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University of London

SOUTH AFRICA CONSTITUTION STUDIES CENTRE

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When we started in October last year we were very worried whether it was to be the South African Constitutional Studies Centre, or South Africa Constitution Studies Centre. But events moved so rapidly in Southern Africa that, soon, we were concerned with more serious things, particularly the foundations of a new constitution for the new South Africa which is emerging in fits and starts.

We have worked overtime. Only problems in connection with the artwork on the cover prevents us from bringing out a book within a year of our inception. "Protecting Human Rights in a new South Africa" has now been published by Oxford University Press (Cape Town) and is on sale, in South Africa; all of which seemed unimaginable when we first moved our papers into the Institute of Commonwealth Studies.

The book is in essence a collection of studies made by us in the past 12 months covering such themes as: Developing a Human Rights culture, Gender Rights, The Family, Children's Rights, Future of the South African Legal System, Property Rights and Rights to Land, Culture, the Constitutional Future of White South Africans, and the whole question of individual rights, democracy and cultural diversity.

We have attended innumerable conferences, and a steady stream of visitors from South Africa, the UK, and other parts of the world have come through our doors. The administrative and infra-structural support of ICS, has given us a solid base from which to do our research. We would like to thank the staff for their support and their courtesy in shepherding visitors the four flights up to our offices, and consoling them on their descent. The atmosphere - a quiet - non-interfering buzz - has been perfect for our purposes. We have held small, very 'in-house', seminars for post-graduate South African law students, and also participated with the ICS in a one-day seminar attended by a large number of South Africa specialists.

We look forward to a further two years of turbulent and productive research. Hopefully, by the end of that period, all of us in the ICS will have the satisfaction of having contributed in a small but significant way, directly or indirectly, towards a new, non-racial, democratic constitution for South Africa; and who knows, South Africa might even be on its way back into the Commonwealth.

ALBIE SACHS

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