

THE RAGING BATTLE FOR MINDS

— Life and death issues —

Black political organisations in South Africa were in competition with each other because each was aware that how apartheid was removed would determine the future of the country, Dr Mangosuthu Buthelezi told the Secretary-General of Portugal's Social Democratic Party at a meeting in Lisbon.

In a memorandum to Mr Dias Loureiro, he said that conflicting forces were seeking alternative ends in authoring the future of South Africa.

"This intense awareness that what we do and how we do it will author the kind of future we are going to have, makes for very turbulent politics," he added.

He said South Africa faced "stark alternatives" as a nation. There would be radical change whoever brought it about.

"Apartheid is doomed and will be eradicated by whoever is the final mover in its removal. That apartheid should be removed is common cause which we as Blacks accept.

"We are, however, intensely aware that how we remove apartheid, what tactics and strategies we employ, who we ally ourselves with as we do so, will determine the kind of society we will have after apartheid."

Life and death issues were involved and Dr Buthelezi said he yearned for the day in which politics in South Africa was about the best way of doing that which was commonly agreed needed to be done.

There was a raging battle for minds being waged in South Africa, he said.

"On one side of a deepening polarisation in Black South Africa, there are those who want to establish a one-party State," he added.

"On the other side, there are those who want to establish a multi-party democracy.

"In the former, tactics and strategies designed to bring about the eradication of apartheid are also designed to



produce the conformity of thought which disciplined revolutionaries believe they have the right to impose on people.

"Those who seek multi-party democracies seek the destruction of apartheid in tactics and strategies which are designed to set the people free to do their own choosing and to author their own destiny."

Those who aimed at establishing a one-party State were far more prone to make the good of the State synonymous with the good of the Party and vice versa. Those who sought a multi-party future saw the good of each and every party as being subservient to the good of the State. Inkatha was emphatically a black

political organisation which sought to establish a multi-party democracy. It was committed to a multi-strategy approach in which it recognised that other kinds of structures, and all Black organisations, should be doing the best they could in their own circumstances to eradicate apartheid.

Dr Buthelezi said the South African Government could hold armies at bay, it could curb explosions of violence in South Africa.

"It can enact apartheid's laws but historically the South African Government is now at a cross-roads beyond which the present veto rights Blacks have over constitutional development must lead to a negotiated settlement."

Buthelezi spells out PW Botha's dilemma

At 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.

Dr 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.

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