

# "AN ATTACK ON US ALL"

**T**he South African Government's restrictions on 18 Black organisations has "slammed all doors for quite a while" on any action which may have led to KwaZulu and Inkatha engaging in negotiations about the future of the country.

At the opening of the 1988 KwaZulu Legislative Assembly, Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi told the SA Government representatives present that their "banning without banning" of the organisations had sounded a gong for a standstill in reform politics and for peaceful negotiations, to which Inkatha and KwaZulu remained committed.

Addressing Dr Gerrit Viljoen, Minister of Education and Development Aid, Dr Buthelezi said Blacks saw this latest action by the Government as a move against Black democracy.

"The prevailing national State of Emergency and the continued deployment of many thousands of South African troops on the borders, across the borders and inside the country, bears testimony to the fact that the South African Government does not rule by consensus," he said.

"The State of Emergency and the harsh action taken under it, bears testimony to the fact that the State President and the South African Government cannot rule this country through the normal processes which characterise good government."

**D**r Buthelezi added that the Government would have to normalise the situation before any negotiations about the constitutional future of the country could take place.

It was "tragic" that in South Africa's polarised society, racism compartmentalised Blacks from Whites who ought to be joined together in common cause. Nobody could wish away the consequences of the oppression by the minority of the majority in the country.

"It seems to me that the longer we delay in coming to grips with the prickly nettle of the Black majority's voicelessness in the land of their birth, the more unlikely it becomes that we will be able to resolve our problems in the best possible way, through peaceful negotiations," he said.

The Government's action in restricting the Black organisations was "extremely unfortunate" and there appeared to be "no light at the end of the tunnel", despite the fact that there was so much going for the country and so much promise which could be welded together in a triumphant drive towards democracy.

Dr Buthelezi told Dr Viljoen that he was beginning to "dread the day" when he would have to do the "bidding of the masses" as they demanded that he abandon a willingness to compromise and gather the people together to lead them in practical non-violent action.

"I shudder as I think of the possibility that such a day may come, under the current circumstances. In a country of such great tensions, one cannot help imagining conflict and confrontation, even at the end of non-violent action, if there is no way forward as far as fundamental changes are concerned," he added.

**H**e said he was making this statement "in measured tones" and in a simple way.

"If the South African Government is not aware that there is something awesomely inexorable about the progress of radicalisation in Black politics, then you, Mr Minister, and your Cabinet colleagues can bluster and accuse me of sabre-rattling.

"I say this because I have experienced being blasted at ministerial level in the past, when I warned about the inevitability of violence in 1983 when the tricameral parliamentary system was imposed on all of us.



"My warnings were interpreted as threats. These were no more than expressions of just my gut feelings as a hard-bitten politician of quite a few decades now.

"I do not rattle sabres in saying what I have said ... I have said this in order to share with you our desperate felt need for the reform process to now actually get off the ground. We dare not mill around on this critical historic crossroad which South Africa has come to. We must go forward.





"There is time yet to gather the goodwill which makes that going forward possible. "Every delay in getting a meaningful reform programme off the ground which Blacks could applaud, eats away at the time that we have left to us." Dr Buthelezi said there did not seem to be a "snowball's chance in Hell" for reform to get off the ground while the State of Emergency existed. "Let us hope that the reasons for

imposing the State of Emergency will soon disappear before desperation leads people to half-baked desperate action." The National Party's headlong drive along the road of prescriptive politics had terrible implications for every race group in the country, he added. There was no White destiny, there was no Afrikaner destiny with the broader White destiny which was a separate

destiny from the destiny of other race groups. History had unequivocally dictated that South Africa was one country, that it had one people and that all the people of the country had but one destiny. Whatever that destiny was, every race group in the country would share it. This meant that every race group in the country would share not only in the errors but also in the wisdom of every other race group.