

effectiveness seek their enforcement. It also depends on how well these provisions are drafted, and thirdly, it depends on the respect given within a country for the rule of law. This is certainly one aspect which is absolutely crucial and which needs to be addressed urgently in South Africa. (That is my personal view.)

Sam Shilowa, the General Secretary of COSATU, writes on "The relationship of the trade union movement to a democratic Government". Although COSATU is in alliance with the ANC, he states unequivocally that the former expects to play a major role in economic

decision making. The trade union movement should not allow itself to become a conveyor belt for any political party. It must remain independent. This is also the view of Cunningham Ngcukana, the General Secretary of NACTU.

Other contributors are Halton Cheadle, the then legal advisor to COSATU; Sheila Camerer, the then Deputy Minister of Justice; Tony Leon, the Justice spokesman of the Democratic Party and now its leader; Marcel Golding, the then ex-deputy general secretary of the National Union of Mine Workers; John Copelyn, the then ex-general secretary of the SA Clothing and Textile Workers

Union; Piet Haymans, the then assistant secretary of SA Society of Bank Officials, Cyril Ramaphosa, the Secretary-General of the ANC, and Frik van Heerden, the then chairman of the National Party study group on constitutional affairs.

All of their views are important and should be considered and appreciated if the President's stated goals are to be achieved. The book, therefore, remains an important beacon.

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THE LORD CHANCELLOR'S BREAKFAST

The English legal year, beginning with the Michaelmas sessions, is ceremonially opened on the first day of the spring term. This ceremonial opening, known as the Lord Chancellor's breakfast, consists of a service in Westminster Abbey attended by the Lord Chancellor, the Master of the Rolls, the Lord Chief Justice, the Chief Justice of the Family Division and the Judges of these and other courts and the representatives of the English Bar and Side-Bar.

Foreign visitors, and in particular representatives from the European community, the Commonwealth and other countries have been invited to this ceremony since 1966.

During 1994, Willem Venter the then President of the Association of Law Societies and I were the first South African representatives ever to have the privilege of representing our respective professions at this traditional occasion.

A host of official functions were held to mark the opening of the English legal year. On Sunday 2 October 1994 delegates were invited to a cocktail party hosted by the American Bar Association's President, Mr George Bushnal, followed by a semi-formal dinner hosted by the Law Society, the General Council of the Bar, the young solicitor's group and the young Bar committee at the Law Society's hall.

On Monday morning 3 October 1994 the official opening was celebrated. Representatives of foreign bars and professions were invited to attend in their formal robes and took their places in Westminster Abbey before the formal procession of the English Judges, headed by the Lord Chancellor, entered the church and took their seats.

The dean of Westminster Abbey opened the sermon with an admonishment that all human judgment was fallible and that without the Lord's blessing, human justice could never achieve its goal.

The lesson was read by the Lord Chancellor himself.

After the service, the Lord Chancellor, the Judges, the Bar and Side-Bar's representatives left the Abbey in procession accompanied by the foreign delegates through Poet's Corner



to the House of Lords, where Lord MacKay welcomed all delegates and Judges personally.

While the foreign delegates enjoyed the breakfast, their partners were entertained to a luncheon by Baroness Flather in the Cholmondely Room, the dinner room of the House of Lords.

On Monday evening, a dinner was hosted by the General Council of the Bar at Lincoln's Inn.

Apart from the obvious emotional element of being able to attend a traditional ceremony of this nature, the welcome which was accorded to the South African representatives was overwhelming. The British Bar, the Side-Bar, representatives of the International Association of Lawyers, Bar Associations and Law Soci-

eties in Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, Scotland, Romania, Kazakstan, Luxemburg, England and Wales, the Commonwealth Lawyers Association and individual colleagues as well as the General Council of the British Bar and the Association of Law Societies welcomed us with open arms. Valuable contacts were established on a personal and professional level. The President of the Association of Law Societies invited us to a private dinner and the Association itself allowed me to attend its congress, which was held a few days later after the Lord Chancellor's breakfast.

As a direct result of our visit, it was decided to create a British South African Law Association, which will be formally launched on 7 June 1995. It will foster professional contact on a personal and an organisational level in the future. Formal invitations to join the Association will be extended to members of the South African Bar and Side-Bar in the near future. The Lord Chancellor's breakfast was a tangible manifestation of the fact that South Africa has rejoined the family of nations also in the professional sphere. It was a privilege to be able to represent the South African Bar at such an occasion.

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