

Managing interdependence in southern Africa

fact, the expansion of education facilities has increased to such an extent that compulsory education is now being phased in for Blacks. Furthermore, the government has lifted all enforced racial discrimination in public places (petty apartheid), abolished all restrictions on racially-mixed sports and recently provided for autonomous self-governing Black municipalities.

Taken together, these changes, whatever their shortcomings, clearly reflect a positive response to the economic, social and political needs of urban Blacks in South Africa. Or, to put the same point another way, these changes have been so significant that South Africa today is very different from even five years ago. However, this conclusion is partially vitiated by the fact that population groups are still defined in terms of race classification laws, and urban Blacks are still excluded from participation in separate institutions for Whites, Coloureds and Asians. These two central pillars of separate development (grand apartheid) are rejected by the leaders of the national states. Thus, national pride and anti-discrimination sentiment might well deter these states from all but fairly loose ties with South Africa.

Until these and related obstacles are eradicated, it is highly unlikely that P.W. Botha's vision of a Constellation, even in its scaled-down form of a Confederation of Southern African States, will become a reality. Fortunately, the struggle to formulate a strategy to secure a meaningful future for all South Africans is still continuing.

Problems for SADCC

Turning now to the SADCC initiative, it is clear that its immediate prospects are bleak. The gravest threat to SADCC's aims stems from a general deterioration of economic and political conditions in the countries concerned. Zimbabwe is moving towards a one-party state based on Marxist-Leninist principles while tribal rifts, terrorism and economic disintegration dominate everyday life.

Lesotho, one of the world's five least developed countries, is also in a state of tension following years of autocratic rule (recently the Minister of Public Works was killed by members of the Lesotho Liberation Army, a military wing of the exiled opposition Basutoland Congress Party), mismanagement and widescale embezzlement of government funds (the recent Report of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts of Lesotho mentions so many instances of fraud, waste and incompetence that there hardly appears to be any agency or project connected with the government that is untainted) and economic retrogression (besides chronic unemployment and inflation, Lesotho suffers from over-population, over-grazing and acute soil erosion) that threatens the stability of the country.

The productive and political life in Swaziland has been all but stopped since King Sobhuza, until then the world's longest-reigning monarch (he ascended the throne in 1911) died in August 1982. It now appears likely that eleven-year-old Prince Makhosimevlo, one of Sobhuza's favorite sons, will be named to succeed the man known as Ngwenyama or Lion. If that is true, the queen mother, called the Ndhlovukati or she-elephant, will rule until the prince is twenty-one. And that means real power will be vested in the Liqoqo or inner council, made up almost exclusively of members of the royal family of Dlamini. Since regency rules are not the happiest to have, the fragile Swazi economy may be in for a period of uncertainty and instability.

Mozambique, an authoritarian Marxist state with close ties to Moscow, is harassed by desperate poverty and the rebellious Mozambique National Resistance Movement, while 18,000 Cuban and East German troops have kept a tottering Marxist regime standing in Angola. Similarly, Tanzania and Zambia, both one-party states, are speeding towards economic collapse. Also Botswana and Malawi are struggling with economic recession and erosion of political stability. As things stand therefore, SADCC members are facing an exceptionally dismal outlook.

Another possible difficulty for the future development of SADCC is that six of the nine members are interconnected with South Africa's economy to a far greater extent than they are with each others' economies. In fact, South Africa dominates, in a number of different ways, the economies of the BLS countries and to a lesser but significant extent the economies of Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique. For example, about 99 percent of Lesotho's imports come from, and nearly all its non-diamond exports go to, South Africa. In addition, Lesotho's large and growing trade deficit is mainly financed by migrant earnings (remittances) from South Africa (about 150,000 Basotho were employed in South Africa as at June 30, 1982) should be added that there are nearly 200,000 migrant workers from other neighboring countries registered in the Republic. To take another striking example, about 90 percent of Zimbabwe's trade currently is either directly with or in transit through, South Africa. Thus, it is to be expected that existing intra-regional ties will have to be maintained for a long time to come and that, in fact, economic relations with South Africa might increase in the short run.

Conclusions on southern Africa

In the light of the foregoing figures and interpretations, four observations seem justified. *First*, demographic and economic realities are rendering South Africans of races increasingly interdependent in one integrated economy where the share of Whites in the labor force is dwindling. *Second*, the new regional approach to industrial development is a major move away from the traditional homeland policy and toward a federal or confederal structure. *Third*, unless South Africa's domestic socio-political problems are dealt with in a satisfactory manner current efforts to promote an economic union in southern Africa cannot possibly be successful. *Finally*, given the economic and political situations in the SADCC countries, it is highly unlikely that SADCC, even if its present plans for regional cooperation were to prove reasonably successful, could serve as a major generator of economic growth.

Still there is no escaping the fact that the countries of southern Africa could be a world power if all the resources of these countries could be used to the best possible extent for the benefit of all the people of the region. Sooner or later this reality will compel all southern African politicians to reassess their priorities. With his usual insight Henry Kissinger, former United States Secretary of State, has described the choice: "History is kind to political leaders who use a margin of choice while it is still available. Those who wait on events are usually overwhelmed by them." Speaking in Pretoria at the Institute of International Affairs Outlook Conference in September 1982, Kissinger called for an "heroic effort" by the southern African authorities to step up the process of reform.