slump in which Namibians have found themselves. Whether its Government spending, corruption,

the price of living - no one speaks out.

Food prices rise constantly - no one queries the increases, no one questions the price hikes foisted on them by the private sector unless they do so on an individual basis, at most, by calling the chat shows on NBC.

Another example is the taxi strike. Leave aside the rights or wrongs of the increase, when thousands of commuters were left stranded without transport, why didn't some organisation take it upon itself to ask everyone with a vehicle to lend a hand in the circumstances? Is there no compassion for the many working mothers with children who had to footslog from town to Katutura? Perhaps this fare increase is justifiable, but there will come a time when the demands are unreasonable and consumers should be in a position to make alternative arrangements. To organise themselves in such a way that they in turn can put an ultimatum to those operating public transport - force them to decrease their prices or consumers threaten to boycott buses and/or taxis, for example.

Newspapers speak out on matters which they feel affect Namibians at large or certain sections, but they are isolated most of the time. There is no chorus of voices giving impetus to their appeals or speaking out on other issues which the media have not yet picked up on.

I am not calling for anarchy and for people to oppose for the sake of opposition. But for Namibians to become more aware of their rights, and for those organisations which represent them, to take the lead.

One hears mainly of a couple of primarily wildcat strikes by some unions, mostly demanding better wages. But those same unions don't activate people on basic issues, such as food price hikes.

Organisations such as the CCN and other grassroots organisations need to seriously review their activities and ask themselves whether in fact they are performing any public service at all.

There are many areas for mobilisation and action on the part of Namibians. What use is this democracy if they fail to make use of opportunities to unite and exercise their rights? - The Namibian

African women get ready for Beijing

By Sylviane Diouf-Kamara

African women will go to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing this September demanding a greater political role and affirmative action aimed at enabling them to fully contribute to peace and development in Africa.

Their position was spelt out at an African Region preparatory committee meeting held in Dakar attended by 5,000 women from around the continent. Despite tensions between governments and NGOs, as well as UN agencies,

Crucial areas covered by the platform include property rights, land rights, inheritance and asset holdings. These concerns, as well as all those related to family and socialization, were the most contentious issues since they touch on religious, cultural and traditional practices even more than actual legislation. They were hotly debated at the Preparatory Committee Meeting, and were the reason for Sudan making one of its two reservations.

Culture, and those traditions assigning specific roles to each sex, are increasingly seen as oppressive to women. This was underlined at the March 1995 Commission on the

traditional women's techniques should be strongly promoted.

In noting the importance of expanding women's roles, the Platform calls for affirmative action programmes that will lead to more women in the media more positive portrayals of women. The Platform focuses on the need for women in key ministries such as finance, defense, planning, and foreign affairs, and the importance of financial incentives to employers so that they can train unskilled women employees.

Africa was the only region to include a section on the girl-child in its Platform. This African initiative, pushed by NGOs in Dakar, has been incorporated into the global Platform for Action, the final version of which is being prepared by the Commission on the Status of Women for submission at Beijing. It is aimed at heightening awareness of the situation of girls and providing more opportunities for them in the fields of nutrition, education, decision-making and health care.

The Commission listed health and population control as priorities, and made clear that African women want cheaper and better availability of primary and reproductive health care services as well as the launching of a plan of action to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS.

During the Commission's meeting on the Status of Women, a representative of the Organization of African Unity emphasized the need to involve women in conflict resolution. This is a major concern of African women who advocate the establishment of women-for-peace networks accredited to regional and international institutions.

The African Platform is now part of the global Platform, which is being circulated in June for all countries to review. Ms. Selma Achipala of Namibia, the Commission's rapporteur, says this will ensure "there won't be too many brackets" in the text presented in Beijing.

Ms. Achipala notes that "the final document cannot incorporate every concern of the different regions." But she says African women "can definitely identify with the global Platform."

Whatever happens in Beijing, the African Platform will remain binding on African countries. As an independent and autonomous document it stands on its own, just waiting to be implemented. ■



Ms. Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September.

and controversy over issues that some delegations saw as intruding on national sovereignty, a consensus finally did emerge.

The agreement was summed up in the African Platform for Action adopted by the ministers and government representatives. For each of the 11 areas of concern identified, the women proposed measures to be implemented by various organizations and agencies under the leadership of national governments.

Since women are the primary victims of poverty, as well as the primary caretakers of children, the African Platform stressed the need for specific policies to support female-headed households, which now represent 35 per cent of all households. In addition, the Platform calls for special economic programmes for poor women — especially in the informal and agricultural sectors — and pushes for changes in gender-biased laws that limit the economic potential of women.

Status of Women in New York, where one of the appeals made by African women was for their governments to combat gender stereotypes and to promote the sharing of roles and responsibilities through education, information and legislation.

One example of their negative effects is the traditional division of labor, under which women are responsible for fetching water, gathering firewood and food. Because women are poor they often have no choice but to exploit natural resources. They are, therefore, not only the agents but also the first victims of ecological devastation.

Expanding women's roles

To reverse this trend, the Dakar Platform states that it is imperative for gender concerns to be integrated into environmental impact assessments and the overall development process, and that indigenous science, technology and

Drought again threatens Southern Africa

By Carole J.L. Collins

Barely three years after Southern Africa's worst dry spell of the century, drought once again stalks many parts of the 11-nation region. Although not as extensive as in 1991/92, the drought has sharply cut cultivated cropped areas and food harvests in several countries and raised 1995/96 food import needs well above last year's levels. According to the US Agency for International Development (USAID), over 6 million people in the region will need emergency assistance in 1995 and 1996 due to drought.

Late, patchy rains combined with hot dry spells in late 1994 and early 1995 to sharply reduce expected grain harvests in seven countries, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

The Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Harare-based Regional Early Warning Unit (REWU) estimates the region's overall maize output will drop 41 per cent this year to about 12 mn tonnes, 3.5 mn tonnes short of regional food requirements. This is a long way from the 1993/94 bumper crop of almost 20 mn tonnes, 62.5 per cent of which came from South Africa alone.

At the end of April, the FAO and WFP asked donors for \$38 mn in food aid for initial emergency operations in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. FAO forecasts Southern Africa will need to import 15 per cent more coarse grain in 1995/96 compared to the previous year due to the drought. WFP estimates that in addition to the region's 1995-96 commercial food import requirements, 200,000 tonnes of maize will be needed to meet emergency food needs. As *Africa Recovery* went to press, SADC was preparing a special appeal to donors to cover the region's food and non-food emergency needs.

Only Tanzania and the northern regions of Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi expect normal or improved maize harvests. While the number of Angolans needing food aid should drop to 1.1 mn (over half the number in need last year), insecurity continues to limit food production.

According to USAID, Zimbabwe is par-

ticularly hard-hit. The number of people receiving drought relief — already 2.7 mn at the end of February — may rise as high as 4.75 mn, or almost half the population. Low rainfall (only 67 per cent of average) and an outbreak of armyworm on small farms have reduced the maize crop to about 575,000 tonnes. This is 75 per cent lower than the 1993/94 harvest of 2.3 mn tonnes, and barely 28 per cent of Zimbabwe's average production level. One of the region's two major cereal exporters, the country suspended all maize exports earlier this year. After drawing on its 1.08 mn tonne grain reserve, it may need to import about 260,000 tonnes to meet domestic needs until next April's harvest.

Despite good rains in the north, Zambia faces its third poor cereal harvest in four years, and an estimated 490,000 people may need food assistance. In the main grain producing south, drought has cut the maize crop by about 15 per cent compared to last year's 1.02 mn tonnes. With a domestic need of 1.5 mn tonnes, Zambia faces a 339,000-tonne maize shortfall, most of which is expected to be covered by commercial imports.

Lesotho may only harvest 17,500 tonnes of maize, 10 per cent of its 1993/94 output and well below the drought-affected 1991/92 harvest of 55,500 tonnes, notes REWU. The government declared a drought emergency in early 1995, and about 350,000 people may need food relief. Annual maize imports are expected to be 249,000 tonnes, more than double the 1994/95 level. In Swaziland, some 90,000 people may need food aid.

For the fourth straight, Botswana — facing an 80-90 per cent shortfall in crops — has declared a drought emergency. Its maize crop may be less than 3,000 tonnes, the same as during the 1991/92 drought. Even its harvest of drought-resistant sorghum may drop over 60 per cent from last year's 39,000 tonnes.

Less than half the normal rainfall has slashed Namibia's millet, maize and sorghum crops. Maize may drop about 40 per cent below last year's 45,000 tonnes and

double the 1994/95 import requirement of 47,000 tonnes.

Malawi's 1994/95 maize crop should be about 1.6 mn tonnes, up 50 per cent on last year, according to the FAO and WFP. But the country still will need to import about 240,000 tonnes during the 1995/96 marketing year. Almost 4.5 mn Malawians were receiving emergency food aid due to the poor 1993/94 crop.

Mozambique's maize crop will be about 27 per cent higher than last year's, but

Southern Africa's maize output could fall by 41 per cent this year and be about 3.5 mn tonnes short of regional food requirements.

USAID estimates about 1.5 million people will still need food aid, especially in Tete province and parts of the south where insufficient rain and high numbers of returning refugees have strained local food supplies.

South Africa, the region's largest grain producer, will need to import about 1 mn tonnes of

maize to offset the effects of an early dry spell. REWU estimates South Africa's maize harvest at only 4.3 mn tonnes, way down from last year's bumper harvest of 12.5 mn tonnes. South Africa suspended all maize exports starting in January, except for some previously committed to Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.

SADC and donors have improved their capacity to respond since the severe 1991/1992 drought (see *Africa Recovery* Briefing Paper No. 9, "Famine Defeated," August 1993). "SADC itself is now in a position to run the logistics of routing food shipments inland from the region's ports," said WFP Information Officer Francis Mwanza. Many donors have set up large counterpart funds which can be quickly disbursed as needed. SADC early on requested World Bank aid for commercial food imports, and it is asking its members to set aside funds in their yearly budgets for drought.

SADC is currently seeking funds for a \$63.17 mn food security programme. Among other things, this would promote intra-regional trade (reducing dependence on costly food imports) and establish a \$30 mn regional fund for use during droughts to not only purchase grain but also feed and vaccinate cattle. ■