

*Bruce Haigh*

**Report On A Visit To South Africa, Harare & London, 17 October - 5 November by Bruce Haigh, Australia/South Africa Training Trust.**

**Introduction**

The Director of the Australia/South Africa Training Trust visited Harare, South Africa and London from 7 October - 10 November 1991. The visit to South Africa took place against a background of increasing violence particularly in the white suburbs and a visit by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Chief Anyaoku and members of the Commonwealth Secretariat seeking to establish whether the Commonwealth might usefully play a role in observing moves to introduce a new constitution and hold elections on the basis of universal suffrage. Discussions were held with Dr Moses Anafu of the Commonwealth Secretariat in South Africa and with Mr Max Gaylard in London.

A number of potential trainees were interviewed and discussions held with representatives of other organisations interested in sending people to Australia for shorter periods of work experience and training. Discussions were held with Peter Smith the new AIDAB officer at the Australian Embassy in Pretoria, with the Immigration officer, David Stewart and the Counsellor David Sprott and Second Secretary, Jane Madden.

**ASATT Work Program**

Useful discussions were held with members of the Skills Network in Harare and London and a joint future program of training and co-operation were agreed. ASATT agreed to find placement for black South African journalists identified by the Skills Network and to become involved in a program to train black public servants. Nominees are expected from the ANC and ASATT has undertaken to approach relevant public sector institutions and key departments in Australia to ascertain what levels of assistance might be forthcoming. It is hoped that the first batch of trainees in this category might be able to commence training in the first half of 1992. Depending on the level of assistance, planning at this stage is being based on an initial figure of four or five trainees for a two-three month period.

In addition ASATT undertook to work with Alister Sparkes Director of the Institute for the Advancement of Journalism,

in identifying suitable black journalists for periods of work experience in Australia. Both the ABC and the AJA have expressed enthusiasm for the training of black journalists.

It was agreed with Peter Smith that AIDAB would assist ASATT by identifying suitable candidates from the pool available of those who have undertaken AIDAB sponsored courses in South Africa and Australia.

David Stewart was given a list of ASATT nominees likely to apply for visas over the next six months and a working arrangement agreed to keep the Immigration Section of the Embassy advised on ASATT nominees.

Briefings were held with prospective candidates in Cape Town including, Peter Jones, Fareida Khan, Richard Baholo and Bernadette Searle.

Discussion on the political and economic situation in South Africa was held in Cape Town with Dr Mamphela Ramphele, Professor Gilomee (who has been invited to be the guest speaker at the Africa Studies conference to be held in Perth in early December) and Peter Jones who is Vice President on the newly formed South Africa Life Saving Association having previously been president of the black life saving body. Jones claimed that amalgamation was in name only and that a group of three Australian life saving officials had recently been in South Africa talking to white officials in the hope of getting a team to compete in Australia. Jones said other black officials were upset at this development and at the time of my departure Jones was seeking a meeting with his white counterpart to put his views with the hope of getting some blacks involved in the squad. Jones will meet with Surf Lifesaving officials in Australia during his visit which is scheduled to take place from 27 November - 16 December. He will be accompanied by Ken Rachidi from Soweto. Both are involved in a black community organisation and both were closely associated with the late Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement. Ken Rachidi is employed by a large South African Insurance Company.

In Australia they will meet with community organisations, Aboriginal groups, small business organisations, insurance and accountancy companies (Jones is an accountant with his own business) and Surf Lifesaving clubs.

The other nominees from Cape Town are due to arrive in March 1992. The artists will be attached to the Canberra School of Art and the environmentalist, Fareida Khan to various bodies including Greenpeace and the CSIRO.

A meeting was also held in Cape Town with a director of Pick 'n' Pay, a large supermarket chain, who confirmed their willingness to send a senior black employee to Australia in April 1992.

In Johannesburg discussions were held with the Post and Telecommunications organisation who expressed themselves very interested in sending people to Australia for training. Telecom has already offered places so it is now a matter of working out the details.

Discussions were also held with SAA who said they were interested in sending people to Australia for training. Further discussions will need to be held with Qantas and other Australian airlines and business organisations. SAA will also explore the possibility of providing concessional air-fares for some ASATT trainees.

Following an expression of interest from the Perth Chamber of Mines an approach was made to the South African Chamber of Mines for a trainee or trainees to work with West Australian based mining companies in the area of occupational health and safety.

The SA Chamber of Mines proved to be very conservative and spoke disparagingly and a little aggressively in terms of reverse discrimination. They wanted to send both black and white trainees. They put me in touch with Professor Phillips from Wits University but there was not time to follow-up on his suggestions. I think that to follow through on this request that the National Union of Mineworkers will also need to become involved.

A meeting was held with Sophie Mazibuko of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). The SACC wish to send community workers and members of the SACC to Australia for short term administrative training. A meeting was also held with Dr Nthato Motlhana and Mr Yusuf Dinath of Medical Education for South African Blacks Inc (MESAB) to discuss possible candidates for short term medical training in Australia. There are many possible candidates but none in the field of ophthalmology where ASATT has an offer of assistance from Professor Fred Hollows. Only a few blacks have undertaken training in the field of ophthalmology and Mr Dinath believed this was because it was still something of a closed shop with the white controlled SA medical profession fairly tightly controlling admission of blacks.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>As a footnote on the medical association of South Africa, it recently agreed to allow Dr Albert Tucker to practice again in South Africa. Tucker was one of two doctors who examined Biko after he lapsed into a coma after being badly beaten whilst in police custody in September 1977. He alleged at the Biko inquest that the injuries Biko had sustained were consistent with him having fallen and hit his head and that when he examined Biko he was not dying although he was gravely ill and should travel 1,000 kms to Pretoria from Port Elizabeth for medical treatment. He claimed Biko was fit to travel even though he had no identifiable reflexes.

A briefing session was held with Ken Rachidi who is to accompany Peter Jones and a meeting to discuss the political situation was held with an old friend Zwelakhe Sisulu, son of Walter Sisulu and Editor of the New Nation. A similar meeting was held with Raymond Louw former Editor of the Rand Daily Mail.

I also drove out to Soweto and held a debriefing session with the four nurses who visited Australia in September/October under the auspices of ASATT.

The visit created great interest within Baragwanath Hospital, the black hospital on the edge of Soweto, and within Soweto itself. The AIDAB officer at the Embassy advised that as a result of publicity in the local press he had received a number of enquires from individuals and organisations wishing to undertake work experience visits to Australia. The Embassy has undertaken to pass these on to ASATT for processing.

The nurses are preparing a report on their visit. They appear to have gained a lot from the experience and have made useful contacts and brought back information which they can apply to the work environment and disseminate within the black community. They were very positive about Australia notwithstanding their critical comments concerning aspects of Aboriginal health care and community life which were reported in the Australian and South African press. Continued interaction between black South Africans and the Australian Aboriginal community should prove of value to both groups and the wider communities of which they form a part. Australia, unlike South Africa, has nothing to hide in its attempts to address the difficulties and problems confronting Aboriginal groups particularly in areas of health, welfare, education and employment.

The nurses (details attached) visited Australia from 6 September - 3 October 1991. They went to Perth, Broome, Alice Springs, Adelaide, Sydney and Canberra and visited general hospitals, community health facilities, academic institutions, Aboriginal health and community services, the NSW AIDS centre and held discussions with representatives of medical and nursing associations. Costs were kept within AIDAB guidelines and Skills Network practice. Rooms were shared and hospitality accepted in order to defray costs whenever it was offered. Aboriginal groups were particularly generous in this regard.

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After a sustained campaign by a few doctors overseas and in South Africa, Tucker was eventually struck off the register in 1984 - seven years after Biko died - for a period of six years. Through the Sunday press in October 1991 Tucker made a craven plea for forgiveness and admitted that his actions had been "wrong".

## Analysis and Comments on the Current Situation in South Africa

Political and economic developments were discussed with David Sprott and Jane Madden of the Australian Embassy. Political developments were also discussed with attorney and PAC representative Dikgang Moseneke and Geoffrey Adams, First Secretary at the British Embassy. Interestingly the British claimed information that the ANC were prepared to enter into a power sharing arrangement with the National Party Government. It was also claimed that the ANC were prepared for a transitional period as long as ten years. This point was interesting in so far as I heard it from no other source.

A Commonwealth Mission with powers to observe and comment on the negotiation process and political and economic developments could help in the search for common ground between the various parties to the negotiations. Such a mission might comprise an economic, electoral and constitutional expert as well as a senior police officer to observe the security and law and order situation. The so called third force is still active in the townships and violent crime is dramatically on the increase particularly in and around Johannesburg and Durban.

In Durban I attended the final session of the historic Patriotic Trust meeting which despite the walkout of AZAPO was a success and had the inevitable result of putting greater pressure on the government to continue dialogue on the constitutional process including the holding of elections. Calls by the ANC for an interim government appear increasingly impractical and members of the Commonwealth Secretariat were less than impressed with the proposal. A move directly into constitutional negotiations appears more viable and would certainly be more acceptable to the government.

Discussions on the political situation in Natal were held with Leon Marshall Deputy Editor of the Natal Mercury.

It was apparent from discussion that the revelations surrounding government funding of Inkatha has reduced the political standing of Inkatha. Buthelezi is not as bellicose as he was six months ago. With the exposure of their game plan the government appears somewhat lost for direction and probably need some help in getting out of the cul-de-sac into which they have stumbled. Although the National Party traditionally does not easily accept overt outside assistance the presence of a Commonwealth observer or monitoring group might offer the means to get all parties back on track. The lifting or the offer to lift Commonwealth trade (and financial?) sanctions might be a significant enough face-saving device and financial inducement (if financial sanctions are also involved) to convince the National Party and its supporters to accept the perceived loss of sovereignty that the presence of an observer group would imply. For its part the ANC would be wise to recognise the genuine fears of whites and press for a negotiating forum of something less than an

interim government. The ANC should begin to speak with one voice and not tailor private discussions and undertakings for the ears of different listeners and governments.

The white community is losing heart and is demoralised by the growing and horrifying level of crime in white areas (particularly around Johannesburg) not to mention a sense of disillusionment with the disarray and lack of consistent and coherent policies within the main black political parties and organisations.

For its part the government has to address the problem of violence particularly in Natal and around Johannesburg. The Army is active in Natal but the seeds that were sown ten or more years ago are now bearing fruit. It is incumbent on the government not to let the same situation develop around Johannesburg. The activities of the so called third force are cruel and destabilising. It is pointless to speculate on whether De Klerk knows who is involved. The fact is he knows what is going on and he has the power to stop it as was demonstrated in Soweto in 1977/78 and again in 1985/86.

It was put to me that the opening up of sporting ties with South Africa, particularly in cricket, has been very good for white morale at a time when many feel like throwing in the towel and have otherwise little to look forward to.

Similarly the easing or abandonment of trade (and financial) sanctions if linked to the presence of a Commonwealth observer mission would be welcomed in all communities and provide the ANC with the lever they would feel they were losing with the loss of sanctions.

Whilst the ANC appears to continue to have widespread support it does not speak for all blacks on all issues and sanctions would appear to be one. (Some members of the PAC claim increasing support at the expense of the ANC and even claim to have the tacit support of some ANC members. The importance of this claim does not lie in speculation over numbers of illusive supporters but rather in the increasingly common ground being identified by moderate ANC and PAC officials and even some older members of AZAPO. This was one of the more important features to emerge from the recent Patriotic Front (PF) conference held in Durban in late October.) There seems to be a feeling amongst blacks that sanctions have been fairly effectively by-passed by the government and that their only effect is the moral weight given by the countries that continue with the policy.

All sides are weary, all sides are bereft of ideas and all sides are looking for a face-saving way out. The National Party is reluctant to concede power particularly to a disorganised opposition but they realise that they cannot hold the present scheme of things together for much longer. All sides are looking for a future dispensation that will protect their interests but for as long as the present scheme of

things remains jockeying for political advantage will remain intense and will only favour the most aggressive and in the short term play into the hands of right wing Conservative and National Party ideologues whether they be in the National Intelligence Service, Army or Police intelligence services, the public service or armed right wing groups.

In the meantime the government and the ANC do not have time on their side. Black unemployment is growing leading to increasingly violent crime and radicalisation of many black youngsters. While they dither and manoeuvre for position, holding onto the past in the case of the government or debating proposals in the case of the ANC, PAC and AZAPO the economy is slowly sliding into decline. If the pace of reform is not accelerated there will be no spoils for the victors only an economy that needs massive amounts of foreign aid and capital to kick start it and even that might not be enough to get it into a position where it can cater for the needs of the growing number of desperately poor people.

The government in co-operation with the ANC and other black groups would be well advised to immediately address the needs of the poor in terms of health, housing, education and jobs if all parties are to avoid creating a legacy that will overshadow and eventually swamp all that they are now bickering and fighting about.

## Calls

Harare Assorted Journalists. Skills Network - Julia Montgomery, Ann Yates, Sarah Haywood

Cape Town Dr Mamphela Ramphele, Deputy VC, UCT.

J'Berg Follow-up with the nurses.

Cape Town Peggy Deport - The Michaelis School of Fine Art Artists - Richard Baholo, Bernadette Searle

Cape Town Fareida Khan

Cape Town SAA - Mr Hartman, Personnel Manager, SAA, CT.

Cape Town Barney Pityana/Francis Wilson, Lindi Wilson

Cape Town Sandra Kriel - Artist

Ilze Olkers - Lawyers for Human Rights

Cape Town Peter Jones

Cape Town Prof. Herman Giliomee - Dept. of Politics, UCT.

Durban PF Meeting

Joe Slovo - SACP

Leon Marshall - Natal Mercury

Arlene Getz - SMH

J'brg Dr Zach de Beer - Leader, Democratic Party  
Ken Rachidi  
Ross Dunn - The Age  
Rob Raschke - ABC  
Peter Mckenzie - Photographer  
Raymond Louw - former editor RDM  
Sophie Mazibuko - SACC  
Zwelakhe Sisulu - editor New Nation  
Dr Moses Anafu - C'wealth Secretariat

Mr Yusef Dinath & Dr Nthato Motlana - MESAB,  
Patrick Laurence - The Star  
Kallu Kalumiya - UNHCR Chief of Mission  
G. Adams - British Embassy  
Mr Sydney Mogae  
Dr J.M. Mbere  
Mr. P.J. Bekker - Senior Manager, Manpower, SAA



Prof. N. Chabani Manganyi, Vice Chancellor,  
University of the North  
Mr Alister Sparkes - Former Editor RDM and  
Dir. Insititute for the Advancement of  
Journalism  
Ms Amanda Singleton - Chief PRO Post &  
Telecommunications  
Mr Frank Vien - Manager Human Resources Post &  
Telecommunications  
Mr Josef Greef - Mngr. Safety & Technical  
Services, SA Chamber of Mines.  
Prof. Hugh Phillips - Uni. of Wits, Mining and  
Engineering faculty.  
Ms Makgala Ngatane - Consultant  
Peter Smith - Aust. Embassy, AIDAB, First  
Secretary.  
David Sprott - Counsellor  
Jane Madden - Second Secretary  
Mr Dikgang Moseneke - PAC

U.K.

Skills Network - Sarah Hayward & Julia  
Montgomery  
Max Gaylard - C'wealth Secretariat  
Dr Moses Anafu - " "  
Donald Woods

