

we're circulating information about the struggle, particularly because our liberation struggle has been misrepresented in the media.

## PARLIAMENTARY REPORT ON AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONS WITH SOUTHERN AFRICA

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The Report of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Australia's Relations with Southern Africa was published in November 1996. The inquiry itself was set up by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade in the former Labour government on 30 March 1995; and, following the 1996 elections and change of government, re-established on 21 August 1996 by the present Minister of Foreign Affairs. It is the first inquiry conducted by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade since that on the Horn of Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe in the early 1980s. Although there have been inquiries relevant to Africa since then for example on peace-keeping and human rights, this is therefore the first occasion for nearly fifteen years that the Joint Parliamentary Committee has focused specifically on Africa. Given the enormous changes that have occurred at global level as well as across Africa in that time, and especially since the end of the Cold War and the establishment of the post-apartheid democratic South Africa, the publication of the Committee's report is thus an important occasion on which to reflect on Australia's relations with this changed Africa. The report is thus important and welcome.

What gives the Report its particular salience at this stage of Australia's relations with Africa is the extent to which the Committee in its inquiry (and notwithstanding their somewhat restricted terms of reference) went beyond the narrow confines of trade and commerce that have in recent years all too often characterised the Australian focus on Africa. Concern for Australian interests in this respect is certainly an important part of the report. (See especially Chapters 6 and 7 on Australian trade and investment in Southern Africa). Nevertheless there is also an obvious attempt to look at Australia's relations with Africa in broader terms and to reflect also on some of the other interests, commitments and emerging social movements that link Australia to Africa, and especially Southern Africa, in the late 1990s. The importance of the ties established during the long years of support for the anti-apartheid campaign are acknowledged; including the links of Australian trade unions with the anti-apartheid movement and the non-racially based Trade Unions in South Africa during the struggle, and the contribution of APHEDA to training programs in South Africa, Zambia and Tanzania over the years. There is a recommendation that assistance to that body should be continued (pp.137-138). Recognition is given also to more recent, newer linkages for example with the work of the Southern Africa Legal Education Assistance Foundation (SALEAF) (4.44, p37).

The Committee also clearly had a basic sympathy for Africa's own needs. They recognise both that the African region was the hardest hit by the global recession as well as the external causes of African indebtedness (5.10, p52 and Chapter 8) and the need for continued international support if Africa's economic crises of the past twenty years are to be overcome. Moreover (and in contrast to the more recent Simons review of overseas development (*One Clear Objective*, poverty reduction through sustainable development Report of the Committee of Review 1997)) they urge Australia to reaffirm its commitment to the target of 0.7% of GNP. The Committee also favoured increased diplomatic representation in Africa (2.24, p14).

AFSAAP members and especially those who are engaged in teaching African studies will be especially interested in the Report's concern to counter the stereotypes and negative images of

Africa that prevail amongst so many Australians; and the Committee's belief that "it is important that knowledge of Africa and particularly Southern Africa be available as widely as possible" (10.11, p149). On the one hand they were quite shocked it seems (10.7 p148) to learn that the A.B.C. is the only Australian broadcaster with a fulltime correspondent in Southern Africa. On the other they acknowledged the imbalance in the resources available to African Studies in Australia as compared with those available to Asia and the Pacific. (10.22, p151). Of still greater interest given the AFSAAP submissions to the Committee, (see *The Review and Newsletter* Vol XVII Number 2, December 1995) is the Report's suggestion that "it would be beneficial if government departments such as DFAT might establish some formal liaison links with the Association, to make full use of the information available through that association". (10.11, p149) The Committee also saw "merit in some sort of exchange program developing involving such associations as the AFSAAP". Recommendation 41 goes further to suggest that the Commonwealth Government should be prepared to consider a feasibility study for a centre for African studies in Western Australia if they should receive such a proposal.

Implicitly as well as explicitly the report raises important questions about future Australian relations with Africa. First, the Committee was concerned essentially with South Africa. They suggested in their Report that this was indeed inevitable, in view of the dominant Australian perceptions of and interests in that state rather than the larger region. "...the Committee found that submissions largely focused on South Africa and to a lesser extent Zimbabwe and Mozambique" (p.xxiii). One wonders whether this heralds a return to the pre-1970s days. Second, anyone who has followed the considerable debate about Structural Adjustment programs and their impact on Africa and the poor will be concerned at the apparent failure of the report to look more closely at those issues. Third the lack of an historical perspective (the time frame is determined by the end of apartheid and starts therefore with 1991-92) is disappointing, not least because it undoubtedly leads the Committee to underestimate the continuing political significance of South Africa's historical role as regional hegemon in the politics of regional cooperation and the circumstances of resource scarcity in the late 1990s. This raises important reservations about their discussion of regional issues and cooperation. There is no evidence for example that the Committee appreciated the fundamental issues raised by the accord signed between South Africa and Mozambique that provides for the movement of white South African farmers into Mozambique to take up fifty year land concessions (4.49, p38); or of the regional implications of the reduction of tariffs and the return of South African manufacturing exports in full flood into former regional markets.

Nevertheless the Committee was clearly concerned to move beyond the stereotypes of Africa that have dominated the public mind as well as the narrow official focus on issues of trade, commerce and security. While they may not have succeeded altogether, they have in fact provided a most useful Report which, read in conjunction with the more recently released Simons Report, provides food for thought and the opportunity for a new dialogue about Australia's relations with Africa. It is up to those concerned with Africa to ensure that this takes place.

For this reason it seems appropriate to reproduce the Report's Recommendations with this note, which we do with acknowledgment. It is worth pointing out that the Government's response to the Report will be in the form of a detailed recommendation to each of the Committee's recommendations. This will be tabled in Parliament, and there is usually time

for debate on that response. This will possibly take place during the August session. Also it should be added that for those of you who would like to read the Report itself, and are unable to find a copy, there are still stocks available, and a copy may be obtained by writing to the Secretariat, Parliament House, Canberra. Fax No. is (06) 277 2221.

#### LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS\*

The Committee recommends that:

1. the Australian Parliament and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, explore ways in which appropriate assistance might be provided to the SADC Parliamentary Forum. (Para 2.21)
2. Australia respond positively to future requests from SADC for assistance, particularly institutional strengthening. (Para 2.23)
3. Australia review its diplomatic coverage of Southern Africa with a view to:
  - (a) establishing other forms of diplomatic representation (eg. sharing facilities with another country, mini-embassies, or creating Honorary Consul positions);
  - (b) providing additional staffing to the Australian High Commission in Harare; and
  - (c) in the longer term, opening an additional post, to be located in one of the smaller Southern African nations eg. Angola. (Para 2.35)
4. Australia offer encouragement and further practical help to the OAU, if requested to assist in the development of good governance in Africa, particularly Southern Africa, through exploring alternative conflict resolution strategies. (Para 3.9)
5. Australia explore with other participants mechanisms to include the hinterland countries reliant on access to the Indian Ocean in future IOR dialogues. (Para 3.36)
6. Australia offer increased expert assistance to the fledgling democracies in the Southern African region in such fields as constitutional drafting and electoral law. (Para.4.29)
7. the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, AusAID and the Australian Electoral Commission develop an ongoing program of assistance in the area of electoral reform and development. (Para 4.29)

\**Australia's Relations with Southern Africa*. The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade, Canberra, A.G.P.S., November 1996.

8. AusAID, in conjunction with Southern African authorities, consider including provision of some legal education and training, and assistance to establish legal resource centres, as part of the official development assistance program. (Para 4.45)
9. Australia encourage an increased regional dialogue through support in the institutional strengthening of organisations such as SADC. (Para 4.53)
10. the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade monitor the development of ASAS and offer assistance as appropriate. (Para 4.57)
11. Australia explore through the International Forum on the Indian Ocean Rim greater cultural exchanges and trade links. (Para 4.95)
12. Australia, as part of its assistance to South Africa, include training for small and medium businesses. (Para 6.33)
13. Australia mount a public information campaign in Southern Africa aimed at highlighting the opportunities for business and other contact such as tourism with Australia. (Para 6.67)
14. (i) Australia bring forward the timetable for conclusion of a Double Taxation Treaty and an Investment Protection Agreement with South Africa; and  
(ii) Australia encourage normalisation of currency and exchange agreements and Harmonisation of regulatory and other requirements within SADC countries. (Para 6.80)
15. Austrade review its current staffing allocation to Southern Africa with a view to appointing an A-based officer to have responsibility for those countries covered by the Australian post in Zimbabwe. (Para 6.85)
16. Austrade conduct a study on the publicising and implementation of EMDG with special reference to Australian companies trading with Southern Africa. (Para 6.93)
17. Austrade produce a brochure for Australian companies interested in trading with Southern Africa, setting out basic information about the market, and assistance available to potential exporters. (Para 6.93)
18. Austrade participate in the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair in 1997 and 1998, and review the degree of business interest after that period. (Para 6.98)
19. Australia encourage an increase in the number of study exchanges between SADC and Australian educational institutions. (Para 7.49).
20. Australia establish a formal exchange program between employees of the public and corporate sectors of SADC countries and Australia, with an emphasis on the industry specialist areas of infrastructure, education and agriculture. (para 7.49)

21. Australia fund a small investigative team representing nationwide Technical and Further Education and training institutions, to undertake a feasibility study of SADC countries with the view to setting up vocational education and training programs supported by Australia. (Para 7.49)
22. Australia facilitate a thorough assessment and analysis of potential business and management training programs and services for prospective or present indigenous national business owners and managers. (para 7.56)
23. the Australian Tourist Commission review its location, staffing and promotional activities in Southern Africa with a view to raising its visibility. (Para 7.64)
24. the Department of Industry, Science and Tourism and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade explore with the South African and Zimbabwe governments a Memorandum of Understanding on tourism cooperation. (Para 7.67)
25. Austrade research the potential niche markets for Australia in SADC countries. (Para 7.74)
26. Australia reaffirm its commitment to the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for official development purposes. (Para 8.12)
27. AusAID in conjunction with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade examine the new aid policy for Africa, announced in August 1995, with a view to determining its effectiveness and scope. (Para 8.31)
28. Australia in international fora, explore ways in which the indebtedness of Southern African countries could be alleviated. (Para 8.38)
29. health issues continue to be addressed by AusAID and relevant NGOs with an emphasis on the provision of sanitation, safe water supply and basic health services. (Para 9.17)
30. Australia continue to fund HIV/AIDS education programs aimed, in particular, at adolescents and young adults in urban areas where infection rates are higher than those in rural communities. (Para 9.19)
31. Australia ensure funding is allocated through AusAID and NGOs for the establishment and continuation of hospices and orphanages for infants and children such as those suffering from HIV/AIDS and those orphaned as a result of the disease. (Para 9.21)
32. any Australian Government funding for NGO family planning programs in SADC countries should ensure that these are culturally sensitive, fully in conformity with our legal principles of informed consent, free from any coercive policies or practices which prevent couples exercising true freedom of choice in determining family size, have regard to the human rights records of the countries concerned, and not involve abortion or abortion drugs. (Para 9.43)

33. AusAID continue to include a focus on education and training in its programs, with an increased emphasis in the areas of basic education and vocational and technical education. (Para 9.60)
34. Australian universities and TAFEs collectively promote the opportunities for education (both in-country and in Australia) to Southern African countries. (Para 9.60)
35. AusAID provide funding to SADC for the establishment of a 'micro-enterprise program' for the women of Southern Africa, enabling them to borrow capital to establish livelihood projects. (Para 9.78)
36. the issue of women's health continue to be addressed by AusAID and relevant NGOs, with an emphasis on the provision of sanitation and water, maternal and infant health services, family planning services, and health education particularly relevant to HIV/AIDS. (Para 9.78)
37. funding and aid support continue to be provided through AusAID and NGOs to provide access to education for all children, regardless of gender. (Para 9.78)
38. Australia continue to work for a total ban on landmines. (Para 9.106)
39. Australia continue to provide assistance through government and NGO agencies to SADC countries for demining activities. Such assistance should encompass:
  - (a) medical and rehabilitation assistance to landmine victims, including the supply of prostheses to victims;
  - (b) community education on the dangers of landmines; and
  - (c) training for local people in demining methods. (Para 9.109)
40. Australia establish a mechanism to assist associations such as the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific, but more broadly NGOs, develop an interchange program with the countries of Southern Africa. (Para 10.14)
41. the Commonwealth Government be prepared to consider any feasibility study submitted by the Western Australian Government and the University of Western Australia and Curtin University on establishing a Centre for African Studies in Western Australia. (Para 10.26)
42. Australia support cultural exchanges with Southern Africa and set up a liaison with the Australia Southern Africa Business Council (Inc) through which requests for assistance can be channeled. (Para 10.31)

## BOOK REVIEWS

Peter Alexander, Ruth Hutchison and Deryck Schreuder (eds.), *Africa Today: a Multi-Disciplinary Snapshot of the continent in 1995*, Canberra, Humanities Research Centre, ANU, 1996, 589pp. ISBN 0 7315 2491 8, no price stated.

ANU's Humanities Research Office organised three major conferences during 'Africa Year', 1995. *Africa Today* presents the proceedings of the third contemporary conference. This volume is handsomely and professionally presented and illustrated, and sees the light remarkably soon after its conception. It is plainly not possible to do justice to 28 papers, ranging through history, politics, literature, film, gender, health and environmental issues. Predictably, their quality is uneven and the connections between the papers little developed. Few could emulate the broad sweep of Anthony Low's keynote review of 'Independence and Tropical Africa's Political Trauma', although Patrick Chabal rises to the occasion in his analysis of the post-colonial political order, Saul Dubow's exploration of Raymond Dart and the evolution of race typologies is continent-wide in its implications, Cherry Gertzel develops a general theory by examining the wars in Rwanda and Somalia, and the discussions of gender also aspire to continental judgments. The more closely-focused papers are perfectly appropriate for a conference, but difficult to read sequentially in print. Predictably again, ten papers investigate South African topics, four of them in the History section. Together with three papers on 'the New South Africa' (by Heribert Adam, Jonathan Hyslop and Bernard Leeman) these come closest to an interactive series.

One of the more remarkable is Bernard Leeman's very personal account of the 'Pan Africanist Congress of Azania', to which he has devoted much of his adult life. The 'much' perspective on South African politics is cogent, even if the institution's policies have developed in a convoluted and sometimes opportunistic fashion. Membership of the PAC and its affiliates often seems to reflect a radical temperament rather than a commitment to specific strategies, tactics or outcomes. Given the many organisational and tactical failings of the African National Congress, when it and its allies were the only rivals of the PAC, the decline of the latter deserves the serious attention which Leeman gives to it. The intimate connections with Lesotho politics, and the fateful personality clashes among the leaders, are described in detail, as in the PAC's calamitous performance in South Africa's first democratic elections. Throughout its forty years the PAC has settled into the role of critic of the ANC, a function which seems certain to persist.

Jonathan Hyslop's analysis of the South African 'white right' and its ultimate failure either to coalesce or to prevent the democratic transition, suggests some of the reasons why the PAC's role may again become important. To avoid the risk of bloodshed, the ANC was bound not only to seek an accommodation with the ruling National Party, but also to offer a role to Constand Viloen's Freedom Front; yet any conciliatory gesture laid it open to PAC and other radical criticism. Had the PAC been as powerful as its 1980s rhetoric promised, that conciliatory strategy might have been politically impossible - and the consequences of a direct confrontation are too alarming to contemplate.

Another paper which caught my attention because it addresses my earlier research interest and analysis and is a highly topical issue, is Pal Ahluwalia's analysis of 'The Rwandan Crisis'. Events have rather overtaken this analysis, with tens of thousands of Rwandese refugees being driven on death marches through eastern Zaire, and a Rwandan-backed insurgency