



SULLIVAN ON SATURDAY



UDF may cause a bigger stir later on

CHOICE of a political topic this week ranges from affidavits on police brutality and the PFP's attempt at a Bill of Rights to the forming of the United Democratic Front and Dr Perez de Cuellar's visit to South Africa.

For Namibia watchers, the fact that the UN Secretary General is finally coming to see things for himself should prove interesting but the real story will be written next week, after he has talked to those who run South Africa.

One could discuss the diplomatic jockeying and manoeuvring that finally resulted in his acceptance, but that little diplomatic coup is now confined to the history books.

And affidavits on police brutality are of such a serious nature that discussion of them would take up the whole column.

The Bill of Rights proposed by the PFP to soften the constitution and entrench human rights has been adequately covered in the Press.

So has the constitution debate, which preoccupied Parliament this week.

In Cape Town this week the United Democratic Front held its first Press conference.

This front for some 400 organisations has been getting a good showing in English-language newspapers, and the extraordinary number of people at the Press conference showed it has aroused media curiosity, if nothing else.

There were no fewer than eight representatives of one newspaper there, four reporters and four executives.

And the editor plus several staff members turned up from another Cape Town newspaper.

This is incredible, considering the organisation will hold its first public meeting today.

About 40 reporters and media people attended the Press conference, and questions were cautious and polite at first.

Facing the Press was a veritable battery of UDF "spokespeople" fielding the queries for information.

For a group of people obviously unused to the Press, they did pretty well.

Then questions became a little bolder, and eventually the inevitable South African stumper was asked:

"Are you in favour of violence as a solution to the country's problems?"

Basically, the answer was that the UDF did not advocate or condone violence, neither in the form of spectacular explosions like the ANC's nor in the form of institutionalised violence as the "oppressive apartheid system" was seen to be by many.

Not a bad answer for beginners in the political game.

The UDF represents 400 groups ranging from the SA Mineworkers' Union to the Soweto Committee of Ten and from the Young Christian Workers to the Islamic Council of South Africa.

It includes the SA Allied Workers' Union, Azaso, Women for Peaceful Change, and the National Union of South African Students, and even the Media Workers' Association.

Its aim is to fight the new constitution and some new bills on influx control introduced by Dr Piet Koornhof.

Its motto is: "Apartheid divides, UDF unites."

It is a front that will be watched very carefully by the Government, but already it has attracted so many organisations that it will be difficult to ban or harass too openly.

Those debating the constitution in Parliament might end up discovering extra-parliamentary opposition to be more powerful than those with voting rights.

A thought:

Wouldn't it be nice if we could all watch the Third Reading debate live on television? □ — *Political Staff.*