

EDITORIAL

Inkatha's Secret Funding

GOVERNMENT'S secret funding of Inkatha has left reputations on both sides badly tarnished. How much damage has this done to the negotiation process? Ironically, it may have helped it forward.

President De Klerk's image has been dented and the relationship between him and Nelson Mandela is unlikely ever to be quite the same again. Ministers Vlok and Malan are at last out of the way and their replacements are among the most forward-looking members of the Cabinet.

Furthermore, the Government's weakened moral position may force it to step up the pace of negotiations in an attempt to win back any international goodwill the scandal may have cost it.

The ANC on the other hand, whose response to the affair has been eminently responsible, must feel that its negotiation position has been strengthened. Why not push ahead with negotiations while that advantage lasts?

So, as far as the Government and the ANC are concerned, there may be a shared incentive to get on with it.

The problem remains Inkatha. It has suffered great damage from the revelations about the

funding and its close relations with the security police. There must be a strong temptation amongst the ANC hawks to now try to sideline it completely.

To adopt such a strategy would be a grave mistake. There is nothing to suggest that Inkatha's grassroots rural support has suffered at all from the scandal. Its capacity for disruption, if it should decide to follow that line, is formidable. The sensible strategy for the ANC to follow is one which will see Inkatha fully engaged in negotiations, so that its members will feel they have helped shape the future and that they will be able to live comfortably with it.

Mr Mandela's insistence on 'inclusivity' in his keynote address to the Umkhonto we Sizwe conference recently, so that "no body of opinion feels excluded" in the difficult days ahead, gives full support to this principle. The dangers of abandoning it have been given bloody evidence by rightwing Afrikanerdom's violent response to the State President's meeting in Ventersdorp. They too must somehow be made to feel included. We certainly cannot afford to carry a disaffected faction on that scale, let alone two, into the future. ●

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