

WHAT THE PAPERS ARE SAYING

TIME

Time magazine recently took a deep and penetrating look at South Africa and presented to its readers a picture of a country hopelessly — and violently — at odds with itself.

In a display of 10 pages of text and colour pictures, it came to no conclusions but placed a strong emphasis on the likely future role to be played by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

Though the lengthy reports carried interviews with a wide range of prominent South Africans, including President P W Botha, Bishop Desmond Tutu, the Rev. Beyer Naude and Dr Van Zyl Slabbert, they focussed more strongly on Chief Buthelezi than any — seeing him as the one leader with whom both Blacks and Whites might be able to talk.

Though noting his opposition to the armed struggle of the ANC Mission-in-Exile and that he has been called a "traitor", a "sell-out" and a "puppet", Time said that both Black and White foes of apartheid knew that without Chief Buthelezi's consent, a solution to South Africa's problems was "virtually inconceivable".

"He is pragmatic, articulate and dynamic. When Buthelezi speaks both Whites and Blacks listen, yet what he has to say pleases neither audience."

Time quoted Chief Buthelezi saying: "The forces demanding the politics of negotiation are mounting. Sooner or later the politics of negotiation will become a reality."

The article continued by saying that to many Blacks, Chief Buthelezi's message was one of compromise and negotiation and was not militant enough.

It quoted Chief Buthelezi saying: "We do not seek cheap popularity by posturing in favour of the armed struggle when we do not even have the tools to carry it out. We have not said that we Blacks may not be forced to one day take up arms. The point is that there are just no arms to take up at present."

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... SPOTLIGHT ON THE BOTHA SPEECH ...

Inkatha stakes its claim for 'kwaNatal'



CHIEF BUTHELEZI: Government will have to take his role more seriously.

David Braier
Political Correspondent

PROPOSALS for a single kwaZulu-Natal government may have been boosted by Inkatha's powerful role during the past fortnight in restoring order to the Durban area.

The Government will now have to take more seriously the role of Inkatha and its leader, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, in negotiating black political rights in South Africa.

This could be the spark of the Natal riots. Inkatha's power has been further consolidated after it helped to quell rioting over the past two weeks. This has placed the onus on the Government to take seriously the Buthelezi Commission plan for a single government in kwaZulu-Natal.

Inkatha has more than a million paid-up members. Political sources say the Government will now be more anxious than ever to ensure that Inkatha's strength is never directed against it, especially as it is indebted to Inkatha for helping to curb a

situation which could have escalated into uncontrollable violence.

The Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, Mr Chris Heunis, has accepted that kwaZulu-Natal does not necessarily share the same circumstances as the rest of the country.

He has said the Government would be prepared to consider any regional dispensation proposed by the people of the region.

This week the kwaZulu Cabinet and the Natal Executive Committee took further steps towards arranging joint administration for the province.

Dr Oscar Dikomo, secretary-general of Inkatha, said: "There was never any doubt in our minds that Inkatha is a powerful organisation capable of exerting influence in the whole situation."

He said Inkatha was faced with a practical situation which had developed into rioting. "We had to apply our non-violent philosophy by protecting the lives and property of our members and seeing that peace was maintained. This was our main motivation."

Dr Dikomo said Inkatha believed in non-violence just as sincerely as other organisations believed in the armed struggle.

He said that although Inkatha's only motive during the riots was to restore peace, he would regard it as "a very useful side-effect" if the organisation's political proposals received more sympathetic consideration.

Dr Dikomo said that while Mr Heunis was prepared to examine a regional solution for kwaZulu-Natal, the Government was going ahead with developments which would confuse the scene.

These included the scrapping of the provincial councils and the creation of regional service councils.

He said that already the kwaZulu Cabinet had a higher status than the Natal Executive Committee in negotiations. But when the provincial councils were abolished next year, the new regional authorities would be nominated and not elected. This would mean they would have an even lower status and it would be more difficult for kwaZulu to negotiate with them.

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The Star Common ground for a convention

AT A TIME when conservative and liberal whites opposed to apartheid are searching for political muscle, a dangerous tendency exists in bodies such as the PFP's youth wing to flirt with organisations whose real ideals may be obscured by anti-apartheid rhetoric. The convenient camouflage of having a common enemy cloaks many political groups. But the time has come for those who believe in peaceful reform and orderly change to rip aside that camouflage and demand to see the bottom lines of political manifestoes.

For instance: exactly where does the United Democratic Front want to take this country? What does the African National Congress really intend with nationalisation? Is the Pan Africanist Congress still in favour of denying voting rights to whites? Does the End Conscription Campaign intend to abolish the army altogether? What sort of government would Mr Mandela fight for were he released? What would Cosas do about protecting minority

rights, should it get the government it wants?

These are questions which have to be answered if apartheid is to be fought by a united front. Political parties need open manifestoes which can be critically scrutinised and publicly questioned. The Government is of course partly responsible for the secrecy and air of conspiracy which surround some organisations — the PAC, ANC and now Cosas are banned — but those who plan to join forces to destroy apartheid need to take a second look at some of their partners.

This is one reason why Dr Slabbert's call for a Convention Alliance makes sense. At a forum such as he proposes differences can be thrashed out, common ground discovered, those in favour of violence perhaps discarded by those who still insist on peaceful change. There is a third option between repression and revolution: it is real reform, negotiated at a convention. Dr Slabbert's alliance could be the first step towards this.