



NEWS

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KAUNDA IN SOUTH AFRICA



Prof. Richard van der Ross and Dr Oscar Dhlomo flanking Dr Kenneth Kaunda at the Institute for Multi Party Democracy Conference held in Johannesburg in February.

were exposed to a television screen for the first time.

The Group presentations were another eye-opener. We were divided according to our respective political organisations.

Our task was to prepare a campaign for elections as a party. My group felt this was not fair

because we had not prepared ourselves for this task. However, we later agreed that the exercise had been a learning process. We called ourselves the Azanian Socialist Party. We drew a preamble and a declaration and agreed that we needed a poster for identification. A fist and a red star

was our emblem. Kganare did the presentation.

Although this was only a mock election exercise it helped us realise how ill-informed we were about other organisations and how we needed to develop communication skills to be able to disseminate information to our constituencies. ✱

Can Democracy exist on Barren Ground?

The invitation to attend MPD's conference whose theme was "In search of Democracy – majorities and minorities" - provided me with a most welcome opportunity to start my 30th or so research trip to South Africa. The conference was of particular interest to me as it was less than three months that Codesa had started its deliberations on a new constitutional and socio-economic order for South Africa.

I had my doubts since 1964, that one day the apartheid regime would be replaced by a non-racial, truly democratic order. White South Africans, particularly Afrikaners, since their arrival on the African shores more than three centuries ago, had never appeared to have an interest in establishing democracy. Black, "Coloured"/Indian South Africans had never been given a chance to develop a democratic political culture. So, with that history, one has one's doubts whether any of the key actors in the South African conflict (ANC, SACP, NP, CP, AZAPO, IFP) is a democratic party in the true sense of the word. Of course, all these parties in their official documents will state today that they are committed to the value system of a pluralistic society. But can it be taken for granted that more or less over-night the deeply divided undemocratic South African society where many of the important actors were

banned and their leaders either murdered or put into prison or driven into exile will develop into a Western style democracy? There are far more questions than there are answers.

My scepticism of course is influenced by what we observe these days in the former Communist countries in Eastern Europe and today's Commonwealth of Independent States. Did the German and the Latvian examples and those of all the other states in Eastern Europe with the exception of Czechoslovakia between the two wars not prove that a democratic order cannot exist on barren ground?

Those of course are the questions that accompany me on my trips to the townships, in my meetings with my White African friends and even in the bars in the Market Theatre where, by no means co-incidentally, I met some of my fellow "Dakar Boer", with whom in July 1987 I had such an exciting time meeting leading members of the then still banned ANC.

What a joy to take a mini-bus into Soweto or one of the other townships. Do I suffer from hallucinations or are those victims of centuries of discrimination really so friendly and co-operative with me the moment I show an interest in them? If only we in re-united Germany showed this preparedness to communicate, to forgive and to even forget. And what hospitality I

find among people who live in shacks, who maybe have never known employment and who in all probability, because of lack of schooling and for other reasons, will never find employment? And will the unemployment rate go down? Hardly conceivable. Will the government of a new South Africa, if it wants to retain its credibility with the under privileged, have to follow a policy of redistribution? That of course will not attract local and foreign investors.

Will the lack of employment, of proper housing, of education and health services not lead to the increase in the already high crime rate? This question is to be asked even more loudly as political differences in the townships are often not fought by democratic arguments but by means of violence. No doubt, there will be a third force. But there's also this attitude of a commitment to political pluralism within the frame of "liberatory intolerance", expressed by an ANC leader in Dakar in July 1987.

Is that not the very real danger expressed by my fellow "Dakar Boer" Breyten Breytenbach who, about a year ago, warned that the Republic might soon go through a long period of indiscriminate acts of barbarism? As the UN played so prominent a role in the struggle against apartheid in SWA, it may have to station a peace keeping force in the new South Africa for

many years, so that a political culture of tolerance and compromise can develop.

It is a few days before the referendum of March 17 and these are impressions I share often with longtime interlocutors among white South Africans. Of course there are those who want to go back to a modernised version of the old order. I feel pity for them because I think their views are the safest way to achieve in South Africa what Germany was like in 1945, that is, total destruction and a general climate of hopelessness.

There are far more people who are prepared to support the Codesa process but who, being confronted on television with certain sad

realities in the townships ask for "cast iron guarantees for their existence" for themselves in a new South Africa. These friends do not only talk about the necessity of a system of power-sharing in a regionalised post-apartheid South Africa. Their hope is also that after the NP will have won the referendum, Nelson Mandela and the other leaders represented at Codesa will show their preparedness to discuss the possibility of a "sacrificial petition" of the Republic (an expression used by Van Zyl Slabbert early in 1991) to get at least parts of the CP to the negotiation table. For apparently the ANC, NP and the other Codesa participants all realise that to get a

stable new order, Codesa needs the CP's participation.

Another very important question, to which I have no answer at all, is what can be done to make PAC return to Codesa. Its participation in the Codesa process seems to be another absolute must.

Only if the ANC, PAC, Azapo, IFP, NP and CP sing the new constitutional refrain will there be a chance that the new South Africa will be a stable country. The outcome of their refusal to participate is to be seen in events in Yugoslavia, Ethiopia, Somalia, Liberia and the former Soviet Union: the disintegration as a result of a civil war. ✱

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Undemocratic Socialism means never having to say you're sorry.

Who is the real Kaunda?

Is he, like his counterpart in South Africa, PW Botha an unrepentant bitter old man? Or a great statesman whose profound insights the world ignores at its peril? Is he naively innocent or maliciously calculating? Or, perhaps, extraordinarily ignorant of basic facts despite the experience of a generation in power? What are we to make of a man who achieves a standing ovation when he tells the Institute for Multi-Party Democracy (MPD) that its *raison d'être* is a bad idea?

History might record the pinnacle of Kaunda's career as being that he presided over Africa's first change of government by genuine democratic means - by ballot instead of bullet - and launched an archetypal African socialist economy on the free market route. This may prove to have been as symbolically important for Africa as the falling of the Berlin Wall for Europe. One might have expected him to take pride in and make

much of this, especially in an MPD keynote address on his first visit to South Africa. I had come expecting to hear an impressive elder statesman, with whom I might not agree, but whom I was sure to respect. Instead, he transported his spellbound audience into the ideological past as if in a time machine. He harangued them with *passé* arguments against what he had been expected to defend. Few seemed to be embarrassed or disappointed.

This was after a promising start. He said he would make the case for "economic democracy" and "the need to diffuse power and give our people more control over their lives". He recognised that "things have changed in the world". In the event it was clear that he is in urgent need of the very lessons on the nature of democracy and free markets about which he scoffed.

Kaunda on Multi-party Democracy

Multi-party democracy is, to Kaunda, a nasty Western gogga. It "is really not the issue". Democracy *per se* has come to mean, he laments, "something that is acceptable to the West". He is dismissive of the "perceived greater diffusion of power that [multi-party] democracies are purposed to bring". The argument that "only in a multi-party set up can society have a more equitable representation" is "too simplistic".

To his surprisingly uncritical audience Kaunda outlined the supposed "history of [the] myth" which regards "Western Multi-Party Democracy as an ideal". Multi-Party democracy cannot "help wake Africa from her centuries -old slumber".

He addressed "the issue of the fallacy of multi - party politics as the answer to all our economic problems" and blamed "the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe" for "this new concoction".