

## Buthelezi spells out PW Botha's dilemma

**A**t a May meeting with the Prime Minister of Portugal in Lisbon, Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi described the erosion of Afrikaner support for the policies of the National Party.

He was in Portugal attending an international conference on Southern Africa involving high-level political participants from more than 30 countries, including the head of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, General Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, with whom he also had talks. When the Group visited South Africa, General Obasanjo met with Dr Nelson Mandela.

Dr Buthelezi told Dr Cavaco Silva that South Africa's State President ruled in a National Party idiom which emerged when Afrikanerdom was a monolithic political power.

"Afrikaners really believed that through apartheid they could divide and rule and that they had the ability to entrench themselves as a central political force which could implement their policies prescriptively," he said.

"This total Afrikaner solidarity on which past National Party Governments so relied, is now being eroded."

A dominant force behind this erosion was, of course, economics. Apartheid as a policy has had to be modified because of economic imperatives.

The expansion of the South African economy had demanded a rate of Black/White worker substitution and the elevation of Blacks to ever more skilled jobs and supervisory positions. It had also created the kind of total interdependence between Blacks and



Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi at a meeting in Lisbon with Portugal's Prime Minister, Dr Anibal Cavaco Silva.

Whites which was incompatible with apartheid ideals of a progressive separation of Blacks and Whites socially, economically and politically.

**D**r Buthelezi said it was not as though Afrikaners were facing an emerging problem en bloc.

Afrikaans businessmen began to realize that their interests were inseparable from the interests of their English-speaking counterparts.

If apartheid curbed the expansion of business in a developing economy, then apartheid did not serve the vested interests of the business community.

Afrikaner businessmen put pressures on the South African Government to moderate apartheid and to remove apartheid restrictions which hampered market-place development.

Theirs was a voice of dissent in what was hitherto a situation of total Afrikaner solidarity.

The total economic dependence of Whites on Blacks also led to the Government itself to initiate some reforms such as the scrapping of the Pass Laws and Influx Control Regulations, the granting of trade union rights to Blacks and the recognition of Blacks as permanent members of society in so-called White South Africa in which they had to be given security of tenure in the areas in which they lived.

These were moves away from classical apartheid and the growing voice of discontent amongst Afrikaner businessmen exerted a restraining pressure on the Government. Internal dissent within the ruling National Party itself began to emerge.

It was in this climate, in which modifications of apartheid were essential to survival, that intellectuals began questioning apartheid as a philosophy of the ruling Party.

# TOP LEVEL TALKS IN PORTUGAL

*DIVIDE AND RULE WON'T WORK*



development beyond its framework. This he could not do by prescription.

**D**r Buthulezi said Mr PW Botha was now dependent on Black co-operation and it was not forthcoming.

"He is thus faced with a dilemma of not being able to proceed in the constitutional direction which he chose when the Tricameral Parliament was introduced.

"From an Afrikaner point of view he is in the invidious position of Blacks holding a veto right over what he, as the Head of State, can do constitutionally.

"The White electorate are aware of his constitutional dilemmas and ever-increasingly they are beginning to lose faith in his ability to break out of them."

It was in these emerging circumstances that Black bargaining power was ascending.

While the State President remained trapped in his dilemma, ever-increasing common cause was being established across colour lines.

**T**he ferment in the National Party itself penetrated ever higher levels and over time former National Party members of Cabinet and other leading Party dignitaries split away to form the Conservative Party.

"We now have a situation in which Afrikanerdom itself is being polarised leaving a growing far right wing group proselytising amongst National Party members."

One of the very real dilemmas the State President faced was that if he proceeded too slowly to introduce reforms, he could not escape the economic crisis into which apartheid had thrust South Africa.

If he speeded up the reform programme he faced a growing right-wing attack and increasing membership losses to the Conservative Party.

"If the State President makes the assumption that he has shed his right-wing and he is free to move further and faster in his reform programme, he has, politically speaking, to recognise that the split in Afrikanerdom is permanent," said Dr Buthulezi.

"Such recognition further erodes faith in an Afrikaner government to dictate events in South Africa to ensure the future well-being of Afrikaners.

"The State President's dilemma is that he is an Afrikaner leader of an Afrikaans Party and that the logical conclusion of moving away from a reliance on an Afrikaner base necessitates finding new allies to replace that are lost."

This dilemma, he told Portugal's Prime Minister, was shown very clearly by the way in which Mr Botha was now trying to grapple with the political need that he had to win Black support for the reform programme he had announced.

The South African Government has had to recognise that unrest will continue to mount unless a new political aspirations were met.

"It has also had to recognise that the politics of prescription cannot succeed in creating Black populations loyal to the political structures that apartheid has dictated for them.

"It has finally recognised that only consensus can achieve that loyalty."

The new constitution which the State President introduced in 1984 entirely precluded Blacks from having any role in Parliament in principle.

Blacks rejected the present constitution and they rejected every attempt the State President began making to legitimise the constitution by obtaining Black involvement in constitutional

**T**here was a rising groundswell demand for the normalisation of South Africa as a modern, Western-type industrial democracy which was running across all race groups.

"The politics of negotiation in South Africa now hold real promise. The outside world needs now to understand that the recalcitrance of the South African State President is being challenged from within.

"The outside world also needs to understand that while the threat of escalating violence and the threat of isolating South Africa economically and punitively were in some respects beneficial, the actuality of violence and the actuality of economic action against South Africa rallied the White electorate behind the State President.

"However much they doubt his ability to escape the political dilemmas he is in, they do not doubt that he commands the strongest military force on the continent of Africa and is in totally effective command of the country's internal security apparatus.

"Every act of violence and every external act of pressure buys time for the State President in which he can delay in making really meaningful reform."

# WHY "REFORM" HAS FAILED

**A**ddressing the Institute of Political Studies in Portugal, Dr Buthelezi said Mr P W Botha's reform programmes had not failed to get off the ground because reform was impossible in South Africa.

Neither had they failed because the only way to bring about change was through revolutionary violence.

"They have failed to get off the ground basically because despite the ripeness of historic time, Black opposition is fragmented and this lack of unity undermines the power of Black democracy," he said.

"Black political radicalism, which is itself totally inept and incapable even of bringing about a multi-party democracy, thwarts the endeavours of Black democratic movements."

Dr Buthelezi said it was vitally important that Portugal understood the Black response to attempts by the South African Government to initiate a reform programme.

"There is an internal South African democratic process at work which is obscured by South Africa's national media and particularly obscured by the international media.

"Everywhere in the world Government and private spokesmen are talking about the need to apply coercive measures to South Africa primarily because they lack faith that the internal democratic process can eradicate apartheid in time to avoid a bloody holocaust in South Africa."

South Africa was in a melting pot and the National Party was in the same melting pot together with Black political organisations, including some which were committed to making the armed struggle the primary means of bringing about change.

If the National Party was now failing to mount a reform programme and if Black democratic non-violent opposition to apartheid had not yet produced a winning thrust, so too had revolutionary forces failed to bring about change. Dr Buthelezi said there was a need for selected foreign governments sympathetic to the respective "warring political factions in South Africa", to come together internationally and to make joint inputs through a permanent

Secretariat located in South Africa and structurally linked to existing embassies.

"The politics of negotiation in South Africa cannot rediscover the wheels of

## ARMED REVOLUTION

### *Why it won't work in South Africa*

**A**rmed revolution in South Africa would be impractical, ill-conceived and immoral, Dr Buthelezi told defence experts in Lisbon.

Addressing Portugal's Institute for National Defence, he spelt out reasons why he had not thrown his weight behind violence.

If armed revolution could succeed both in vanquishing apartheid and establishing a just democracy in South Africa, it would be a different matter, he said.

However, Africa's experience had shown him the foolhardiness of assuming that strategies which worked elsewhere on the continent would succeed in South Africa.

While, for instance, he had great regard for Mozambique's late President Samora Machel and Zimbabwe's Mr Robert Mugabe, he was absolutely sure that, given African National Congress leader Oliver Tambo's circumstances, they would have "failed as dismally" as the ANC.

One of Mr Tambo's problems was what he called the schizophrenic nature of the ANC. It was three organisations wrapped as one.

In it, the SA Communist Party, Umkhonto we Sizwe and "what one can perhaps call the Nationalist ANC" all had their own inner decision-making processes.

Politically this made the ANC organisation entirely different from Frelimo and ZANU - PF.

The other pertinent factor was that circumstances robbed the ANC of real decision-making authority on the

democracy and should take the tried and tested in working democracies around the world and apply the principles that the civilised world has learned at such great cost over great periods of time," he added

ground in South Africa - where it was trying to wage its armed struggle.

Dr Buthelezi said that travellers flying over South Africa saw a criss-cross of roads, railway lines and power lines with villages, towns and cities at regular intervals.

"What you see amounts to a vast network eminently suited to the conventional military and police forces of the South African Government and awesomely prohibitive for the movement of arms, men and supplies."

**T**hey also had the strike power to "go on the rampage across the length and breadth of Southern Africa" whenever the Government chose.

This again made the situation vastly different from those in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe where the Portuguese administration and the Smith regime could do nothing about revolutionary springboards in neighbouring territories.

These were pertinent reasons why the ANC in exile at it was, had failed, over 25 years, to develop an armed struggle from abroad.

It had received very substantial Soviet backing for decades and had a "multi-million" annual budget with more arms and personnel than it could deploy, so its failure was not traceable to lack of resources.

"It is simply true," Dr Buthelezi said, "that more arms and more personnel would make no difference. The military might of Pretoria really is awesome in the African context."