

THE INDEPENDENT ON SATURDAY
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NEWS

Buthelezi hits at ANC in KZN

Peace process not taken to the people

A high sense of morality and political integrity, which characterised the relationship between the IFP and the ANC at the national level, had not percolated down to the KwaZulu-Natal ANC leadership, IFP President Mangosuthu Buthelezi charged yesterday. **PADDY HARPER** and **XOLISA VAPI** report

IFP leader *Inkosi* Mangosuthu Buthelezi criticised certain KwaZulu-Natal leaders of the ANC yesterday at the funeral of murdered KwaNongoma mayor and IFP youth leader Mr Joseph Bhekuyise Sikhonde.

He said they were undermining progress towards peace and reconciliation being made at national level by himself and President Thabo Mbeki. "It seems that the vision, high sense of morality and political integrity which has characterised our relationship at

the national level has not percolated down within the provincial leadership of KwaZulu-Natal.

"It seems that within KwaZulu-Natal, the opposite attitude prevails and some people in the top provincial leadership of the ANC are trying to undo the hard work President Mbeki and I have laboriously performed to build peace and reconciliation on a daily basis," Buthelezi said.

He said while he did not hold the ANC leadership in the province responsible for Sikhonde's death, "I hold them responsible for not having reacted to this tragic occurrence".

This, he said, created the sense there were elements in the ANC provincial leadership "who have not ceased to be no more than dogs of war".

Buthelezi said, however, Sikhonde's death should be turned into a means of taking reconciliation forward.

Buthelezi paid tribute to the slain headmaster, saying he had paid the ultimate price for his loyalty to the IFP. Buthelezi drew parallels between the killing of Sikhonde and plots to assassinate him (Buthelezi) while he was working in KwaNongoma in the

1970s. "I feel deeply devastated by sorrow and guilt as I stand before the lifeless body of Mr Joseph Sikhonde for I know that he died to bring forward the work that I began in Nongoma more than 30 years ago," Buthelezi said.

KwaZulu-Natal ANC leader Mr S'bu Ndebele responded last night.

He said Buthelezi might not have been well informed about the killings in KwaNongoma which had "brought home sharply that the ANC and the IFP should not delay the process of getting peace understood at grassroots level".

Ndebele said the ANC would respond to Buthelezi's concerns at the ANC-IFP 10-a-side meeting on Wednesday, adding that he and IFP's peace negotiator Reverend Celani Mtetwa were working on a joint programme "to take the peace out of the boardrooms to Nongoma, Ulundi as well as other trouble-spots".

Several thousand mourners gathered in KwaNongoma for Sikhonde's funeral.

A large contingent of South African Police Service and South African National Defence Force members were deployed in the town.

CHICAGO BOUND



IFP MP Kisten Rajoo and his wife Sheila are packing their bags for the United States after his appointment this week as consul general in Chicago. He is the third IFP figure to be given a diplomatic post: Former KwaZulu-Natal Premier Frank Mdlalose was posted to Egypt and ex-provincial Education Minister Vincent Zulu was sent to Jordan. Rajoo said Durban stood to benefit a lot from his diplomatic posting as it was a twin city with Chicago and he pledged to work closely with Mayor Obed Mlaba for trade, educational and cultural advancement

Picture: ZANDILE NSUNTSIHA

ANC hearts and minds at stake

Party's strength in diversity

The battle for the heart and soul of the ANC is heating up ahead of the Port Elizabeth conference, writes **ESTELLE RANDALL**

THE ANC's National General Council next month will be a critical test of both the ANC's strength and of the relations with the alliance which swept the party to an overwhelming election victory in 1999.

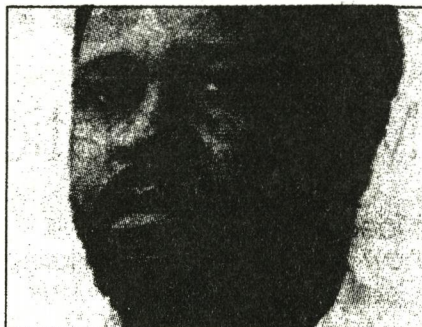
As ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) member Mr Dumisane Makhaye says: "It's the party and its government, not the government and its party. People voted for the ANC and if anything goes wrong, it's the ANC that's going to be blamed."

For some, like South African Communist Party (SACP) Deputy General Secretary Jeremy Cronin – also a member of the ANC's NEC – it'll be more than just debate: "Obviously there's a battle for the heart and soul of the ANC," he believes.

Debate and decisions taken at the general council will determine how effectively the ANC can drive through the necessary changes to the economy while at the same time increasing popular participation in Government.

Speaking during debate on the budget vote for the presidency this week, President Thabo Mbeki identified both as crucial for the delivery of real improvements to the lives of ordinary South Africans.

The council is meant to offer the movement an opportunity to reflect on



JOEL NETSHITENZHE

'The problem in South Africa is not too little opposition. It's too much opposition to fundamental changes'

DUMISANE MAKHAYE
ANC NEC member

how well it has implemented decisions taken at its 50th conference in Mafikeng in 1997 and the hope is that the ANC will be able to "make a qualitative leap forward".

Senior members have high expectations that this will happen.

Says Makhaye: "The problem in South Africa is not too little opposition. It's too much opposition to fundamental changes. Power doesn't only reside in Parliament, it resides in the economy. But who controls the economy, the security forces and the intelligence community? It's basically not us.

"The balance of forces now allows the ANC to make greater advances, to take bold decisions that couldn't be taken five years ago."

But Makhaye warns: "A delayed action is as dangerous as premature action. We're at a moment where the possibility of fundamentally transforming the country is there. The experience to do so is there."

But documents meant to stimulate discussion at the council have not dealt substantively with the crucial issues facing the movement.

The three documents were principally drafted by ANC NEC members Mr Smuts Ngonyama, Government Communications head Mr Joel Netshitenzhe and Public Enterprises Minister Jeff Radebe, a senior member of the SACP.

The original document on racism – crafted by Ngonyama – and tasks of the national democratic revolution – crafted by Radebe – are understood to have come under substantial criticism from the ANC's NEC and had to be reworked. Nevertheless, they still fall short of expectations.

As one senior ANC member remarked: "The big questions aren't there. Instead, there's a lot of garbled mother-and-apple-pie stuff. The disappointment from branches is fairly widespread. The quality of the documents reflects a kind of intellectual decline in the ANC. We don't want to see broad policies just confirmed."

Senior ANC members attribute the absence of serious debate to several factors.

One is the acrimony in the debate about Government's macro-economic policy, which drove the ANC-led alliance to the brink of collapse in 1998 when the former president Mr Nelson Mandela and then-deputy Mbeki meted out bruising criticism to the SACP and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) for their strident opposition to the policy.

But since 1998, the SACP has moderated the way in which it raises criticism of Government economic policy and appears to have begun

implementing the advice it received from a senior ANC leader: "You must lead without being seen to lead".

The more nuanced approach from the SACP has won apparent appreciation from senior ANC members, such as Deputy President Jacob Zuma, of the role of the SACP and its contribution to debate on crucial issues of the economy and jobs.

Despite ambivalence from the ANC's National Working Committee about the importance of the SACP's recent national strategy conference, Zuma is understood to have insisted it was important enough for him to attend.

ANC hearts and minds at stake

The party has interpreted this as a sign of appreciation for its attempt to moderate the manner in which it raises criticism.

Another reason for the absence of debate on the hard issues, says a senior ANC member, is that large conferences – such as the Mafikeng conference in 1997 – have tended to be overshadowed by election lists.

The next national conference of the ANC – where elections are held – will take place in 2002. Makhaye believes the alliance itself will come out much stronger.

"The council is allowing debates to happen. We don't usually have that opportunity," he says.

A strong alliance is as crucial for the ANC, as it is for the SACP and Cosatu. Despite the apparent irritation among some ANC members in Government with Cosatu's mass protest action, it would be fatal if such a large formation – of more than one million paid-up members – left the fold and became vulnerable to seduction by groups which perceive the ANC as too conservative.

The SACP is also an important source of intellectual capacity – some key ministers such as Trade and Industry Minister Alec Erwin, Radebe, Public Service and Administration Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi and Water Affairs and Forestry Minister Ronnie Kasrils are members of the SACP. Though small, the party has endeared itself to Cosatu and has been able to sustain a membership of 13 000 paid-up members, despite its meagre resources and an environment which does not favour communism.

Fatal

Although there are no clear proposals for change, one of the ANC's discussion documents prepared for the General Council warns: "Without the open intervention of the democratic State, a black middle class will grow at the expense of the majority of people and will have a fatal impact on building democracy which is representative of the people as a whole.

"(The State) should pursue policies which aim at maximising the number of (black) South Africans who can share in the economy and, while improving their own material conditions, gain capacity to help determine the direction, pace and depth of our economic transformation."

This is similar to the position of the SACP, which at its strategy conference last month called for vigilance "that change is not reduced to the transfer of some power, privilege and wealth to an emergent black elite, while the underlying class, race and gender inequalities of our society remain."

But the SACP went further by urging Government to focus more on mobilising domestic private and public capital, instead of relying on foreign investment as the mainstay for jobs and growth. Foreign direct investment trends for 1998 show that South Africa attracts less than 10% of what goes to Chile or Australia.

But the struggle isn't to turn the ANC red. The ANC's strength lies in its diversity and the SACP does not want that to change. What it wants to prevent is the ANC becoming an instrument for the elite.

□ The ANC in KwaZulu-Natal will hold a special provincial general council meeting today as part of the build-up to the organisation's national general council meeting.

The meeting, which will be held at ML Sultan Technikon, will be presided by party Provincial Chairperson Ndebele, while discussing proposals on national council documents.

OPINION

IT IS difficult to understand what it would take for the leadership of the New National Party (NNP) to concede that it is time to cut its losses and bow out of the political stage with some measure of grace.

It has been said many times before, but it just does not seem to occur to the party that it is impossible for it to shed the baggage of its apartheid history and be repackaged as a new commodity in the political market.

It is bleeding to death, and it does not have the capacity to rescue itself because it continues to miscalculate very badly. Sadly, the writing has been on the wall for quite a while, and, in fact, once the NNP surrendered power to the ANC during the first democratic election in 1994, it began the slow, painful road to its death.

The decision to withdraw from the Government of National Unity caused irreparable divisions within the party. The transition of power from former State President FW de Klerk to Mr Marthinus van Schalkwyk was not a smooth affair. The departure of stalwarts such as former golden boy Mr Roelf Meyer to join forces with Mr Bantu Holomisa in the United Democratic Movement did not inspire confi-

dence in the leadership of the young Van Schalkwyk who was perceived to be too steeped in the traditions of the old Nats.

The electorate has not bought the story that there is something new in this National Party. Worse still, the party has alienated both extreme strands, from the progressives in the form of Meyer and former Foreign Affairs Minister Pik Botha, to old-school conservatives such as Dr Tertius Delpont and former Law and Order Minister Hernus Kriel.

What is now left of the once mighty NP is a dissipating core around Van Schalkwyk which hangs around to close the door as each

member leaves.

Ironically, the NNP is paying a price for trying to make amends for its past. Van Schalkwyk is correct in his analysis that the future for traditionally white parties does not lie in present-day Democratic Party approach to opposition politics. A confrontational approach towards the ANC leaves parties such as the DP and the NNP very vulnerable to sustainable propaganda that they long for the good old days of apartheid.

Unfortunately, by pulling out of the Government of National Unity the NNP lost an opportunity to use whatever little influence it had in the

Cabinet to impact on South African politics.

From the wilderness, it is now fighting for political survival. It is being forced to forge alliances with the DP from a position of weakness, whereas if it had read the political signs correctly not so long ago, it could have negotiated from a position of strength.

The two parties announced this week that they had committed themselves to exploring the possibility of fighting the local government election, earmarked for November, under one banner.

A joint working committee of 11 people from each party is to consider

all things considered
CYRIL MADLALA



Time for the ailing NNP to adapt or die

proposals from both sides, and each delegation will report back to their respective leader in seven days.

DP Chief Whip Douglas Gibson leads the DP team which includes Federal Council Chairman James Selfe, Deputy Chairman Tertius Delpont, Western Cape DP leader Mr Hennie Bester, the provinces's education MEC Helen Zille and stalwart MP Mr Colin Eglin.

The NNP delegation includes the party's Executive Director Renier Schoeman, Parliamentary Caucus Chairman Sheila Camerer and Mr Peter Marais of the Western Cape.

Van Schalkwyk might have a point when he says it is arrogant of the DP to invite other parties to fight the local government elections under its banner, but the reality is that the DP can afford to be arrogant this time.

Already Dr Louis Luyt's Federal Alliance has announced that it will join forces with the DP for the November poll, and from the way NNP councillors across the country are flocking to the DP, there might not be anything left of Van Schalkwyk's party by the next election.

This could be the last opportunity for the NNP to make the right move at the right time. It will just have to learn to live with the DP's arrogance, or die alone peacefully.

It is not much of a choice, really.



OUTRAGED: Chairman of the National Youth Commission Mahlengi Bhengu

Picture: ZANDILE NSUNTHA

'Virginity tests no answer'

Dignity just as crucial

Virginity testing is not the answer to social problems such as Aids, teenage pregnancy, child abuse and rape, say youth and human rights groups. **MELANIE PETERS** reports

HAVING an older woman and her uncle looking at her private parts to ensure that she was a virgin scarred her for life. So said National Youth Commission Chairman Mahlengi Bhengu (30) this week while giving a personal account of the traumatic experience during her childhood.

"I was 12 years old and had just entered puberty when I went to live with my uncle in Eshowe. He insisted that my niece and I were tested to ensure that we remained virgins.

"My sexuality and the things I would go through during adolescence or why the test was done was never openly discussed with me," Bhengu said.

They were tested several times before she left for boarding school a year later.

"My uncle always used virginity testing punitively, saying that my friends were a bad influence. He threatened to make sure I remained a virgin.

"It was very scary and even though I had not been taught about my body, I knew that an older man looking at and touching my private parts was wrong.

"But I could not resist and it was infuriating. Virginity testing is a violation of the rights of young girls and women. The challenge lies in family-based education and parents speaking openly about sex and Aids, its implications and responsibilities," she said.

Hot issue

This week virginity testing was a hot issue at two major conferences held in the province – the HIV/Aids Youth Indaba in Durban and the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) conference on virginity testing in Richards Bay.

The stances of the CGE, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) and the National Youth Commission were clear: the practice of virginity testing undermines human dignity, gender equality and youth development.

Virginity testing of girls, some as young as five years old, was common in KwaZulu-Natal and the cultural practice was on the increase in the province, despite the concerns of human rights groups, said CGE commissioner Ms Beatrice Ngcobo. The virginity tests conducted on young girls to ensure their purity and to promote "morality" were an outrageous abuse of the rights of the child as enshrined in the Constitution, Ngcobo said at the Youth Indaba, of which the theme was "The impact of cultural practices in the fight against HIV/ Aids".

CGE Deputy Chairman Phumelele Ntombela-Nzimande said virginity testing put the whole responsibility of safe sex, abstinence and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases solely on the shoulders of women.

Damage

She questioned how looking at a young girl's private parts would bring about a solution to South Africa's HIV/Aids problem.

"Often these tests are done when the damage is already done when a girl has been a victim of abuse or incest. We need to adopt an holistic approach to address these social problems that plague our society and that are not detrimental to the dignity and health of an individual," she said.

However, African Renaissance Institute Senior Fellow Professor Pitika Ntuli, who encouraged the youth to embrace their own culture, said he was in favour of virginity testing.

It was a controversial practice only because Western cultures dismissed it as a sexual practice and did not see it holistically. Ntuli felt the practice could help identify rape or abuse victims and perpetrators, and could help get victims counselling so they did not go through life with such baggage.

He said those not in favour had something to hide and had "skeletons in their closets".

'Wrong-headed' Makhaye still embraces communism

From N CLELLAND
Democratic Party

MR DUMISANI Makhaye is as useful to honest political discourse as David Irving is to writing truthful history. His article *Fascism will not triumph* (*The Independent* on Saturday, June 3) in which he excoriates the leader of the opposition and the DP is a case in point.

In the words of Franklin D Roosevelt's long-time adviser Harold Ickes, he "suffers from halitosis of the intellect".

But worse than that, he has so twisted and distorted and vandalised Mr Tony Leon's speech on the Holocaust to the National Assembly that he now suggests that Leon, the Jew,

is some sort of Holocaust denier or trivialiser.

Makhaye infers that Leon is basically a fascist which is the most outrageous piece of hate speech heard in the last decade in this country.

As in the best traditions of *Mein Kampf*, he has taken half a fact and turned it into one big lie.

The strange thing is that the very speech from which Leon is accused by Makhaye of representing a trivialisation of the Holocaust was described by no less an authority as the Chief Rabbi of South Africa, Cyril Harris, as an "insightful and valuable contribution".

The truth of the matter is that this is what Leon said:

"Communism under Stalin killed more people than Nazism. But what makes the Nazi crime worse is that they killed people not for what they had done, but for what they were ... these atrocities, like apartheid, were born of racism."

He went on to say: "For us who are living, there is an over-riding duty towards those who died: remember them. We must never, never forget the Holocaust. And I say exactly the same about the victims of apartheid: they must never be forgotten."

"During the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we heard people say, 'It's time to forget about the past'. It is never time to forget about the past. If we forget, we dishonour those who suffered. If we

forget, we are preparing the way for these crimes to be repeated."

These are not the words of a man who denies the existence or importance of the Holocaust.

Accusing the DP leader of using the opportunity to "engage in cheap politicking" is as ludicrous as it is ironic. Makhaye may hide behind his cheap disguises and use his "Tony Light" characterisation to spread anti-Semitic garbage - it doesn't fool anyone, least of all the people of South Africa.

Also, Makhaye should have a careful look at his own ANC ranks. Leon and others in opposition have been called "neo-Nazis" and "neo-fascists" by the ANC.

But the further truth of the matter

is the ANC wants to have it both ways. On another score it wants to own the "Holocaust" by introducing debates in Parliament on the subject.

This is part of the ANC's ongoing determination to co-opt suffering for its own political purposes, but with the egregious propaganda machinations of the communist-trained Makhaye it is unlikely to succeed.

By the way, not because it is better or worse but because it is a simple historic truth: more people died under communism than under Nazism.

The tragedy is that while Nazism has been rejected by every right-thinking person, communism is still embraced by the wrong-headed likes of Makhaye and his comrades.

THE INDEPENDENT ON SATURDAY, June 17, 2000

Tomorrow's challenge

SA youth face the battle of Aids and unemployment



YOUTHFUL SPIRIT: (From Left) Premier Lionel Mtshali, youth leader Mntomuhle Khawula and Deputy President Jacob Zuma arrive at the Durban Youth Day festival. Young women (above) get into the spirit of things at Curries Fountain in Durban

Pictures: ZANDILE NSUNTSHA

The emotionally-charged scene a photographer captured in Soweto one Wednesday morning 24 years ago paradoxically paid to his dreams of becoming one of the world's top photographers, writes Political Reporter **XOLISA VAPI**

SADLY, when Mr Sam Nzima, pushed the shutter, capturing the scene of a dying 12-year-old Hector Peterson being rushed to hospital by a comrade during the 1976 Soweto student uprisings, he took the one picture which was sure to bring to an end his job and his career.

The student uprising which started that morning soon spread like wildfire from the south of Johannesburg to other parts of South Africa, setting in motion a rollercoaster of civil disobedience and rebellion which eventually toppled the apartheid state.

Nzima (65) is now a forgotten man, but his picture is not.

He is bitter, very bitter that he has not been duly honoured for his work which shocked the world, except for the Shell Picture of the Year Award in 1976, which was only worth R400.

Nzima yesterday received unofficial recognition from the youth. Thousands of youth across the country wore T-shirts displaying his famous black-and-white photograph - thanks to the National Youth Commission, which organised yesterday's event which saw the youth marching, dancing and partying till late to celebrate the contribution made by the youth 24 years ago.

While the theme of yesterday's event was Aids and unemployment as the battles confronting the youth, President Thabo Mbeki addressed a joint conference of the ANC and the Afrikanerbond Jeugliga in Pretoria to warn against race-based disparities of distribution of wealth, income, opportunity and skills.

Mbeki said if these disparities were not addressed, "at some point in future we will experience an enormous and angry explosion by those who remain disadvantaged", like the land question in Zimbabwe.

He said affirmative action had an "inherent conflict", with 98% of the top brass in the business sector still being white.

Speaking in Durban yesterday, Deputy President Jacob Zuma urged the youth to step up the fight against Aids, which he said "does not discriminate between black or white or between young and old".

Premier Lionel Mtshali said the youth were faced with the challenges of an economy that no longer wanted them. "No young person leaving school can regard his or her education as complete. The next step for everyone should be to acquire a skill," Mtshali said.

And, in an interview in Durban yesterday, Nzima said that he identified himself with the Aids theme, and urged young people to heed Zuma's call.

He still vividly remembers the time of June 16 1976. The day was Tuesday at the Johannesburg offices of *World* newspaper. As usual, *World* Editor Percy Qoboza had assembled his reporters for a daily news diary meeting. "Tomorrow," he told them, "there is going to be a student march against Afrikaans as the medium of instruction around Soweto. We must cover it."

March

By 6am on Wednesday Nzima and reporter Ms Sophie Tema were already on the streets of Soweto, waiting for the march to start from Naledi High School.

They followed the protesting youth as they picked up their fellow

students from other schools. Peacefully they marched up and down the streets. At Mofolo Park they stopped.

Then Tsietshi Mashinini, one of the student leaders, climbed up a tree and addressed the crowds, telling them that this was a peaceful march.

"Suddenly, one student came running from the direction of Orlando East. 'Hey, majitha! Sekurongo, amarhata ayeza.' (Guys! Things are bad, the police are on their way)

"I sensed trouble and drifted away. Then the police arrived, led by a white guy with a stick under his arm. He ordered the students to disperse, but they responded by singing *Nkosi Sikelel' i-Afrika*," recalls Nzima. Then all hell broke loose as police started shooting. A young boy fell. It was Hector Peterson, widely regarded as the first victim of the 1976 unrest.

As Vuyo Mbuyisa was carrying the wounded boy to the hospital, with Hector's crying sister next to

him, Nzima approached them and captured a picture which was flashed on the front pages of the globe the following day.

Nzima's career had reached its pinnacle, but his excitement was short-lived. His picture marked the end of his photojournalism career.

He was summoned to appear at Johannesburg's notorious John Vorster Square Police Station for interrogation.

"Percy Qoboza refused and told the station commander that I was not responsible for sending the picture to the overseas newspapers. United Press International circulated the picture," said Nzima.

A dilemma confronted him. He either had to remain in Johannesburg and risk police harassment, and even death "for denting the image of South Africa abroad", or resign.

He chose to leave. In 1977, Nzima's photographic career, which began on the streets of Johannesburg in 1954, came to an abrupt halt. He left for the then Eastern Transvaal, now Mpumalanga, where he applied for a liquor licence to run a bottle store in the Bushbuckridge rural area of Lilydale.

He is bitter, though. He says his picture has been used many times around the world, but with little mention of the man who took it.

"The main thing that worries me is that Hector Peterson Square was named after my picture and a memorial statute is erected where he was shot. When heads of state visit Soweto, they are taken to that place in memory of the heroes and heroines of the struggle," says Nzima, who claims he was not invited when former President Nelson Mandela unveiled Hector Peterson's memorial in 1991.

"They recognise the picture and not me. But when I see it I feel great, having contributed to the history of this country. That is the only consolation. This is one of the most published pictures in the world," he claimed.

Nzima has no intention of making a comeback as a news photographer, but he has kept the spirit of camerawork alive in Bushbuckridge, where he today teaches young people, whom he believes are tomorrow's future, how to develop black and white pictures.

(2)

Leaders in the world of medicine

Committed King Edward

From Dr CM HOVE
Zimbabwe

ICAME down to South Africa and proceeded straight to Durban to King Edward VIII Hospital with one mission in mind; to acquire deep medical knowledge, skills and experience and then take all this back to Zimbabwe.

On arrival here, I soon realised how much more information there was to learn. The challenges ahead would be enormous. Today that has passed and I am well equipped and happy to go back home, team up with the great people of Zimbabwe and together develop our country.

Before that, I feel very compelled and happy to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to King Edward Hospital and its staff for making it possible for me and many other foreign supernumerary registrars to acquire the necessary skills.

The road was, and is, tough, rough and thorny with all sorts of obstacles. But somehow I, and many others, remained with great hope that the future would be better.

Vomiting

King Edward staff are dedicated, show high performances and above all, total loyalty. This, I think, is one of the factors keeping this large hospital where it is in Africa and in the world.

I observed a few patients coming into hospital, one was bleeding following severe trauma, the other two had gastro-intestinal related diseases with vomiting and diarrhoea. As one of the patients on a stretcher passed near where we stood, he suddenly had a severe bout of vomiting, throwing literally everything on the walls and floors of the King Edward corridors. A colleague told me that this was a daily event here at King Edward Hospital.

Soon after the above events, one sees the hard-working men and women mopping and cleaning the walls and floors of the hospital. The dedicated hospital porters are up and down the corridors transporting patients to and from various wards and departments. Others are seen transporting linen and clothes to and from laundry and wards. Surely it takes a greater passionate heart to be able to render such vital services.

These general hands, as they are often referred to, are essential and without them hospital services can almost come to a standstill. I praise and thank very much all those hospital floor cleaners, the tireless porters and linen staff for the marvellous job you are all doing in this busy hospital. Please keep it up.

King Edward has wonderful doctors and nurses. Most of the medical disciplines are headed by men and women who have written and published tons and tons of medical literature. The X-ray Department where I have spent most of my time is similarly equipped. This has brought a firm and good reputation to the hospital.

Commitment

Patients stream into King Edward day and night and those I personally spoke to regard this hospital as their only and last source of hope. The great majority of King Edward Hospital patients are the very sick, poor, disadvantaged with few viable alternatives. They need everything the nurses and doctors can offer.

Thank you again to the great doctors and humble nurses for your commitment to the value and needs of the patients. There are problems here and there, some of these I personally witnessed, but my word

today is one of encouragement that this spirit of commitment and hard work continues to prevail.

The administrative staff is also superb. Although I did not interact so much with them, I have seen them at work. They co-ordinate all activities and events in the hospital and this is no easy task.

I thank the Chief Medical Superintendent and his team for keeping this great hospital running, despite the obstacles and difficulties that we are all aware of. The idea is to continue to search for great solutions and keep the people's hospital running.

As I leave for home, I would like to extend invitations to you all to visit Zimbabwe. The current political climate should be temporary and will soon cool off as Zimbabwe emerges with solutions. Stability and economic progress lie ahead.

After I have gone, many more supernumerary registrars will come to King Edward VIII Hospital. Please give them the best that you have given me.