

BUTHELEZI VERSUS BOTHAS

“... I will not be used as a mopping-pad to clean his apartheid floor....”

It is now four years since the Prime Minister of South Africa, Mr P W Botha and the Chief Minister of KwaZulu, Chief M G Buthelezi, have held talks.

Chief Buthelezi says he sees no point in meeting Mr Botha if it is his intention to talk “...only within the four corners of apartheid.”

However, as the elected leader of

six million Zulus and the President of Inkatha, he says it would be “irresponsible” of him to avoid discussing with the Prime Minister (if a suitable agenda would allow him to do so) the burning issues confronting all South Africans.

Chief Buthelezi has made it clear that he would be prepared to have a discussion with the Prime Minister if

they could first meet privately to clear “certain matters” between them.

“I would like to discuss with Mr Botha the problems of the new constitution — the fact that 22 million Black South Africans have been rejected.

“I would like to discuss the policies of negotiation and reconciliation and to talk about how Black and White can move towards positions in which the body politic and the White electorate could elect representatives to go to a conference table where power-sharing was the major item on the agenda.

“I would like to discuss the future of South Africa with him and to talk about the multi-racial destiny which will inevitably be the destiny of this country.

“The issues which I would like to put on the agenda are of a fundamental nature and will not change within the foreseeable future.

“The urgency of meeting the Prime Minister for me therefore has no specific date attached to it.

“I believe it would be unwise for us to sit together to talk about important things while the air has not been cleared to enable us to do so.

“The Prime Minister has made discussions between he and I very difficult.

“I recognise Mr P W Botha to be the most powerful man in Africa and as despicable as apartheid is, he is my Prime Minister.

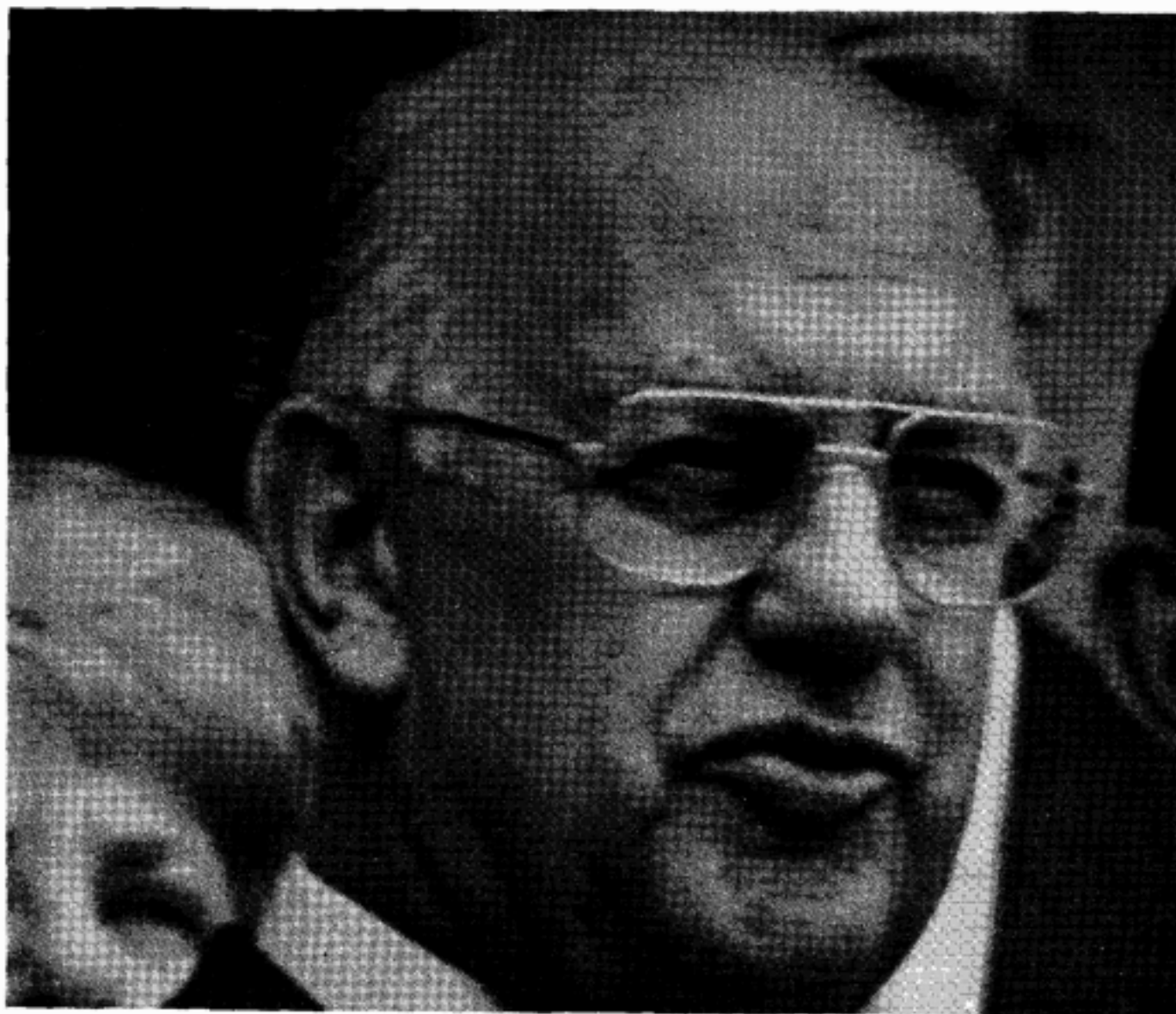
“All political sense therefore tells me that it would be rank foolishness on my part to spurn any genuine invitation he may extend to me to sit down and talk with him.

“However, past experiences with South African Prime Ministers have taught me that our Prime Ministers have difficulty in talking to a Black leader in an open and exploratory way.

“Dialogues I have had with them have left me with the somewhat jaundiced view that discussion is for them a one way thing in which I am informed on how best I can further the Government’s apartheid intentions.

“Blacks and Whites will have to talk to each other sooner or later and the only real agenda for such discussion is an agenda which includes the problems presented both to Blacks and Whites by the need to accept compromise as an essential ingredient in any lasting political formula.

“In the meantime I am not prepared to be used by the Prime Minister as a mopping-pad to clean his apartheid floor.”



Prime Minister P W Botha. Picture: Sunday Times.