



VIVA HELEN SUZMAN, VIVA!

By Raenette Taljaard

Some countries have the rare gift of the lives of spectacular individuals at different epochs of history and their national narratives. These individuals offer them examples, give the necessary voice to key issues confronting societies and, very often, sacrifice much en route to the changes that they inevitably seek.

Most fundamentally rare individuals give examples that are relevant inter-generationally and that often break the barriers of space and time to inspire thousands across borders – both physical borders and the borders that may exist within countries or within the spirit of an artificially divided nation. This is one of the most powerful transcendent messages of the life of Helen Suzman.

South Africa has been blessed by a generation of leaders – Nelson Mandela, Albert Luthuli, Walter Sisulu, O.R. Tambo and, yes, Helen Suzman – that have broken many, many barriers in fighting for a vision of a liberated South Africa. From very different spaces and corners of influence they made their indisputable contribution to our nation's history.

They may have done this from different 'benches of history' and from different ideological positions but the power in their examples lies in the fact that they offer our nation a diversity within a generation of leaders who collectively contributed to setting a course flowing from a vision of a free non-racial society. This is a spirit from which we may draw in these turbulent times of succession struggles and personal animosities.

In this edition of FOCUS we feature Helen Suzman's 90th birthday and various aspects of her life and contribution to our country's liberation and the cause of freedom.

For those of our readers who could not be at the Wanderers Club on the 7th of November to celebrate

with Helen and her family, we offer a glimpse into a very memorable evening. This edition brings together tributes from across the political spectrum and testifies to the great admiration and deep-felt emotional connection many leading South Africans have with Helen.

For this special event the Helen Suzman Foundation commissioned a poem from well-known South African poet Lebogang Mashile which pays tribute to a remarkable life in the best possible tradition of our continent's poetry. In the pages of this edition FOCUS readers will also meet Mr. Modise Phekonyane, a former Robben Island prisoner, and an accomplished poet, who has joined the Board of Trustees of the Helen Suzman Foundation and recalls some of his memories of Helen Suzman's visits to Robben Island.

This edition also contains some analysis on the mini-budget and possible local and global threats to economic growth, the Ginwala commission and some trends present in our proportional electoral system. We also capture some seminal lectures – the Biko and Luthuli lectures – and the WITS Panel discussion on Mark Gevisser's recently released biography of Thabo Mbeki.

At the time of writing a zero-sum game clash between President Thabo Mbeki and ANC Deputy President Jacob Zuma on the congress floor of Polokwane seemed inevitable with potential serious consequences for the unity of the ANC and with possible consequences for the future trajectory of key policy areas in South Africa. The next edition of FOCUS will bring you comprehensive coverage of these events and their outcomes. As we approach the Festive Season we all prepare to unwrap the most interesting national present of all – a new prospective president of our country.

COLIN EGLIN - -----

Colin Eglin is a former DA MP and Trustee of the Foundation.

PRINCE MANGOSUTHU BUTHELEZI - -----

Prince Mangosuthu (MP) Buthelezi is the leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party.

KOOS VAN DER MERWE - -----

Koos van der Merwe is Chief Whip of the Inkatha Freedom Party.

MICHAEL CARDO - -----

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.

BANTU HOLOMISA - -----

Bantu Holomisa MP is President of the United Democratic Movement.

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James Selfe (MP) is the Federal Chairperson of the Democratic Alliance

ROBERT MATTES - -----

Robert Mattes is Professor of Political Studies and Director of the Centre for Social Science Research, University of Cape Town, and a Senior Advisor to the Afrobarometer; Shaheen Mozaffar is Professor of Political Science at Bridgewater State College; and Joel Barkan is Professor Emeritus of Political Science, University of Iowa.

MOSIOUA LEKOTA - -----

Mosioua Lekota is the Minister of Defence

LERATO TSEBE - -----

Lerato Tsebe is an intern at the Helen Suzman Foundation

RACHEL JAFTA - -----

Rachel Jafta is a professor of economics at Stellenbosch University and a Trustee of the Foundation.

XOLELA MANCGU - -----

Xolela Mancgu is the Chair of the Platform for Public Deliberation at WITS University and a political analyst and columnist.

PATRICK LAURENCE - -----

Patrick Laurence is an independent political analyst and a contributing editor to The Star.

JOAQUIM ALBERT CHISSANO - -----

Joaquim Alberto Chissano is the former President of Mozambique and the first recipient of the Mo Ebrahim Prize for African Leadership.

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Former Robben Island prisoner Modise Phekonyane unlocks Mandela's prison cell on the Island.

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Tel: +27 11 646 0150 Fax: +27 11 646 0160

Email: info@hsf.org.za

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The Helen Suzman legacy

Images in this article courtesy © Russel Roberts

By Colin Eglin



In Parliament and outside it, Helen Suzman has provided living proof that one person can make a difference

Helen and I first met in June 1954 over lunch in the Oak Room of the old Manchester Hotel that stood at the corner of Strand and Burg Streets in Cape Town.

I was about to become a member of the Cape Provincial Council. Helen was completing her second year as the Member of Parliament for Houghton.

The lunchtime meeting had been arranged by Tony Delius, the poet, journalist and parliamentary correspondent of the *Cape Times*, who a few days earlier had said, "Colin, there is one MP among the new members whom I believe you should meet – she is Helen Suzman. She is bright. And, one way or another she is going to make an impact on the political scene."

How accurate Tony's assessment has proved to be. For Helen was to become a legendary figure for her fight for human rights and for justice in South Africa.

Our political and personal friendship, dating back to that lunch, has survived the strain of two strong-willed characters for more than 50 years. We have worked together in liberal opposition politics both inside and outside Parliament. We have journeyed around Africa. We have visited China.



Helen Suzman with Mr. and Mrs. Eglin at her 90th celebrations in Johannesburg on 7 November 2007.

For some years I had the prestigious, yet daunting, task of being Helen's leader. I have enjoyed her hospitality and her sense of fun. I have come to appreciate her keen intellect, to understand her commitment to principle, her intolerance of hypocrisy, her anger at injustice, her concern for people. Most of the time Helen and I have enjoyed each other's company, and at times when that was not the case, at least we have endured each other with good grace.

No one should underestimate the significance of the contribution that Helen has made to the people of our country, or the importance of the legacy that she has given to future generations. In Parliament she was courageous, she was principled. When she spoke she was clear, lucid and to the point. No obfuscation, no ambiguity, no spin. There was never any doubt where Helen stood on issues.

She always made sure of her facts. She went to see for herself. She visited political prisoners and detainees, went to find out what was happening in the squatter camps and to the people being harassed under the pass laws or being evicted from their homes under the Group Areas Act. Armed with first-hand information

she returned to the fray, questioning, harassing, badgering the apartheid ministers and bureaucrats.

Using Parliament as a platform, she demanded the attention of the apartheid rulers, she got the ear of the media, she endured the vilification of the racial bigots, she earned the respect of the oppressed. She showed that one could be aggressive, and effective, without being offensive. That one could oppose without losing the respect of those who you opposed. Indeed, Helen set standards of excellence and provided a role model for an opposition Member of Parliament.

Helen Suzman was a liberal.

During the years 1961 to 1974, when civil liberties and the rule of law were under assault from the apartheid government, and the official opposition was either compromising or capitulating, Helen, as the lone representative of the Progressive Party, single-handedly stood up against detention without trial, spoke out against oppression, and fought for civil liberties and the rule of law.

She was a liberal, but she was no armchair crusader. She was a "hands on" politician and a tenacious fighter for the causes in which she believed.



Dame Helen Suzman – still feisty at 90 with a characteristic sparkle in her eyes

Helen was a liberal, but she was no political ideologue. For her people, not dogma, came first.

She had a straightforward political creed: "I hate bullies. I stand for simple justice, equal opportunity and human rights. These are the indispensable elements in a democratic society and are well worth fighting for." She confronted bullies like Verwoerd, Vorster and Botha head on.

Helen Suzman has played a significant role in helping our country to transform from an apartheid to a democratic state.

During the dark days of apartheid she did more than any other person to keep liberal values alive. Through her actions and the arguments that she advanced she has demonstrated that these values are not merely abstract concepts, but that they form the basis of good government and of wholesome society.

Indeed, South Africa's new democratic constitution, with the liberal values that it embraces, is a testimony to the inspirational impact that Helen Suzman's work and example have made on the politics of our country.

There is an important lesson to be learnt from Helen Suzman's years of service to the people of South Africa. It is a lesson to be learnt by those who say despairingly, "What is the use?" "What can one person do?"

Helen has shown that one person can make a difference.

She made a difference to the lives of the prisoners on Robben Island, to many of those who were detained or banned, to those suffering under the pass laws or dispossessed of their homes, to the countless number of individuals whose cases she argued tenaciously with the seemingly uncaring authorities.

When, in Parliament, on 19 June 1986, the pass laws, which Helen had opposed so vigorously from the time she came to Parliament in 1953, were repealed, and members gathered around to congratulate her, I was reminded of the moving words spoken by Senator Robert Kennedy in his address to the young people of South Africa at the University of Cape Town on 6 June 1966.

"Few of us will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each one of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.

"Each time a man stands for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope.



Helen surrounded by her former Parliamentary colleagues

"And crossing each other from a million centres of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

Here in our South Africa Helen Suzman has been a person who has stood for an ideal, who has acted to improve the lot of others, who has struck out against injustice.

On the occasion of her 90th birthday it is well right we South Africans thank Helen for "sending forth those tiny ripples of hope", and in doing so acknowledge the role that she played in helping to build the current that swept down the "walls of oppression and resistance" in our country.

At a Progressive Federal Party congress held in 1988, a few months before Helen announced her retirement from Parliament, I said:

"The contribution that Helen Suzman has made to South Africa and its people can never be measured simply by electoral results. Her contribution must be judged today, and will be judged by history, by the sustained excellence and the integrity of the fight for basic human values. Helen Suzman has shown that, even when you cannot win approval, you can win respect. And in a world so full of cynicism, respect is worthwhile in itself."

Little did Helen or I know then that within 18 months Mandela would be free, the ANC would be unbanned, apartheid would be a dark era of the past, and that we would be entering a new democratic South Africa.

Thank you, Helen, for your perseverance and dedication at a time when moral government in South Africa seemed an impossible dream. And for showing us that one person *can* make a difference.



By Mosioua Lekota

A flame of the home fires

Helen Suzman's life gave light, hope and strength where it was needed most

A few weeks back I was subjected to some heckling from opposition benches, but survived. Being from the majority party, I believe that heckling is not as harassing as it would be were one on the minority benches. Still, I felt the bite of those jeers and jibes from the minority opposition voices.

So when I received the invitation to contribute some reflections on Ms Suzman I paused and wondered what to say. She had not been a guerilla, not a returning exile, prisoner or former detainee without trial, had not been banned or house arrested, etc. All of which are some of the trademarks of most of the recognised opponents of apartheid.



© Mark Wessels

Helen was different. Because her skin colour gave her access to a parliamentary seat she campaigned to get into the lion's den and from there kept the attention of the nation and the world focused on the crime against the people of our country. Daily she endured the abuse, the humiliation and hostility of her mostly male racist and chauvinist adversaries. Quite often the press carried reports indicating unprintable expletives directed towards Helen by then National Party members of Parliament, including, at times, cabinet bigwigs. Not to be deterred, month after month and year after year Helen returned to give her best and absorb the worst from them.

It was as I reflected on how I had felt when jeered at by opposition members that I experienced a deeper sense of what she had gone through all of those long years (during which she served as an isolated voice of opposition), and I appreciated afresh the depth of her selfless contribution. All of us who serve in the House today know very well how stressful a hostile reception of one's intervention in debates can be.

But Helen's contribution went far beyond enduring the humiliations of parliamentary activities. When I first knew of her through the pages of the *Rand Daily Mail* and other

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newspapers, her words were always a deep source of inspiration to our black communities. She affirmed the correctness of the struggle for freedom. Like Helen Joseph, Braam Fischer, Beyers Naude, Nadine Gordimer, Archbishop Hurley, Sheena Duncan, Molly Blackburn and other white opponents of apartheid she reinforced our firm conviction that whenever freedom day would come, the majority of white South Africans would join with us in the construction of a truly nonracial society.



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South Africa's Minister of Defence had first-hand experience of Helen Suzman's role, along with a generation of other leaders from all organizations, in fighting for freedom.

Whenever sceptics raised their pessimism that white South Africans would never accept equality of status with us, and challenged us to point to empirical evidence that this was possible, we would refer to the names of these heroes and heroines.

It is common today for us South Africans to attempt comparisons of the importance of each other's contributions. Thus, for instance, some people are tempted to regard former prisoners or former exiles as having contributed more than many opponents of apartheid who remained in communities, keeping the home fires burning. Yet those who kept political awareness high and provided crucial support to activists, the Don Matteras, Sally and Nthato Motlana, Dilizintaba Mji, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Archie Gumede, Oscar Mpetha, Albertina Sisulu, ABC Motsepe and many others were crucial to the morale and staying power of our people. Their contributions spanned the entire political spectrum – ANC, PAC, NIC and TIC, AZAPO, Progressive Party, Liberal Party, NEUM, SACC, Christian Institute, etc.

In celebrating Helen's life we must celebrate the spirit of all those South Africans who gave something of themselves to bring us where we are today.

If Helen's contribution affirmed the conviction of our communities across the nation that a different and better dispensation awaited them in future, for us who served prison terms on Robben Island and elsewhere, her regular interventions

and strident demands for the improvement of conditions under which we served our sentences were of immense and immediate value. Access to studies, contact with families, periodic improvements of diet, better medical care (especially for the

In celebrating Helen's life we must celebrate the spirit of all those South Africans who gave something of themselves to bring us where we are today

elderly among us) made endurance better than if conditions had remained crushingly brutal. For make no mistake, in desperate circumstances human beings often burn out, cave in, and even abandon worthy causes. By helping to ameliorate our immediate circumstances Helen gave a very big boost to our capacity to stay the distance in the drive towards the democratisation of our beloved country.

Long live the heroic example of the life of Helen Suzman!

(Mosioua Lekota is the Minister of Defence)

By Raenette Taijaard

Happy birthday, dear Helen

A gathering of family and friends celebrated 90 years of the life of a great, and greatly loved, South African icon

Images in this article courtesy © Russel Roberts

Dame Helen Suzman hosted a glittering array of friends and colleagues from her illustrious life at her 90th birthday celebrations at the Wanderers Club in Johannesburg on 7 November 2007. The evening had a distinctive family tone, with her relatives in attendance in full force and her loved ones from all walks of life surrounding her with their good wishes, accolades and appreciation.

Her son-in-law, Prof Jeffrey Jowell, kicked off proceedings, her daughter Francie delivered a moving and highly personal tribute to her indefatigable mother; and, not least of all, Helen herself spoke in her customary vibrant and lively delivery about her remarkable life. Her grandson Danny proposed a toast to one of the world's most unique, feisty grandmothers.

While not all her friends could be present, many sent wonderful tributes which Prof Jowell shared with the gathered guests.

Helen Suzman surrounded by her family on her 90th birthday



Nelson Mandela wrote:

“Dear Helen, Graça and I regret not being able to attend your birthday celebration this year. We trust, however, that those who do attend will ensure that you feel very special. And remember, Helen, that there will be many South Africans and friends of our country who will be thinking of you. For your role in the struggle against apartheid and in the building of democracy was an extraordinary one. One not easy to forget and one that should never be forgotten.”

And there is a letter from FW de Klerk, who says:

“From Elita and me, warm congratulations. You have dedicated your life to the good cause of a fair, democratic, forward looking South Africa, and deserve a special place of honour, which history has already accorded.”

Having relayed these wonderful words, Jeffrey Jowell handed over proceedings to Helen’s daughter Francie to pay tribute to her mother. Francie’s tribute was accompanied by many private family snippets and photographs that showed Helen in various stages of her life.

Here is a young Helen Gavronsky, aged about 12 or 13 years, then a diligent schoolgirl in a Parktown convent. But what was she up to after school hours? You will be surprised to know that the press was already on her trail. In 1929 a newspaper article

reported “a delightful concert given in aid of charity at the Parktown home of Sam and Debbie Gavronsky (her father and stepmother). The concert was a great success and not the least entertaining is [the performance] of Miss Helen Gavronsky, who proved to be a clever and entertaining young artist. She fits fair to become a future luminary of the professional stage.”

And here she is with her father in the garden, back home in Parktown. About this time she met our father, Mercy Suzman. He was then a young doctor; recently returned from his medical studies in England and the United States. And she once joked that she married him partly because she coveted his horse. But having the opportunity to ride that very animal she subsequently fell off the horse. That ended that. They were married in August 1937. Helen was 19.

Helen was always a very accomplished swimmer. And she was also a very neat diver. And here she is after she had climbed out of the pool, very pleased with herself.

I recently came across an exam paper of 12 November 1941 on economic and social development in South Africa. She, of course, got a first, and as well as that, in front of the paper was her professor’s comment: “An excellent paper, and very well written. Has been the best student of the year.”

[Later] I was overseas studying in London and eagerly awaited her weekly letters, handwritten on those blue aerographs we used to use. In between maternal advice about one thing or another, and



various anecdotes, she described more seriously the sheer slough of her work. The long hours in the House. The loneliness, because she no longer even dined in the members' dining room, there was no one to dine with. Her contempt for both political parties, main political parties. Her refusal to be intimidated by government threats in the name of Law and Order; and her determination to oppose each and every apartheid law, which she did. She spoke on every consensus issue and always, might I add, always wrote her own speeches. Here are a few of Helen's own words, taken from her early letters:

"Those of us who can still speak up have a moral obligation so to do. And I intend to exercise my so-called parliamentary privilege to the last day. I am quite determined to say what I want to say and to hell with intimidation. Law and Order be damned. If you do not hear from me for a few weeks, you will know that I have been sent to the salt mines."

About this time she received a letter from Chief Albert Luthuli, Nobel Prize winner and leader of the ANC, at that time banned: "You are a bright star in a dark chamber where the lights of liberty, of what is left, are going out one by one."

There were, in fact, more than just moments of creeping frustration and tiredness, but she never let up, either in or out of that dark chamber.

Her weekend home would not be much of a break. She would have spent hours in her study, meticulously attending to hundreds of letters from people seeking help, what she called the sad harvest of the seeds of apartheid. Not just replying, but attempting to deal with each and every case, arguing their causes to sturdy civil servants or to ministers. She was determined to be accessible. This meant having a listed telephone number, despite threatening calls in the middle of the night. And this meant receiving people who would arrive unannounced at the front door. We had no gates at all.

Helen knew only too well that when addressing Parliament she was also addressing the outside world, since anything published in Hansard could be reported in the press. Right up to her very last session in Parliament, she took every opportunity to expose and publicise the brutal consequences of apartheid, about which she always had first-hand evidence. Helen's hallmark was her insistence on seeing for herself. On hearing of some crisis or person in trouble she would grab her car keys and drive off to lend support and to intervene, no matter how distant, how dangerous or how difficult the situations.

She described in a letter to me how, in response to a frantic phone call early one morning, she and a colleague rushed out to see for themselves the horrible goings-on, the ruthless demolition of a squatter camp on the Cape Flats. She also made a point of visiting political activists in their distant places of banishment, as in this picture of Helen and Winnie Mandela in Brandfort, where she had been banished for some seven years.

She took herself to mass funerals, which in fact became mass political protests, held in the aftermath of disastrous clashes with the police such as this one in Mamelodi. We were startled to hear this on BBC news one evening [playback of BBC news recording]:

"Amandla! When blacks here mourn their violent dead, they call for their heroes, black leaders in jail and one white woman. In this cauldron of anger and grief, Helen Suzman looks as if she stepped out of an Edwardian garden. She is tough. She has fought racial injustice all her life, and she is still fighting.

[Voice of Helen Suzman]: "We must make it clear to the government that these disastrous confrontations between the people of the townships, the police and the army, must stop. The killings must stop."

From the early 1960s, or from the time at Sharpeville, in fact, Helen made a special point of visiting prisons, and she persistently harassed officials and ministers about improving the appalling conditions. Although he never met her, Breyten Breytenbach described how she became our "Lady of the Prisons". And the importance of her visit to Robben Island is nowadays recounted in all the guided tours given by ex-prisoners. A couple of years ago we persuaded her to come with us on one of these tours, and she agreed to do so only on condition she could be in heavy disguise. This comprised dark glasses and some other elements that made her unrecognisable to anybody. I mean, nobody could recognise her as Helen Suzman. But of course her cover was blown, because she could not restrain herself from correcting the guides as to the precise whereabouts of where she had greeted Nelson Mandela. And after they got over their shock, the guides were delighted, especially when for a time she virtually took over the tour. Within Parliament, as you know, she raised the cases of detained political leaders and called for their release time and time again.

For all her valiant efforts Helen was awarded 29 honorary doctorates from universities all over the world and received various accolades and awards both at home and abroad.

Helen's daughter Francie pays tribute to her mother on her 90th birthday.

Helen once wrote to me towards the end of a particularly gruelling parliamentary session: "The thought of leading a fairly normal life is too gorgeous for words."

But what is normal? To Helen a normal life is always active, committed, involved. And since her so-called retirement some 20 years ago, she has continued unabated, vigorously taking up cases of injustice, visiting prisons, entering political controversy and generally continuing to play an independent role. Always calling the shots as she sees them and never courting popularity.

But lately, as many of you know all too well, at the end of a busy day her greatest pleasure is to relax in a much-loved garden, with those Shitsus in her lap. Or even better, in her study with a Scotch and soda, and with the impossibly boisterous Benji lolling all over her and the couch. And at that time of the day there are two no-nos. Woe betide anyone who drops her Scotch, or even worse, dares to say a word against her unruly dogs. Happy birthday, ma. You threatened not to make it to your 90th, and I told you that would be most inconsiderate. We are so glad you have made it. And it is just as well you did not become a luminary of the professional stage. And we are so, so proud of you.

To the delight of all gathered they heard Helen's characteristic voice on her 90th birthday:

HELEN:

My dad, Sam Gavronsky, was once asked by a friend, how is Helen. My father smiled and said, "Helen is meschugge."

I inherited inter alia his stamina and his sense of humour, without which I could never have survived all those years in Parliament. But you know, some very anti-Semitic letters used to arrive. Strangely I got one the other day, too; you would think I was still involved. I got one of these nasty little letters, but it really was funny. It was just a postcard with nothing on it at all, except "the Yiddisher know-all from Houghton". These things flew into my postbox like homing pigeons.

... I had a very interesting relationship with the Speakers of the House. That was Mr Klopper, who is the founder member of the Broederbond, and also with Le Grange, who was as fair-minded as I have seen. I had vicious words to say, but the minute he became Speaker of the South African Parliament, the institution came first. These were impartial speakers.



I have never been so shocked as the day when I saw in the newspaper – I mean, the man was a Chief Whip of the ANC, and he was convicted, actually, of defrauding Parliament. And there was the Speaker of the House, "toyi-toyi-ing" behind him. It was disgraceful.

"They should probably have me imprisoned next week," Helen added with a twinkle in her eye, before going on to share more memories with her guests.

Towards the end of the evening, Helen's dear friend Mamphela Ramphele also paid tribute.

"You set an extremely high standard for what it means to be a woman, redefining all of what it means to be a woman. Bringing in the personal, the professional, the political into a gracious woman. And, of course, being gorgeous as you are makes a huge difference. You have also redefined what it means to be a citizen. The civic duty ethos that is so important to consolidate in any democracy, you lived it, you embodied it, you continue to do so even today. But more importantly, I am saying for all of us here, we love you because you are such fun."

The 90th birthday of Helen Suzman will not soon be forgotten, and as Mangosuthu Buthelezi so aptly said in a tribute, "God broke the mould after he made Helen." It is unlikely that her life, ethos and sparkling, vibrant presence can ever be repeated.

Helen Suzman reflects on her parliamentary career and contemporary politics in her garden.

By Michael Cardo

Interview with Helen Suzman, on the occasion of her 90th birthday

Q. Did you grow up in a political household?

A. My mother died when I was born, so I lived with an aunt and uncle and my older sister and father, and that wasn't a political household at all. When I was ten my father remarried a very nice woman, whom I liked a lot, but she wasn't political at all. My father rather thought I was crazy with my ideas.

Q. How did you come to be politicised in the 1940s?

A. Well, after having my first child in 1939 and trying unsuccessfully to enlist for war service, I completed my degree at Wits. There I learnt a great deal from a lecturer in Native law and administration called Julius Lewin. I became very interested in his subject. After qualifying, I served as a statistician on the War Supplies Board. I became a tutor in economic history at Wits in 1945 and I learnt a lot over that period, about pass laws and other discriminatory legislation.

The pass laws were suspended during the war to prosecute the war effort, and thousands of blacks streamed into the cities from the rural areas. General Smuts knew they had come as permanent residents and not just as migrant labourers, and he had enough foresight to realise that the laws had to be changed. So in 1946 he appointed a commission under Judge Harry Fagan to consider the laws governing blacks in urban areas. The Institute of Race Relations invited me, along with another lecturer from Wits, Ellison Kahn, to prepare evidence for the Fagan Commission. It took us six months, and the commission accepted some but not all of our recommendations. At the institute, I learnt at the feet of the great: the Hoernles, Bernard Friedman, Ellen Hellmann and Leo Marquard.

To everybody's surprise, before Fagan's recommendations could be implemented, the Smuts government was defeated in the 1948 election. I thought





Happy 90th Helen

The Helen Suzman Foundation wishes our
Patron-in-chief Dame Helen Suzman
A blessed 90th birthday.

We salute your courage, value-based
leadership and vision for a different
country than the one you lived in. Your
understanding of and respect for the value
of all humanity will always inspire millions
at home and abroad.

if I was going to stay in this country I must become politically involved. So I joined the United Party [UP] and formed a branch, which had a very liberal policy, at Wits.

Q. At what stage did you decide that you wanted to be a public representative?

A. [In 1952] Houghton was a liberal constituency, and the constituents were fed up with the sitting UP member, Eric Bell, who'd been there for 14 years. So the Chairperson of the constituency, Dr Reggie Sidelsky, approached me and said won't you stand, and I said: "I can't possibly." I had a job at the university that I liked; I had two children, aged ten and 14; and a husband who was very involved in his medical practice. My husband, to my amazement, said: "You're wrong. This is a natural extension of what you've been doing for quite a long time, and you ought to." Parliament only sat for five or six months in those days, so I would be home for the rest of the year. I accepted nomination, never believing that it would happen. There was Eric Bell, Joyce Waring and myself. We had a meeting in the constituency and I was nominated. I got the seat, an unopposed UP seat [in the 1953 general election].

Q. Why didn't the liberal wing of the UP break off earlier than 1959?

A. The second election [in 1958] I also won unopposed, but by then I was beginning to be very fed up with the United Party because it was extremely equivocal about whether it was going to vote or not vote on issues concerning blacks. There was a congress in 1959 at which Douglas Mitchell, a very right-wing member from Natal, proposed that congress adopt a resolution withdrawing Smuts's promise, as part of his pact with DF Malan [in terms of the 1936 Land Act], that millions of morgen would be added to the so-called native reserves in compensation for black voters being taken off the roll in the Cape. Mitchell said that Dr Verwoerd had announced that the native reserves were going to become independent. Therefore, said Mitchell, they're no longer South African, and we can't give them the land. The whole liberal backbench of the UP thought this was shocking. We spoke against it and voted against it. Almost the worst thing was that Sir de Villiers Graaff, the leader of the United Party, voted against it but said he wouldn't take it as a sign of no-confidence in himself if the congress voted for it. In other words, he told them more or less to go ahead and vote for it. So we were furious, and all of us [liberal backbenchers]

resigned, and we formed the Progressive Party [Progs]. We were joined later by Harry Lawrence, who had been a cabinet minister, and Harry Oppenheimer, an ex-MP. The two Harrys gave us great respectability, and Harry O, of course, gave us much-needed finance.

Q. What was your attitude to those liberals who formed the Liberal Party [LP] in 1953? In your memoir, you criticise Margaret Ballinger for giving too little praise to the liberal wing of the UP, which you felt she should have encouraged, because it shared her philosophy. Would you agree, though, that there were clear differences of principle and emphasis between the LP and the UP on universal suffrage and extra-parliamentary political activity, for example?

A. I would have joined the Liberal Party, I think, had it existed [before 1953] but I had done a lot of talking at the United Party Women's Council so I was pretty well with them. Then I was elected unopposed as a UP MP in 1953. I wasn't in any case at that time in favour of universal franchise [which the Liberals adopted in 1960]. I fought for it within our own party, and we achieved that some years later. The Liberal Party started out with a [commitment to] universal franchise, and actually that was the right thing. We followed the Molteno Report, which was the foundation of Prog policy, and which recommended not universal franchise, but qualifications that applied to everybody – quite a low educational qualification and an economic qualification. Equal opportunity was to be given to everybody to reach the qualifications: in other words, education for everybody and no restrictions on jobs. We didn't change to universal franchise until 1978.

Q. What was the hardest part of being the sole Progressive MP between 1961 and 1974?

A. There was a snap election in 1961 and all the Prog candidates were eliminated except me, and that was repeated at three more elections. I won, not because I was a better MP than the others, but because I had better organisation.

I had to be in my seat for every vote to register Prog opposition to all those terrible bills that were introduced in the 1960s, like the first house arrest bill, and the bills that allowed for detention without trial for up to 90 days, then 180 days, and eventually for an unlimited period.

The United Party destroyed itself because although at first reading it criticised the particularly objectionable clauses

of the Ninety-Day Detention Law [section 4, the "Sobukwe Clause", which provided for the indefinite incarceration of PAC leader Robert Sobukwe, even after the completion of his three-year sentence for defiance of the pass laws in 1960; and section 17, the 90-day detention without trial clause], it ended up voting for the bill at second reading.

Well, the United Party really dithered themselves out of existence, because by 1974 we got six Progs back again, and only one of them, let me tell you, was an original Prog formation member, and that was Colin Eglin. I had to lead them in, when we started Parliament, to be sworn in by the Speaker. And as I walked up the aisle with these six people in line, one National Party member called out: "*Daar kom Mevrou Rosenkowitz!*" She was the lady who'd had sextuplets not too long before!

Q. In his memoir, Colin Eglin notes that you bore the brunt of UP attacks in the Transvaal in the 1970s, especially from Harry Schwartz. How did this colour your views on the merger between Schwartz's Reformists and the Progressives in 1974?

A. I was very unhappy. I hated the idea, but it was a majority decision of the caucus and I went along with it. But I never really got along with Harry until [Frederik] van Zyl Slabbert's resignation as leader of the party in 1986. We lost the 1986 election because a lot of university kids said: "If the leader of the party doesn't think it's worth being in Parliament, why should we bother to vote?" And I remember canvassing universities at the time, and you could get no response from the kids there.

Q. What were some of the highs and lows of your parliamentary career?

A. Well, you know I was accused by PW Botha of helping to arrange the assassination of Dr Verwoerd, which was really quite a thing. He came rushing down the aisle, and wagged his finger at me, and said, "Ja, dis julle liberaliste!", screaming and shouting, and rushed out. That was one rather low moment. And, of course, the sentence of life imprisonment given to black political leaders and some whites was something I was deeply shocked by.

The abolition of the pass laws was a great moment. A National Party front-bencher, Albert Nothnagel, made a speech during the debate saying that no-one had done more

to put the case for repealing pass laws than the member for Houghton. And he actually crossed the floor and shook my hand. That was a really dramatic moment in my life. Poor old Albert was sent off to be an ambassador after that, but it wasn't too bad: he was sent to the Netherlands.

Overall, it was a very hard-working period of my life, but I had a few things in my favour. First of all, I had an excellent researcher, Jackie Beck, who used to do all the researching through the English and Afrikaans newspapers to fish out questions that I could put in Parliament, and I can tell you that was a very important part of my parliamentary service, because they were all dead on point. They would all receive answers which were very anti the apartheid government, such as what happened in Soweto on June 16 [1976], how many people were killed at Sharpeville in 1960, how many people had been arrested under the pass laws, how many people had been moved under the Group Areas Act, how many people had been convicted under the Mixed Marriages Act or the Immorality Act, how many people had been detained without trial, etc. And they were very valuable for the press: they got great publicity. And the English-language press was on my side. That was another very big pro-factor.

Q After his death, some commentators suggested that PW Botha's contribution to ending apartheid had been underestimated. What are your views?

A. There were some very important repeals of legislation under Botha, such as the repeal of the pass laws, the Mixed Marriages Act, the Immorality Act, and job restrictions. Black trade unions were permitted to strike. But Botha was never anything but a bully, and these laws were not abolished because he changed his mind about their desirability. They were abolished because they could not be implemented.

Q In retrospect, are you happy that you left Parliament in 1989?

A. The merger [between the Progressive Federal Party (PFP), Denis Worrall's Independent Party and Wynand Malan's National Democratic Movement in 1989] was really the end of the road for me. I couldn't stand the idea of Worrall coming in, and that other guy. Neither of them had any seats, or any particular virtues. I mean Worrall had been an ambassador, admittedly, and I didn't mind him, but I didn't think he was bringing anything to the party, and felt that we would end up having another sort of a mixture that would reduce the strength of our liberalism within the party. So I decided that I would not stand again in the 1989 election. I should have stayed one more year because that was the year that everything was abolished under FW de Klerk, who to my mind

isn't given enough credit for the part he played in the peaceful resolution of our problems. Of course Nelson Mandela was *the* man, but you also had to have the government, because De Klerk had the army with him, he had the police, and the majority of voters. Like Mugabe, he could have stayed in office with the army and the police.

Q. Has the transition to democracy occurred in the way you imagined it would?

A. Oh no, not really, because of inefficiency, the failure to deliver on promises, corruption, and unemployment. I think the economic policy hasn't been bad: at least everything in sight hasn't been nationalised, which was in the Freedom Charter; I might add. So from that point of view it was good. But I don't agree with the policy of Black Economic Empowerment or affirmative action.

I think there has to be redress but all the apartheid laws have gone anyway. The evils of the Bantu Education Act are still there. That hasn't been tackled sufficiently. You still find kids who are unqualified to go on to do anything like engineering or medicine. I know there has only been one generation to undo the evils of Bantu Education, but the government should have done more to train people. The education system is very poor; unfortunately. If you haven't learnt maths and science, you can't teach them, and there's still a very big shortage of teachers in those subjects.

Another thing that worries me is the state hospitals, which everybody knows are absolutely disgraceful. How Manto Tshabalala-Msimang can be kept on as Minister of Health when we all know she is an Aids denialist, I don't know. She follows Mbeki's lead there and that's a very bad mark against him, going against the whole scientific world on antiretrovirals. There's a Constitutional [Court] decision [on antiretrovirals.] They've put in something now, and, of course, [the former Deputy Minister of Health] Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, who went against the government's official position, has been kicked out: you know, the messenger, and so on.

Q. What do you regard as the strengths and weaknesses of our post-apartheid political culture?

A. I don't think the proportional representation system is suitable for this country. I think it's very wrong that the government never examined Van Zyl Slabbert's report on electoral reform. He proposed a system that's part-proportional, part-constituency. Proportional representation is more democratic in some ways, because it allows small parties to get one or two members into Parliament, but quite honestly I don't think it's suitable for this country. We should have accountability.



Helen's political insights are still on the mark

Q. You have said that Nelson Mandela should have served another term as President. Why?

A. The country hadn't really settled down politically during Mandela's five-year term as President. He needed another term, I think, before you could really say the country had stability, and he would have achieved that had he served another five years. I thought Mandela did very well as President: there was great reconciliation, he was an icon in this country and internationally, and above all, he was a man that was prepared to reconcile. That was my first impression of him when I visited Robben Island in 1967 and met him for the first time, along with Walter Sisulu. I was immediately struck by the calmness of this man and by the easy way in which he talked about political reconciliation. And I raised this in Parliament every year, and asked for his release, and pointed out that this man was the man that was favouring reconciliation in South Africa.

Q. Who do you think is likely to be the next State President? Who is your preferred candidate?

A. Jacob Zuma. I know he won't necessarily become the President of the ANC [African National Congress] in

December because of the voting structure, but if he stood for the general election in 2009, I think he would sweep it. He's got the masses on his side; there's such unemployment and they don't think he is one of the tycoons favouring the capitalist system. He's got Cosatu on his side, and the members of the South African Communist Party, as well as the ANC Youth League. Cyril Ramaphosa is my first choice, but Tokyo Sexwale wouldn't be too bad, either.

Q. There has been some degree of hostility towards liberals in post-apartheid South Africa. What is your prognosis for the future of liberalism?

A. That's really rather an understatement: I mean, there's pure hatred in some quarters. What worries me is that none of the young ANC people have got any idea of the contribution that white liberals made, and somehow their dislike seems to be more aimed against white liberals than it is against the apartheid government. I think it's going to be a very tough fight to maintain any form of political liberalism under the present parliamentary system, where there's no appreciation for the role of the opposition, where you do not have any impartial Speakers, and only limited backing from the press.



Images in this article courtesy © Russel Roberts

By Mangosuthu Buthelezi

One of the best parliamentary performers of all time

With raw courage and accomplished panache, Helen Suzman kept up a relentless barrage against the excesses of the apartheid government

The many tributes to Mrs Helen Suzman on her 90th birthday will record that she was one of the many people who were madly pulling at the ropes of apartheid inside and outside of South Africa. Helen has been a dear friend to me and my wife, Irene, for over half a century. I adore her as much for her love of life and acerbic wit as I admire her for her role in the struggle. She has added style and panache, as well as principles, to the South African political stage.



IFP Leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi with long-time friend Helen Suzman at her 90th birthday celebrations.

Like so many others, Mrs Suzman has not been given the recognition she deserves. I hope that this will be rectified. Context and significant information can easily be airbrushed out of historical narratives: history is often shaped by the narrator. The presentation of history, for example, at the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg is heavily in the direction of the ruling party and its associates in the struggle, but I understand that a display of the role Mrs Suzman in South Africa's history has been expanded there, at least. It would be a travesty if Mrs

Suzman's role were not given prominent recognition in our struggle narrative.

Mrs Suzman tirelessly used her position to break the apartheid mould in a profoundly undemocratic whites-only parliament. Some have questioned if she was 'right' to work within the apartheid structures. My retort would be: what was the alternative for Helen? She demonstrated raw courage in curbing some of the worst excesses of the apartheid government with her forensic parliamentary skills and relentless



Friends gathered and shared in suitable tributes and expressions of friendship for a remarkable woman.

badgering of National Party politicians to, occasionally, do the right thing.

She also gave me unstinting encouragement when dallying with black politicians was not the smartest thing to do. On one occasion in the 1960s, after attending a Progressive Federal Party seminar, my brother-in-law, Dr Dotwana, and I were stopped in our car at a roadblock in Germiston. One of the policemen spotted a leaflet on the backseat of the car containing pictures of Helen Suzman and Dr Verwoerd, with a scathing attack on the Prime Minister. I was arrested and driven to the office of the Security Police in Germiston. In the meantime, someone had been in contact with Mrs Suzman who promptly called the police, demanding that I be released immediately, which I was.

We sometimes differed, as friends of course do, but we never stopped talking and we always give each other a big hug when we see each other. We have never differed on the fundamentals.

Opposing revolutionary change and violence, we recognised the complexity of the situation in South Africa. Blacks here, we both noted, were not a homogenous group and this would require constitutional allowances in any future, preferably federalist, political framework for the country. What we ended up with was rather less than what we had hoped for.

We both rejected rapid and imposed solutions that would likely result in anarchy and hardship for the people that this approach was supposed to help. This was the preferred route, in the radical Left's opinion. For this reason, we both dismissed sanctions as a mere gesture that would not make any strategic sense.

We also both had an ally in Britain: Lady Thatcher. On one occasion, we both went to see her at 10 Downing Street in 1986. A few weeks later, in an amusing interlude, the then Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition, a Mr Neil Kinnock, who had lathered himself up into a fine state of righteous indignation at Questions

to the Prime Minister, looked apoplectic when the Prime Minister approvingly quoted a letter that I wrote to the left-leaning *Guardian*, opposing sanctions and violence. "Yes, *The Guardian* carries excellent letters," the Iron Lady proclaimed. Then the Prime Minister cited an article by Mrs Suzman that had also appeared in *The Times* that same week. Speaking about sanctions, she said: "The likely effect in South Africa would be the imposition of a siege economy and more repression."

Mrs Suzman and Lady Thatcher are cut from the same cloth. Both are conviction politicians with an unerring sense of certitude. Spin, for both, I suspect, is something that washing machines, and not politicians, do. Mrs Suzman gave no quarter to her opponents and did not expect any. She played a straight bat and played it for all it was worth. She always said what she meant, and meant what she said. And this brings me directly on to what lessons we can learn for the future from Mrs Suzman's career.

Mrs Suzman's "impeccably informed gift of debate hits the bull's eye of apartheid laws", to quote her friend Nadine Gordimer. This places her in the dizzy ranks of the best parliamentary performers of all time. She would have been as dazzling in Westminster; the mother of parliamentary democracy, as she was in the old South African parliament. Heaven knows what she makes of the tenor of today's debates in the National Assembly.

Whilst I agree that we must improve the resources available to parliamentarians, their paucity is not a defence for mediocrity. Yes, in part, our electoral system militates against effective parliamentary democracy. For decades, Mrs Suzman had to answer to the good people of Houghton. I understand that the only assistance she had, apart from her intelligence and hard work, was one researcher. Yet she also demonstrated, like David versus Goliath, that good can triumph over evil and right can prevail over might. Her stones and

slings, as I mentioned earlier, are her supple ability to marshal facts and the crisp conviction with which she delivers her argument.

Opposition politicians often whine about the overwhelming strength of the ruling party, as if it's an injustice they won and get to push their agenda through! A tiny lady, but a lioness in stature, demonstrated the power of one who stands up to unjust laws and bullies.

There is just one last point that I would like to make about Mrs Suzman. She is blessed with a wonderfully dry sense of humour. In the midst of apartheid's despair and injustice (much of which still persists), she saw the funny side of life. She enjoys

A tiny lady, but a lioness in stature,
demonstrated the power of one who
stands up to unjust laws and bullies

the nuances and ironies of human nature. After all, are these not the attributes that make us interesting as human beings? All too often we seem fixated by a collective hand-wringing angst about our country's destiny. One of the reasons that people like Mrs Suzman fought such a valiant fight was so that we could also do that most human of things: laugh.

The best way we can pay tribute to this remarkable woman is by taking her life's work forward: standing up to bullies – in whatever guise they come.

Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi MP is President
of the Inkatha Freedom Party

By Rachel Jaftha

The “ancien regime” meets the modern economy

South Africa’s hitherto successful economic policy is being challenged by significant risks to future growth

At the ANC’s policy conference in June this year, the pretenders to the policy reins referred to Thabo Mbeki, Tito Mboweni and Trevor Manuel as the ancien regime, who destroyed the South African economy.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The South African economy – measured in real gross national income per annum – was just under 51% larger in 2006 than it was in 1994;¹ real per capita income has grown by 22% since 1999; and the country is one of the few in the world that has a budget surplus. In addition, the

economy is in the longest upswing in its recorded history. This performance is in no small measure due to the prudent, credible, and enabling policies put in place and implemented by the so-called ancien regime.

But are these good times sustainable?

This is exactly the question that occupied the minds of the Minister of Finance and National Treasury officials as they prepared the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) presented in Parliament on 30 October 2007. This document reiterated government’s commitment to economic growth as a necessary condition to achieve the





Finance Minister Trevor Manuel highlighted the turbulence in the international financial markets in projecting a small budget surplus

core objectives set for 2014: halving the unemployment rate and the proportion of people living in poverty.² In this review we will use the MTBPS as a framework to draw out domestic and external threats to South Africa's growth outlook.

Risks to the growth outlook: domestic factors

In the short to medium term, the sources of economic growth are usually to be found on the demand side of the economy, whereas the longer-term prospects depend crucially on our productive capacity, which is a function of both the quantity and quality of available resources and our ability to generate new technology and use imported technology effectively.

While prospects on the demand side remain buoyant, with both consumer and investor confidence still at relatively high levels, despite signs of declining of late, it is expected that tighter monetary policy will shift the growth impetus away from consumption. With non-interest government spending set to grow by a further 6,4% in real terms in the medium term (2008/9–2010/11), the only component of aggregate demand that is likely to continue its lacklustre performance is export demand. The MTBPS gave explicit attention to trade policy

to address this aspect; a more extensive discussion of which follows below.

The economic growth process of the past number of years has started to show up capacity constraints, which, if not fixed, could slow down economic growth significantly and contribute to higher inflationary pressures. These constraints include various types of infrastructure, from transport to telecommunications (especially broadband), but also skills shortages, not only in areas requiring high level skills, but also at artisan level. The threats these factors pose to the growth outlook merit closer examination.

Skills

Measured as percentage of total government expenditure, South Africa's spending on education (18,5%) exceeds that of several developed and developing countries,³ such as the United States (17,1%), Australia (13,3%) and Brazil (12,0%). In addition, South African firms have to contribute 1% of payroll to finance training, the purpose being to provide suitable skills to power further growth. Despite these good intentions, however; the outcome remains dismal (as documented in several reports, such as the assessment by the Centre for Development and Enterprise



The economic growth process of the past number of years has started to show up capacity constraints.



The mini-budget highlighted the critical challenge of aligning fiscal and monetary policy.

(CDE) of South Africa's science and mathematics outcomes).⁴ Obviously aware of this dilemma, Minister Manuel repeated his earlier appeals for greater efficiency in the education and training system, and announced additional fund allocations for school infrastructure, early-learning opportunities, occupation-specific dispensations,⁵ expanding the school nutrition programme, and to accommodate more learners with special educational needs.

Domestic inflationary pressures

Consumer-price inflation has been outside the target range since April 2007,⁶ reaching 6,7% in September. Food and fuel prices were the main contributors, but at the last Monetary Policy Committee press conference, the Governor of the South African Reserve Bank emphasised that upward pressure on prices has become more generalised. In addition to the usual suspects, food and fuel prices, risks going forward include increases in administrative prices (such as the intended 18% increase proposed by Eskom), and wage settlements in the region of 8% or more, not accompanied by increases in productivity to keep per-unit labour costs stable. On the positive side, a relatively stronger rand will help to contain the impact of higher US dollar oil prices.

From the MTBPS it is clear that the fiscal policy framework (introducing the structural budget balance to separate cyclical tax-revenue windfalls out and using said windfalls for investment in capacity building) complements the prudent monetary policy stance. The hope is that bitter medicine now would preclude having to take really revolting crisis-management medicine down the line.

Current account deficit: trade and industrial policy

In the 1980s talk of the balance of payments constraint was common among economists and policymakers. The argument was that the South African economy could not grow faster than about 3% per annum; otherwise a current account deficit would arise, with its associated problems. Since then, the structure of the South African economy has changed, and requisite reforms have been implemented, which raised potential output⁷ growth to about 4,5% (up from 3%). This means that a knee-jerk panic reaction to a current account deficit reaching more than 6% of GDP is not warranted, especially given the growth in fixed-capital formation, which required (and will continue to require) increased imports.

On the export side, however, opportunities offered by greater access to global markets have been missed consistently (bar a handful of exceptions). The MTBPS emphasises the importance of accelerating export growth by investing in areas of revealed and potential competitive advantage. This situation requires skilful leadership from the responsible minister and senior executives at the Department of Trade and Industry. One has the sense that trade and industrial policy has lost direction lately, oscillating between South Africa's commitment to freer trade and open markets under the multilateral trade regime, and harping back to earlier times of unilateral imposition of protectionist measures (as the ill-advised textile quotas aptly illustrated). The MTBPS reminds us why trade reform was necessary in the first place, and, in fact, suggests unilateral lowering of barriers. This is so important that it is worth quoting at length:⁸

“Trade reform increases productivity by encouraging businesses to become more efficient. Higher productivity growth improves the competitiveness of import-competing firms and exporters. Investment in trade-related infrastructure such as transport and telecommunications and in effective skills development programmes helps to make the boost in economic growth more inclusive. To take better advantage of strong economic growth in the rest of the world and with the continuing impasse in the World Trade Organisation’s Doha Round, a more unilateral approach to capturing the economic gains of lower tariffs may be appropriate.”

Having said that, it should be noted that the appreciating rand could undermine the competitiveness of South African exporters in the short to medium term. Since the exchange rate is a factor that firms cannot control, it is a strategic imperative to build competitiveness on factors other than price, such as quality, attention to customer needs, consistently good delivery times, innovative products that could command higher prices, etc.

Risks to the growth outlook: external factors **Global uncertainty and emerging-market scares**

One of the concerns that comes with a sizeable current account deficit is the fear that it makes the domestic economy vulnerable to external forces, for example, in times of global uncertainty, as currently witnessed in the aftermath of the American sub-prime saga. The worst-case scenario for South Africa would be a sudden stop of capital inflows, which would leave us unable to finance the current account deficit. Such an event seems remote, however; given the continued resilience in fast-growing economies, generating surplus savings looking for investment opportunities. The interest rate differential between South Africa and the alternative portfolio

investment destinations remain an attraction in favour of the local market. On the other hand, uncertainty about South Africa’s political succession battle may cause a shift in portfolio investment elsewhere, leaving the balance of payments at risk.

Global inflationary pressures

In the United States and the Eurozone, as well as India and China, inflation has been creeping upward. The main culprits were, as in South Africa, food and energy prices, but lately it seems as if the pressures could be more general. An oil price in excess of US\$90 a barrel does not help to calm inflationary fears, either. Measures to curb inflation, together with potentially tighter liquidity conditions because of the sub-prime fall-out, may slow down growth in our trading partners, further thwarting attempts at increasing exports.

Conclusion

The South African economy is not what it used to be, and neither is the global context in which we operate. This new world holds opportunities and risks. While the MTBPS generally paints a rosy picture of South Africa’s economic growth prospects, it is not oblivious to the domestic and global risks to this growth outlook. Whereas the external factors are largely beyond our control, the MTBPS suggests measures to counter the domestic obstacles in order to put the South African economy on a higher longer-term growth path. This will, of course, not happen automatically, so it is fair to say that reaching this higher growth path depends on all of us playing our part, from the higher echelons of power right through to the teachers, learners and municipal employees in every corner of this country.

Endnotes

1. Supplement to South African Reserve Bank Bulletin, June 2005 and South African Reserve Bank Quarterly Bulletin, June 2007.
2. MTBPS, 2007, 2.
3. World Bank, 2005 World Development Report, 84 –6.
4. CDE, *Doubling for Growth: addressing the maths and science challenge in South Africa’s schools*, Johannesburg, 2007.
5. The idea is to attract and retain quality human capital by providing career-pathing opportunities that will reward competencies, experience and performance (MTBPS, 2007, 29).
6. MTBPS, 2007, 7.
7. The rate at which the economy can grow over the longer term (given available resources), without creating significant imbalances.
8. MTBPS, 2007, 23.

By Koos van der Merwe

Not quite farewell

The IFP President has no intention of simply fading away, as he stirs his party to renewal and renewed effort aimed at the 2009 elections

The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) has emerged from its hugely successful annual general conference with election guns blazing. In its sights are the following targets: to regain the KwaZulu-Natal government; to bag the vast majority of KwaZulu-Natal local municipalities; to gain a much stronger representation in Gauteng; and to return a large team of MPs to Parliament in Cape Town in 2009.

Anyone attending the exceptionally large 32nd IFP Conference in Ulundi this October would have been drawn into the enthusiasm and air of expectancy. More than 3 000 delegates were gathered, and there was a definite sense that something monumental was about to happen. This expectation did not go unmet, as the IFP used this year's conference decisively to throw down the gauntlet.

One might say the 2007 conference was among the most successful ever.



© Adil Bradlow/PictureNET Africa

IFP supporters have the 2009 election in their sight.

Quotes from the IFP President

From the media's perspective, the most sensational aspect of this year's conference was no doubt the announcement by the IFP's President, Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, that he would not be available for re-election in 2009.

However, there was no question that Buthelezi remains a fiery commander-in-chief. Over the three days of the conference he appeared in real combat mood, stirring his troops for a coming political battle.

Conference convened under the banner "Each one's role in a crisis and the forthcoming elections". Amid thunderous applause, the President announced: "South Africa is in a crisis." He compared the country to a fish that is rotting from its head and referred, among other things, to the dramas around Police Commissioner Jackie Selebi and the National Director of Public Prosecutions, Vusi Pikoli.

Buthelezi explained how the deep crisis in combating crime has now gone deeper. The supremacy of the law and the foundations

of democracy are being threatened. "Morality, probity and legality are collapsing," he said. By suspending Mr Pikoli, President Mbeki has interfered in the judiciary, thereby undermining the supremacy of the judiciary.

Buthelezi warned: "We have a lame duck government, seized with a lame duck ruling party, in what is becoming a lame duck country unable to deal with its problems. Someone has to provide some ways out of this political maze." Buthelezi accused the ANC's top leadership of becoming more and more caught up in infighting, conferences and overseas trips, instead of overseeing effective service delivery.

Strained relations with the ruling party

In a shocking revelation, Buthelezi condemned the ANC's relentless "purge" of public servants from the KwaZulu-Natal government based solely upon their perceived support of the IFP. To date, eight directors-general have been forced out of office.



© Joao Silva/PictureNET

A very young recruit shows his political allegiance.

Literally hundreds of IFP government employees at all levels have been booted out by the ruling party in what can only be seen as rampant abuse of power.

Delegates at the conference were further outraged when Buthelezi pointed out that Mike Mabuyakhulu, Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Local Government in KwaZulu-Natal, was targeting IFP municipalities for corruption, while turning a blind eye to corruption and mismanagement in ANC-led municipalities. The IFP has zero tolerance for corruption at all levels, at all times, in all places. Rooting out corruption is not about point scoring, and should not be done selectively.

Developing a dynamic election strategy

Gearing up for an election, the IFP's focus is on what its opponents are failing to do, and how the IFP will put it right, especially in respect of service delivery.

The election strategy of the IFP is geared towards these goals. Some of the key elements in this strategy are:

- aggressively and positively marketing the IFP's solutions to replace failed ANC policies;
- focusing priority attention on areas in which the ANC government is weak and failing, such as lack of service delivery, poverty alleviation, unemployment, crime, corruption, and HIV and Aids;
- engaging in a massive regrouping of IFP affiliates;
- sending out professionally trained IFP organisers to assist IFP supporters to obtain identity documents, so that they may act on their political enfranchisement;
- establishing at least one IFP branch in every ward in KwaZulu-Natal;
- mandating the IFP Youth Brigade, which is making spectacular progress with targeting young people at schools, universities,

colleges and elsewhere, to bring a message of hope for young South Africans;

- reviving political education for IFP cadres at local levels; and
- ensuring that “no-go areas” are not tolerated. The IFP will canvass support wherever its policies are needed – which is every corner of our country.

Enticing new constituencies

Because the IFP believes its policies are relevant from the local to the national context, it is determined to seek out new constituencies. The level of disillusionment among many South African voters is such that they are ready to hear about an alternative.

Although the IFP is carefully serving its traditional voters, it is at the same time enticing new constituencies that have eluded the IFP in the past. In the process, the IFP is reasserting the party's influence in South Africa. Our country needs the IFP's vast experience in governance and service delivery. It needs the IFP's contribution.

The IFP remains a political powerhouse

Despite losing some support in the last election, the IFP has proved beyond doubt – especially in light of this year's successful conference – that it is still a political powerhouse in this country.

It remains South Africa's second largest black political party, and the third largest party in Parliament. It is represented

in both Houses of Parliament, and in the KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng legislatures. It has many councillors outside of KwaZulu-Natal and governs 36 of 61 municipalities in KwaZulu-Natal. In 2009, the IFP aims to improve its representation in all these spheres of government.

Because the IFP believes its policies
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Looking to the future

Speculation over Buthelezi's announcement regarding his own future as the leader of the IFP pale to insignificance when one looks at the powerful contribution he has made to positioning the IFP as an alternative government in KwaZulu-Natal and a strong opposition nationally. He has given this party a history that will stand it in good stead as future generations seek political leadership with backbone, integrity and experience. In years to come, Buthelezi's IFP will no doubt become the party of the people.

Koos van der Merwe is Chief Whip
of the Inkatha Freedom Party.

By Bantu Holomisa

Causes for national concern

With limited resources, the UDM is concentrating on nurturing potential leaders so that its voice may continue to be heard on the burning issues of the country – of which there is no shortage

On 27 September 1997 the United Democratic Movement (UDM) was launched. In less than two years we had 14 MPs, representation in six legislatures, and established ourselves as the official opposition in Limpopo and Eastern Cape. And the following year, we got more than 230 local government councillors elected nationally, and governed the King Sabata Dalindyebo (KSD) Municipality in the Eastern Cape.

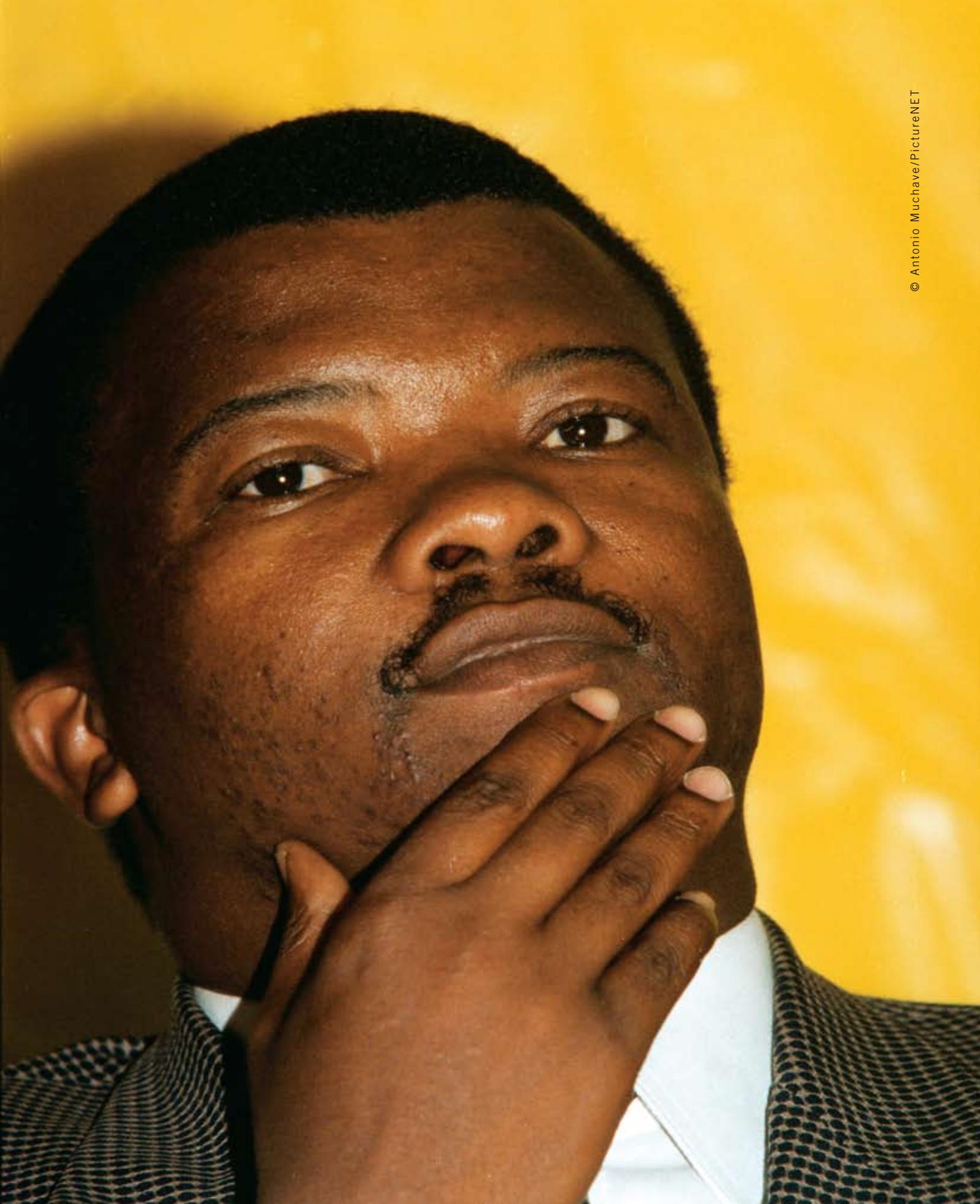
When we celebrated the UDM's tenth anniversary on 29 September this year, 3 200 delegates converged at Gallagher Estate to mark the occasion.

What we have done consistently since our launch is to be vocal about the burning issues facing the nation.

Thus our criticism of GEAR economic policy, and our alternative policy suggestions, are well recorded.

It is pleasing to note that today government's language has changed, and its members are now talking about the "developmental state" and similar concepts, which we have been championing since our launch. We hope that they understand it in the way we do, because our policy is influenced by tried and tested policies, such as the Marshall Plan that rebuilt Europe after the World War 2, and, indeed, how the government of the then Afrikaners uplifted them when they got their freedom.

Our consistent campaigns on matters such as these, and on corruption, did not endear us to some, who came to view us as an emerging electoral threat. Eventually the





UDM supporters show their colours at a party rally with 2009 on the doorstep.

bedrock of democracy, that right of every South African to have choice and a voice, was directly threatened with the drafting of the floor-crossing legislation. Again – when it mattered most – the ANC was enthusiastically supported by the official opposition. The constitution was amended, and it was left to the UDM to challenge this matter in court, eventually winning a partial victory in the Constitutional Court. Thereafter the ANC and DA simply colluded a second time, in order to steamroller through Parliament constitutional amendments to enforce floor-crossing.

The truth of the matter, however, is that the UDM has grown – but not nearly as much as it could potentially grow – and we need to intensify our growth efforts and invest our resources to identify and nurture potential leaders. Our limited resources have made this a difficult task in the past, but we are determined that many more UDM voices must be heard on a variety of burning issues facing the nation. If we do not currently possess the people with the necessary skills and experience in our ranks, then we are duty-bound to go and recruit them.

The wish of most political parties is to run the government one day. Obviously, the UDM cannot expect to step into national government tomorrow. But in the immediate future, our target for our ascendancy plan is to achieve a higher position, preferably as official opposition.

What is the state and health of our nation 13 years into our democracy? So much has been done to transform the society. We are, however, disturbed by social ills, political pathologies, health pandemics and the moral drift of our society.

For instance, the UDM warned from the outset that the arms deal was ill-conceived and too expensive, ran counter to massive social-delivery demands, and was riddled with corruption. The rest is history. What we cannot deny is that this arms deal is eating away at the core of our body politic like a cancerous tumour. Until such a time as we hold a fully independent judicial commission of inquiry, we will not be able to rid ourselves of this cancer.

We must register our concern and call for decisive action to nip in the bud the signs of civil disobedience we see on a daily basis, where there is destruction of property, stoning of cars, disruption of major traffic arteries. It is a pity that the genuine frustrations of the people of this country have been hijacked by people for the purposes of political infighting. It has to stop.

Our assessment of the state of our democracy yields mixed results, with both positive gains and disturbing elements. The latter are:

- There is growing cynicism towards politics due to some ill-advised policies, such as floor-crossing.
- The succession battle within the ruling party and its allies threatens the very foundations of our society.
- The approach in tackling the scourges of HIV/Aids, unemployment and poverty has been indecisive.
- Ill-conceived BEE schemes seek to enrich the few and entrench political patronage and clientage.
- There is growing corruption within public and private sector.
- The rates of crime are unacceptably high, with our security establishment not adequately prepared to tackle the problem.
- We lack a culture of ownership, which translates into people not caring about their environment.
- The one-party-dominated system, as well as racially or regionally based parties, are dangerous, given our history of a divided past.
- Coalition politics are not based on shared goals and

principles, and are guided only by a sinister attempt to increase one's voting block in order to take over a municipality, or a provincial government.

- There is a lack of proper accountability. There is an urgent need to consider electoral reforms. We need, as well, to regulate party funding to prevent a situation where the ruling party, the government, and, indeed, the country, are up for sale to the highest bidder.
- The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) is a critically important institution, yet it still remains vulnerable to political manipulations that may compromise its independence. For instance, we must question the wisdom of members of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) – specifically, members of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) – being used as officials throughout the electoral process, when COSATU is unashamedly aligned to a political party contesting elections.
- There are a few zealous elements that seem to misunderstand the role of a public broadcaster, and seek to reduce it to being a mouthpiece of the ruling party. The would-be new SABC board should not underestimate the desire of South Africans for an open debate on the issues facing the country and the continent. Let them free the airwaves.

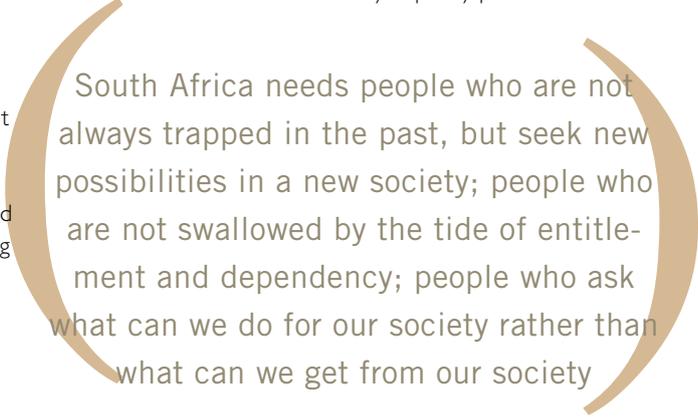
Turning to the identification and election of an ANC President, my experience with the ANC is that they have a culture which is often not known or understood. In particular, this culture is always attributed to the era of the late OR Tambo. We saw it in 1994, when President Mandela thought that because Cyril Ramaphosa was Secretary General, and next on the ANC parliamentary list, he would be the automatic person to choose as Deputy President of the country. After all, Mandela himself would have thought that the ANC had democratically indicated who his Deputy President should be.

But Mandela was advised differently, and the result was that Mbeki was appointed Deputy President. The advice that he was given was that Mbeki had always been the heir-apparent. This culture of selecting a leader seems to have only been known among the exiles, while Madiba and those who were in jail, or in the country, seem to have been caught off-guard by this so-called culture.

Since 1994, certain sections of the ANC have sought to undermine that culture of anointing leaders, and on paper it seems that they have succeeded, because today there are open campaigns for and against leaders. Yes, we have seen campaigns directed at President Mbeki himself, which are clearly designed

to create doubts about his ability to lead. Where I think they have succeeded in a big way is that you find the leaders who were in exile split into separate factions, with some fearing the possibility that Zuma might challenge Mbeki; in the "ANC of old" the matter would have been handled in a different manner, and not in public.

Another matter is the confusion created by the talk of a third term. The public immediately pressed panic buttons when they heard Mbeki would seek a third term, because they knew that there is no such thing as a third term in the ANC constitution, and the constitution of the country explicitly prohibits it for the



South Africa needs people who are not always trapped in the past, but seek new possibilities in a new society; people who are not swallowed by the tide of entitlement and dependency; people who ask what can we do for our society rather than what can we get from our society

Presidency of the Republic. The ANC and President Mbeki have failed to clear up this confusion and vagueness.

The delegates at the ANC conference would be well-advised to seek clarity from their leaders about exactly where the expression "third term" fits into the debate; are they by proxy endorsing the amendment of the country's constitution to allow Mbeki a longer stay in the highest office?

South Africa needs people who are not always trapped in the past, but seek new possibilities in a new society; people who are not swallowed by the tide of entitlement and dependency; people who ask what can we do for our society rather than what can we get from our society. A new ethos and spirit is desperately needed if we are to protect and advance the gains of our freedom. The UDM has played a significant role in this regard by uniting South Africans in their diversity.

(Bantu Holomisa MP is President of the United Democratic Movement.)



By James Selfe

It's time to heal another scar

Thousands of people who did nothing that would be considered wrong in a normal society still carry the burden of a criminal record

When South Africa negotiated a political settlement to end apartheid and to introduce the new democratic order, it made provision for a mechanism to deal with crimes committed in the course of propagating the liberation struggle or of repressing that struggle. This was, of course, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) process.

This process dealt with certain types of offences and certain types of offenders. The TRC's Amnesty Committee heard applications from