

PICK 'N PAY STRIKE

Biting the hand . . .

At this stage Raymond Ackerman must be feeling a little like P W Botha. There he was, like Botha with his reforms, ostensibly doing his best for people who stubbornly refused to co-operate. In Ackerman's case, the most hurtful aspect of the recent strike at Pick 'n Pay (P'n P) was the blow to corporate image and personal pride.

The turnover loss during the five-day stoppage is put at R6m-R8m. That's a bagatelle given P'n P's annual gross sales of more than R2 billion and, in profit terms, it is almost negligible. The company's paper thin margins (well below 2% after tax in financial 1986) means the bottom line loss translates into no more than R200 000.

And even that could be made up during the year, so it's not the cash which is causing the concern. Worse hit financially are the 6 000-odd workers among P'n P's 21 000 labour force who responded to the call by the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (Ccawusa). On average they lost R100 by going on strike to achieve R5 a month more than they had been offered. Not exactly a worker triumph.

What disappoints Ackerman most, we suspect, is that Ccawusa should have picked on him yet again. P'n P was also a strike target in 1984. Ackerman likes it to be known that he is a caring employer. The chairman's fund sends employees' kids to schools and universities; a nonracial employment policy has seen blacks rise to senior positions on merit; there is an all-race housing scheme and talk of employee share options.

Even more to the point, P'n P by common consent is one of the best payers in the retail sector. But that cuts no ice with Ccawusa, which says the scales are still too low.

We concur. Even now, P'n P's new minimum of R386 a month isn't much to shout about. Indeed, personnel director René de Wet readily admits that when the minimum wage was around the R300 a month mark "we were vulnerable to comparisons with poverty datum lines" (see *Current affairs*).

So, better payer or not, the company has learnt the hard way that the "paternalism" De Wet speaks of does not make it proof against industrial action. After all, who can convince the shopfloor worker that if wages move too far ahead of the market, his company will become less competitive, that profits will disappear, outlets be closed and jobs lost?

The answer, sadly, is that P'n P is seen as an easy mark. It presents a caring public image of which the unions are happy to take advantage. Also, it is a rich company — rich because it is efficient. This very image of success is part of P'n P's problem. As the unions see it, the company makes money so it can afford to pay.

But corporate success is a fragile thing. What Ccawusa should be asking itself is how long P'n P can remain successful, and employ so many thousands, while it is constantly subjected to disruption. In short, trade union rights also bring responsibilities. It's something Ccawusa and its fellow unions should realise before they no longer have any members to represent.

PEOPLE'S COURTS

Sliding towards anarchy

The advent of "people's courts," whereby township tribunals pass judgment on offenders, instead of reporting them to the police, is alarming. No one has as yet discovered how these courts are appointed — or what qualifications they may have for running judicially sound hearings.

The *Business Day* reporter who was permitted to attend a people's court case in Alexandra was shown an example of some leniency. Would it have been the same had no outside witness been present? Quite possibly not.

Elsewhere, with or without the benefit of any kind of hearing, people have been necklaced by those who rule the townships in the shadow of Casspirs and Buffels. Part of the point of a sound judicial system is that it is *public*, and that offences and penalties are defined by common law or statute.

Of course, what has happened is that since September 1984 township dwellers have had less and less cause to like the armed forces of the State. In addition, there remain many unpleasant discriminatory laws on the book; and that situation does not assist blacks to feel any great liking for the

official courts.

But as a senior lawyer points out (see *Current Affairs*), the potential for abuse — for the degeneration of the township "courts" into "kangaroo courts" — is alarming.

In truth, "people's courts" are not courts at all. The defence appears to rest with the accused, and the onus of proof is upon him. Ironically, this is rather the way the old pass law courts used to operate — perhaps that is the way the "comrades" think all courts operate.

The "people's courts" must be condemned. But it is up to the police, in particular, to demonstrate that they are there for the benefit of the community. The only way in which this can be achieved — and confidence in the force won back — is if there is far more professionalism in the police.

At this late stage, the hope may appear slim. But if private individuals increasingly take it upon themselves to administer "justice" — including the death penalty — then a chilling new dimension will have been added to our severe problems of social stability.

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Counting the economic costs

What, if anything, has Pretoria gained from the military strikes at alleged African National Congress (ANC) positions in Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia? Given the immediate worldwide condemnation, and its economic reflection in the precipitate decline of the rand, their timing, at the very least, is questionable.

After Ronald Reagan's air raid on Libya, and the decision of the Tokyo summit on terrorism, it is possible that President P W Botha and the Cabinet calculated that world opinion would be muted: that the general climate is against terrorism. And there is clear evidence of increasing shipments of arms, bombs, rockets, and landmines being infiltrated into SA; indeed, the ANC has declared 1986 as the year of Umkhonto we Sizwe, its military wing.

The latest strikes are also being officially presented as pre-emptive in nature. Last week, Defence Minister Magnus Malan (currently hospitalised) said: "The circumstances in which we find ourselves are enough justification for operations against terrorist bases across our borders, should the threat originate there." He meant it.

In addition, it can be surmised, a little *kragdadigheid* will do the Nationalists no harm on the Right, whose parties have welcomed the raids. And for Pretoria belligerence has also paid some dividends in Lesotho and Mozambique.

Whether the SADF's raids — which left at least three dead — will prove in time to have saved lives at home remains to be seen. At this stage, no one in the international community equates them with the US's Libyan action — directed at a state that sponsors international terrorism.

Instead, SA's targets lay within the borders of three Commonwealth countries — and took place when the Commonwealth's Eminent Persons Group (EPG) was in SA pursuing its diplomacy for regional peace. As is now known, the basis of the EPG plan was the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners in exchange for a moratorium on violence by the ANC.

A long shot — but better than intensified violence, which is crippling business confidence and forestalling economic recovery. Only two weeks ago, the political tide appeared to be turning slightly in favour of President Botha's reformist administration. The abolition of influx control impressed the West. And the EPG had noted that its initial negotiations had been "positive and constructive."

The initiative is now in ashes, and the EPG was leaving SA as the FM went to press. Some cynics (who are not always wrong) even contend that the raids were designed to smash the EPG's plan. That Pretoria never seriously intended negotiating anything with

Were the attacks on neighbouring states fully thought out? In the absence of hard evidence that they will in the longer term save lives from terror attacks, the price in terms of economic and social deprivation could be too high.

the ANC, which it blames for the unrest.

Does this mean that sanctions are inevitable? The EPG, it can be recalled, was established to assess the progress of reform in SA, precisely to stave off the prospect of sanctions. Perhaps it will be up to Margaret Thatcher to hold the line — for the rest of the Commonwealth wants retribution. But even in ignoring calls for sanctions in the UK House of Commons, Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe condemned the raids. So SA is treading a dangerous path.

Our other friend, the US, has also sharply expressed its anger at SA's behaviour. Small wonder. Chet Crocker's years-long policy of constructive engagement has very little to show for itself. Southern Africa is in turmoil, revolutionary forces are at work within SA, and Namibia is as far from independence as it ever was.

The pressures will be on Crocker to de-

monstrate to an increasingly sceptical electorate (with presidential elections just two years off) that constructive engagement is a game worth the candle. Pretoria is giving him very little to assist in an exceptionally difficult task.

World confidence in SA's stability this week was expressed in the price of the rand (touching US42,35c on Tuesday). Should the slide continue, hopes of lowering inflation will be halted in their tracks. Business confidence is at an all-time low and aggregate demand is going down, not up. With high unemployment, escalating unrest, deepening racial polarisation, continued disinvestment, the capital flight and emigration, all the ingredients are in place for a further erosion of the social fabric.

That means that any economic recovery — which would create new wealth and jobs — will be yet further deferred; and just how long can we afford matters to go on as they are? Any supply-side measures being contemplated by the State President's Economic Advisory Council will be increasingly less effective as the economy becomes wholly sensitive to political developments. Without some major political gesture — such as Mandela's release — the way ahead leads to a siege economy and a siege mentality.

Were all these factors considered by government when it decided on the raids? If they were, and the hope was that the world would understand the South Africans' need to curb concerted terrorism and so reduce the overall level of violence, then Pretoria miscalculated. The gamble has not thus far paid off.

Part of the reason for this is that whatever is done about the ANC (and must presumably continue to be done as long as the organisation co-ordinates terrorism in SA), the origins of the countrywide violence do not lie in some Communist conspiracy, but in the social conditions created by apartheid.

It is difficult to believe, for example, that the ANC has any hand in what is happening in KwaNdebele. Pretoria is pushing the homeland towards "independence" in December, against the wishes of what appears to be the majority of the people who live there (see *Current affairs*). So a mini-civil war has broken out and most of the legislative authority members have had their houses burnt and are reported to be on the run. What was that P W Botha said earlier this year about a common South African citizenship?

Right now government must produce evidence that the raids were justified. If it cannot, then the economic and social cost, especially over the long term, may have been much too high.

See *Current Affairs*, page 47.



SADF target in Botswana ... worldwide anger

PRETORIA AND THE ANC

Raids overshadow peace

SA's lightning commando raids and an air strike into three neighbouring states this week should not have come as a surprise, although the timing was questionable.

International reaction, too, was unsurprising — except, perhaps, to government, who seemed to expect far greater Western understanding for the action, particularly after last month's US raid into Libya.

However, the international outcry was huge. Increased world pressure on SA has brought punitive economic sanctions very much closer. And the raid quickly took a beating. The US was considering recalling its ambassador, as it did after the SADF raid on Gaborone last June. It remains to be seen whether America and Britain will, as in the past, veto the inevitable sanctions call in the UN Security Council.

The Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group (EPG) initiative — seen by many as the best last chance to forge a peaceful settlement — has all but collapsed. The seven-member group who were in SA at the time of the raids, packed their bags and left Cape Town prematurely on Monday. Evidently, they saw little point in going on with efforts to promote dialogue between government and the African National Congress (ANC). Only hours before the raid, the EPG were in Lusaka meeting senior ANC leaders; they returned to Cape Town on Sunday for what was to have been a key meeting with Cabinet ministers on Monday.

Little short of a miracle will now stop the EPG recommending increased sanctions against SA when it reports to the Commonwealth heads of government next month.

Despite the obviously demoralising blow against the ANC, some strategists predict an escalation of ANC activity, particularly in the northern and western border regions, and possibly also stepped-up attacks on "soft" targets.

With hindsight, it is simple to see the build-up to the raids. Last week in parliament, Defence Minister Magnus Malan gave clear warning of what was to come. "The circumstances in which we find ourselves are enough justification for operations against terrorist bases across our borders should the threat originate from there ... The merit of such action was underscored by the US' courageous action against Libya after many threats and provocation," he added.

The following day, President P W Botha warned in a speech to the President's Council that government was determined to use military force if necessary to maintain the sovereignty and integrity of SA, and defend people against "internationally organised terrorism." Among the white community this is, by

and large, a popular stance.

Botha also sent a thinly veiled message to the EPG not to interfere unduly in the domestic initiative for constitutional change. Government would not be cast in the role of merely another party to these elusive talks with the banned organisation, but rather as their convener, he explained.

Coupled to the raids, Botha's warning to "foreign meddlers" and similar warnings by other ministers now make it clear that government is not particularly interested in any outside mediation in peace efforts.

The ANC is regarded as a terrorist organisation and must be dealt with as such. Malan said he hoped the activities of terrorists in Libya would lead to a greater understanding by the West of SA's cross-border operations. The West, however, makes a clear distinction between the "State-sponsored" terrorism of Libya and Syria, and the position of the ANC, which the US views as a significant party that must be involved in finding a solution to the South African problem.

There were at least two other clear pointers to impending action. On Sunday, police announced the discovery of the largest-ever cache of what they said were ANC arms and explosives hidden in the veld near Krugersdorp; and evidence in the trial in Rustenburg

of a Botswana civil servant detailed the alleged infiltration of ANC insurgents from Botswana.

First reports from the three capitals indicated that three people were killed and at least 13 wounded in the raids. Two died in Lusaka and one in Gaborone.

The logistics of the raids remained a close secret. It appears the operation began just after midnight on Monday with the simultaneous bombing of the ANC's central Harare offices at 16 Angwa Street, and a house used by the ANC at 19 Eve's Crescent, Ashdown Park, a suburb on Harare's western outskirts. Both were destroyed.

The attackers appeared to have been in motor vehicles and may have infiltrated Zimbabwe from Mozambique, about 350 km to the east. Soon afterwards, Zimbabwean PM Robert Mugabe claimed his forces had arrested four people involved in the attacks and confiscated a vehicle and explosives. South African authorities said that everyone involved in the raids had returned safely to base.

At about 6.45 am on Monday, helicopter-borne troops attacked what was claimed to be an ANC transit facility at Mogaditsane near Gaborone, Botswana, after leaflets were dropped warning local residents to remain indoors and assuring them that the raid

CROSSROADS MAYHEM

The death toll in inter-faction fighting at the sprawling squatter settlements near Cape Town was expected to rise above 20 as the *FM* went to press.

More than 100 people have been injured and an estimated 20 000 left homeless after more than 2 000 shacks were burnt down in Crossroads.

The clashes, between conservative "fathers" and radical "comrades," began at the weekend.

Four factions are involved. There are two "fathers" groups, led by Johnson Ngxobongwana and Sam Ndima; and two "comrades" factions, led by Melford Yamile and Christopher Toise.

Broadly speaking, the "comrades" are United Democratic Front-orientated. The "fathers" appear to support the status quo.

There are an estimated 300 000 people living in Crossroads and surrounding settlements. Police have denied allegations that they have been covertly supporting the "fathers."



was against ANC "gangsters."

At about the same time, SAAF jets attacked ANC bases at Makeni plots, 15 km south-west of the Zambian capital, Lusaka. The organisation's "operations centre" and its department of information and publicity were reported to have been hit. It seems likely the jets used East Caprivi as a base for the Lusaka raid.

Some saw the raids as calculated to go down well with the white Right, which is making inroads into Botha's support base. However, the raids are in line with previous ones and could, in part, be linked to Pretoria's desire to extract security accords with those states.

They also re-emphasised government's hard-line "anti-terrorist" stance and were an obvious warning to the ANC that while violence and instability continues inside SA, the organisation's operations in neighbouring states will be under serious threat of attack.

MINE PAY TALKS

Double trouble

The predominantly white Council of Mining Unions (CMU) was in an aggressive mood this week, preparing to ballot members' willingness to strike over a wage dispute with the Chamber of Mines. But the odds that industrial action will actually occur seem stacked against it.

However, the week also marks the start of the chamber's wage negotiations with the three mine officials' associations, as well as gold mine wage talks with the black National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). And there is far greater chance of a strike resulting from the NUM talks than from the CMU dispute.

The CMU represents 24 000 workers in eight unions. Conciliation board negotiations last week broke down even though the difference between the union's demand for a 15,1% across-the-board increase, and the chamber's 14,6% offer, now amounts to a mere 0,5%. But even though official conciliation procedures have been exhausted, the history of CMU-chamber negotiations suggests that all is not necessarily lost. Time and again settlement has come only after conciliation board meetings.

Of course, this year could be different. Feedback from members, says CMU secretary Tom Neethling, indicates that the possibility of strike action is much greater this year. But he does not rule out all chances of settlement.

The chamber, for its part, is staying cool. Says its industrial relations adviser, Johann Liebenberg: "The difference is too small to contemplate striking over. They would lose more in wages than they would get if we gave in to their demand. Likewise, I don't think mineowners will be prepared to face a strike over 0,5%. It is still possible that further talks will resolve the differences."

Wage talks with the NUM, which will cover 27 gold mines, present the chamber with a far more difficult challenge. The union's militancy is well known and for the last two years its members have struck in support of its demands.

This year, the NUM is looking for a 45% across-the-board wage increase. It is also demanding: May Day as a paid holiday; a reduction in work hours to 80 hours a fortnight; annual leave of 44 days for all workers; a 100% leave allowance for all workers; no loss of income for workers transferred from one occupation to another due to disability or illness; a guarantee that when workers return from leave they will receive the same rate of pay as before and similar benefits; paternity leave for prospective fathers; and improvements to shift allowances, maternity, death and funeral benefits.

One demand missing from the NUM's list, and a feature of past negotiations, is for the scrapping of the racially exclusive definition of "scheduled person" in the Mines and Works Act. This would end job reservation on the mines. For years the NUM has been excluded from talks on this highly sensitive issue between the chamber and the established mine unions. But government has given a firm undertaking that the definition will go this year, and the NUM says it will be discussing the matter with the chamber and the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs. However, the union is reserving its right to introduce the issue into the wage talks if it gets no satisfaction.

FOSCHINI STRIKE

At the crossroads

The drawn-out dispute between the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Ccawusa) and the Foschini group has been overshadowed by the more spectacular Pick 'n Pay strike. But, as the spectre of a consumer boycott and widespread sympathy action rises, its effects could be far more dramatic.

The legal strike over the retrenchment of 274 workers is now into its fourth week. It follows months of talks in which the union attempted to negotiate a short-time deal in an attempt to avoid lay-offs. But Foschini contends that the nature of group operations makes the scheme impracticable.

According to company spokesman John Corlett, about 250 workers from 46 Foschini, Markhams and Pages stores, and the group's Isando distribution centre, are on strike. The action is centred on the Witwatersrand and the Vaal, with some stores in Natal and the Free State also affected.

Since the beginning of the strike the group has maintained an easygoing attitude, tolerating picketing and sleep-ins. Last week, though, it obtained an interdict to end the sleep-in at Isando which threatened to become unmanageable. Neither side has yet shown any sign of softening its position.

Corlett says that although the strike is an irritant, it actually affects less than 10% of the group's stores.

But there are indications that the strike is coming to a head. Management has previously said it was not planning to dismiss strikers. But this week Corlett told the FM: "We are reviewing the situation daily."

And, at a weekend conference, the union decided to intensify a hitherto half-hearted consumer boycott of the group's stores. The major target is likely to be the 133 Pages stores which cater mainly for black trade. Ccawusa says the Congress of SA Trade Unions and the United Democratic Front are both supporting its cause. And the union is also threatening sympathy action at other retailers.

The strike has reached a critical stage. Resolution depends on a compromise settlement. But it has become increasingly difficult for either side to shift positions to initiate further talks. The alternative, though, is a lengthy conflict which will sap both.

KWANDEBELE

A nasty little war

Growing resistance to what local residents call "the joke of KwaNdebele independence" threatens to drag the fledgling "national state" into civil war before it is born. Inhabitants are questioning how the poverty-stricken area can become "independent." The core of the homeland was a collection of resettlement camps not more than 100 km from Pretoria, established in the Seventies. Most residents commute daily, weekly or monthly from dormitory shanty towns to jobs in the PWV triangle.

Moreover, Chief Minister Simon Skosana's government is falling into disfavour because residents resent its autocratic style and believe MPs are using their positions to accumulate personal wealth. In the last week, businesses and homes worth R4m be-



KwaNdebele's Skosana... autocratic style widely resented

longing to 41 of the 46 MPs were selectively burnt down. Groups of youths are fighting members of Imbokhoto, the vigilante arm of the government. Imbokhoto's leader is Skosana and his Interior Minister Piet Ntuli is its vice-president.

Imbokhoto has been accused of assaulting and killing Ndebeles who oppose independence. Assault charges have been laid against Skosana and Ntuli for their alleged role in attacks against Moutse residents after the highly controversial area was incorporated into KwaNdebele last January.

Violence erupted last week after the funeral of an Imbokhoto victim. At the time of going to press, the area appeared to be quiet. In the past week, however, at least nine people have died in clashes between police and residents, and fighting between residents. A number of MPs are on the run.

Some MPs have tried unsuccessfully to shelter on white farms bordering KwaNdebele. Most of the farmers have close links with the homeland as they use labour from the area, but the farmers do not want to risk being identified as supporters of the KwaNdebele government. The SADF and police are patrolling the area and those MPs still in KwaNdebele are said to be under police guard. Schools have been closed and a number of pupils have been arrested.

The announcement earlier this month that KwaNdebele, a sprawling dustbowl, would become independent on December 11, sparked off the rural rebellion. Last week, about 30 000 villagers gathered at the kraal of Paramount Chief David Mabusa Maboko Mahlangu — traditional head of the Ndzundza royal family — and demanded that Skosana withdraw his acceptance of independence. At the meeting, they also demanded that the hated Imbokhoto be dismantled.

Although Skosana has now said his legislative assembly could reconsider independence, it is clear the struggle encompasses greater issues. The survival of his "government" is being threatened by the combined opposition of the royal family and popular rebellion, spearheaded by young people in the area. One of the youth leaders is said to be Timothy, a son of Skosana.

The motivation of the royal family is, however, ambiguous. It is not clear whether it is against independence per se, or merely independence under Skosana. Princes Cornelius and James Mahlangu sit in the KwaNdebele Legislative Assembly. The question is, why have they not spoken out until now?

Prince Cornelius Mahlangu is Skosana's Minister of Health. When he tried to address the meeting last week, he was shouted down. He has since announced his resignation. James Mahlangu says the royal family joined the protest because residents were unhappy at not being consulted. A referendum on independence has never been held.

It is not clear what role the royal family sees for itself should Skosana's government fall. James Mahlangu says it will "depend on

the people." Young people in the area have already made it clear they are fighting against all apartheid structures and do not want any homeland authority.

Over 40 projects (paid for by the SA taxpayer), have been designed as part of an "independence package." One consists of constructing a new capital city, KwaMhlangu. Work has already begun. Another is a plan to build a new prison with its own gallows, at an estimated cost of some R2m.

Vast tracts of white farms have already been bought for "consolidation" into KwaNdebele. The first block of 69 000 ha (which, together with the 66 000 ha Moutse area more than doubles the size of the "country") were handed over to the KwaNdebele government in April. A further 80 000 ha are due to be added; and the Rust der Winter farms, meant to compensate for the loss of the Nebo farms to Lebowa, are still being haggled over.

Residents charge that it is impossible to get a business licence, which is a prerequisite for obtaining finance to start a business, as this is controlled by Ntuli. Allegations of nepotism and corruption are rife. People suspect the allocation of the farms could be open to similar abuse.

BLACK FREEHOLD

Barriers remain

Although blacks say that by giving them the new right to buy land, government has gone some way towards accepting them as citizens of SA, they also believe their efforts to acquire property will still be hampered by the Group Areas Act (GAA).

The African Bank's MD, Moses Maubane, tells the *FM* that freehold rights will definitely give black people security of tenure. However, he adds, there are still other problems such as the GAA and the Land Act, which will continue to bar people from buying property in most areas.

"Although we, the African Bank, are operating in the CBD of Johannesburg, for instance, we still cannot buy the premises we rent because of the GAA. In that sense, granting freehold rights has not changed much politically. These legal restrictions have to be removed to give full meaning to the granting of these rights."

The granting of freehold rights to blacks, leaders in commerce and industry point out, means that every black person can — in terms of the law — buy land for which he gets title, and not just the house he occupies as is the case under 99-year leasehold. It also creates a better climate for building societies and banks to extend loans to blacks, as the land can serve as loan security.

They explain, too, that under the 99-year leasehold scheme, building societies were reluctant to get involved, particularly in cases where the loans required were too small and, therefore, unprofitable, because the land was only leased to the individual.

Until 1978, when 99-year leasehold was introduced, blacks in urban areas were officially regarded as "temporary sojourners," expected to return to the homelands when they could no longer work.

Because blacks were denied full citizenship of the country they could not buy land, especially in "white" SA, which comprises 78% of the land surface of the country in terms of the 1936 Land Act. Another snag is that blacks cannot acquire freehold land in certain tribal or homeland areas either, as ownership is vested in the tribe.

PEOPLE'S COURTS

Inherent dangers

A leading member of the South African legal fraternity has commented on the apparently growing phenomenon in our black townships of the so-called "people's court" (*Current affairs* May 16).

Warning that the situation threatens to bring the administration of justice into disrepute, Transvaal Law Society president Edward Southey says that in any civilised country the administration of justice must be carried out by the State. The overriding maxim, he adds, must be: "No person can take the law into his own hands," a view most, including the *FM*, would endorse.

The police and the courts are obliged to enforce and administer laws passed by parliament — including those perceived by blacks to be oppressive. A result is the growing lack of faith within black communities towards the official judicial institutions.

Another factor contributing to this distrust is the alleged racial disparity in passing sentence, although Southey argues that in many cases the full facts — showing the unique circumstances of each case — have not been supplied.

Finding a solution is obviously a lot more difficult than stating the problem. Southey observes that normally, if a sufficiently wide section of a country's population dislike the way justice is being administered, the obvious redress is through the ballot box. However, this is not an option for blacks in SA right now.

But, he says, "people must be educated to understand that the police and courts are there to help them to enforce their rights. They must not be seen as instruments of oppression." It would obviously help, he adds, if "unduly repressive laws were repealed." But the existence of those laws "is not a licence to overturn the established system."

Although Southey accepts that in some areas these courts have shown a certain amount of restraint in the forms of justice meted out, he fears that if not checked it will lead to anarchy. In the long term they are bound to become "kangaroo courts" — where political and personal enmities will become more dominant than the merits of the cases being assessed.

KWANATAL INDABA

Heunis pre-empting

Indaba delegates are trying hard to play down the impact of government's latest proposals for a new-look provincial government run by nominated representatives answerable to parliament. At the close of their discussions last week they attempted to downplay the issue by claiming they had "wasted no time" discussing it.

Even though government's proposals appear to cut directly across the Indaba — by allowing for joint executive authorities between provincial and homeland governments, but ruling out joint legislatures — delegates maintained they would press on regardless.

It seems they are hoping it is *still* not too late to incorporate elements of the Indaba proposals into government's plans, or to get government to back-pedal on the joint legislature issue — the main thrust of the Indaba.

In this respect they now have a new deadline. The new Bill is to go before parliament shortly and the new provincial government system will come into effect on July 1 (*Leaders* May 16).

Privately, though, delegates concede their worst fears have been realised, that government would pre-empt the Indaba by introducing proposals of its own for provincial government as a fait accompli.

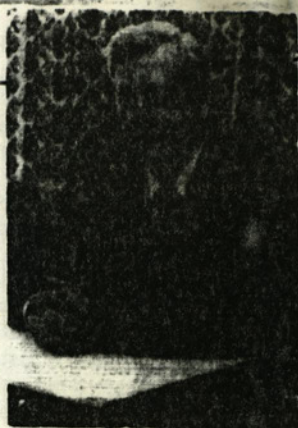
Oscar Dhlomo, who leads the KwaZulu delegation, says that with government's own proposals in place, it now remains for the Indaba to see how best its own proposals can be reconciled with government's.

"Psychologically," he says, "it's not helpful." It would have been better had government held off making its recommendations until after the Indaba had published its findings, as they were requested to do, he said.

The Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, Chris Heunis, maintains no slight was intended. He says there was a degree of urgency involved. The old provin-

cial council system is to be abolished in five weeks and it would only have been possible to put Natal's recommendations to parliament in the next session.

□ Meanwhile, KwaZulu Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi may soon be seeking a meeting with jailed African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela. The proposal that the two meet came from Dhlomo, Inkatha's secretary general, who last week asked the KwaZulu legislative assembly for its sanction. The astutely-timed move follows a recent visit to Mandela by Helen Suzman of the Progressive Federal Party. She reported Mandela as saying that all groups, including Buthelezi's Inkatha, should be involved in negotiations about SA's future.



Heunis

RENE DE WET

Assessing the P'n P strike



The FM spoke to Pick 'n Pay (P'n P) personnel director René de Wet about the recent week-long strike by members of the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union (Ccawusa).

FM: P'n P has been singled out in both of the last two major retailing strikes — the previous having been in 1984. Why?

De Wet: We were the last big retailer to be unionised by Ccawusa. Also, there is P'n P's success and the workers' perceived deprivation regarding that. But we certainly compare relatively favourably with other companies in the way we handle our workers. Did the strike have anything to do with P'n P's image as a good employer and the effect this has had in raising employees' expectations?

Yes, I think so, and also because of our image as a family-type concern. To some extent we do tend to be paternalistic. But that is better than a cold and bureaucratic set-up. Nevertheless, there is less paternalism now that we recognise the need for negotiation. Hand-outs are out.

Could the strike have been handled differently?

We should have been more flexible about our offers. But once the workers voted for R90 "or else," a momentum was created which made a strike inevitable. It could have been avoided only if the union had changed its demand. But its leaders were carried along by the momentum of workers' expecta-

tions.

It was difficult for us, too, because we understood that the demand was not unreasonable. With a minimum wage of around R300 a month, we realised we were vulnerable to comparisons with poverty datum lines, for example.

Was the strike worth it?

No strike can really be worth it. But ultimately we had to decide whether to capitulate or, as a matter of principle, try to restart negotiations. It is difficult to quantify the loyalty shown by some customers against the dissatisfaction of others, and whether turnover losses outweighed cost savings on wages. Nevertheless, I believe we made the correct decision.

How serious were the confrontations in the stores involving strikers?

One feature we did not anticipate was customer reaction. The union wanted to get the sympathy of customers but, on balance, the customers reacted in favour of P'n P. Many shopped despite the unpleasantness. **Are you saying that customers sparked off some of the incidents?**

Yes. In Steedeale, for example, we had to close the store on the Saturday because there were armed vigilante groups outside wanting to get at the staff. But, in other cases, strikers forced customers' tolerance levels beyond breaking point. In Kingsburgh, Natal, strikers blocked the store entrance. Customers felt intimidated, so they reacted. On the other hand, given the scale of the strike, it passed off relatively incident-free.

Why was Natal worse than other areas?

After the 1984 strike, management in the Transvaal became more skilled in coping

with conflict. The union's approach in Natal was also much more militant. It seems that the 1984 strike made Transvaal workers more assertive and self-confident. I don't think they felt they had to reassert themselves.

At Bedworth Park, Vereeniging, the problem was eventually resolved in a novel way. The manager permitted about 50 strikers to demonstrate with placards and to sing as loudly as they liked, near the entrance to the store. In return, workers refrained from physically interfering with customers.

That was a positive development and could be a future option — if the union is prepared to negotiate such an arrangement. But we will also become more acquainted with our legal rights to control the behaviour of strikers by, for example, using trespassing laws and selective lockouts.

How are relationships between workers and store-level management now?

It varies. It is probably more polarised in the Natal stores. But even in Johannesburg there has been a management backlash. Despite great stress, however, our managers acted with tremendous restraint.

After a strike like this, it takes time to get both sides working together normally again. It is important that neither side feels that it lost. We will continue conducting intensive training and discussion sessions with our management people. Generally, if they can talk out their pent-up emotions, things should return to normal. Afterwards, most are better for it. There is a lot more mutual respect between a more assertive worker and a manager who respects the worker and his rights.

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PRODUCTS AND PROJECTS

SECURITY

Sniffing explosives

An explosives detector, the Bloodhound, which is said to be highly sensitive to vapours given off by most commercial and military explosives is now being manufactured in SA by Fuchs Electronics.

The light and simple-to-use unit employs a unique electron capture



Bloodhound ... quick detection

technique to "sniff out" bombs and explosives in a second, says marketing executive Barrie Naylor.

The hand detector unit, weighing 3,5 kg, is linked by cable to a back-pack console containing two rechargeable batteries and a gas bottle. It will quickly pick up distinctive explosive vapours from a safe distance whether the product is packed in a suitcase or car boot or concealed in clothing, plastic or cement.

When explosive vapour is identified a visible alarm is given. The unit also has an audible alarm which can be cut out. A hand-held probe provides a means of carrying out thorough body searches.

The Bloodhound was developed by the UK's Analytical Instruments Security with the backing of the British government. "The unit has a very low false alarm rate," says Naylor.

Cost: R19 000.

Phone: (011) 864-1860.

Sitting pretty

A new range of German-designed office chairs recently introduced to the South African market has won major orders worth

nearly R2m in just four months, says Mike Bridgeford, MD of Af-col group company Duncan Bayne.

His company recently secured the sole southern African rights to manufacture and sell Mauser Genius range, which is acknowledged as one of the most advanced ergonomically-designed ranges on the European market.

"We have to meet Mauser's strict quality control standards on every component," says Bridgeford. The range has about 75% local content, but hi-tech components are imported from West Germany.

He says the range incorporates all the normal adjustments available on modern office chairs, including an adjustment for back-rest tension which ensures optimum support at all times.

The company has just won a R1,3m contract for chairs for the new Nedbank and UAL Merchant Bank premises in Main Street, Johannesburg.

Price: On application.

Phone: (011) 837-6181.

Precise printers

Nashua has introduced the Nashua Fax 5000, which, they say, sets new standards in high-speed exact copying.

It is a neatly contoured desktop digital facsimile receiver which incorporates a programme memory, sequential broadcasting, a failsafe operation, confidential transmission, and extra enlargement and reduction facilities.

Nashua Fax 5000 Safe Pak adds memory space for 10 groups of up to 40 numbers which are accessed via a 3-digit code. It can store up to 60 pages and stored documents are accompanied by pre-programmed instructions which tell the unit when and where they are to be sent. It delivers the information without any further attention, says Nashua MD Jac Moolman.

If there is difficulty with the transmission the unit automatically attempts to resend the pages. If this is unsuccessful it reports the pages were not transmitted.



FAX 5000 ... safe transmission

Confidential documents can be transmitted directly into the memory for private access by the receiver, says Moolman.

Cost: R24 000.

Phone: (011) 805-1511.

Monitoring fleets

An on-board recorder suitable for use in any type of motor vehicle has been developed in SA

to provide a comprehensive control and management system for fleet owners.

It can also provide the driver with a self-management system that gives on-the-spot correction to enable him to operate more efficiently, says Mike Breytenbach of Hampo Systems, the distributor.

The Traveller on-board recorder eliminates inaccurate manual records and reports, printed in an easily read format, provide a record of kilometres travelled, trips made, stopping, starting and idling times, fuel consumption and the drivers name.

It identifies accidents, punctures and other malfunctions, and it can be programmed to record the loaded mass on leaving the depot, the number of deliveries, delivery note number and the amount of cargo taken off at each drop.

Reports of speeding, harsh braking and over-revving are provided, and the driver is given an audible warning.

An in-office reader receives the information by cartridge or by radio link.

Cost: From R1 800.

Phone: (011) 836-4041.

CHECKLIST

RAU Bureau for Continuing Education: Instructa '86

— Exhibition and seminar on education and training technology. Johannesburg. July 7-11. Phone: (011) 726-6103.

Centre for Developing Business: Course — Start a business of your own. Johannesburg. May 28-July 2, one evening a week. Phone: (011) 643-3241.

Cape Town Chamber of Commerce: AGM. Cape Town. May 27. Phone: (021) 23-2323.

Wits Business School: Seminar — Marketing management. Johannesburg. June 16-20. Phone: (011) 643-6641.

School of Business Leadership: Course — Integrated management systems. Pretoria. July 21-24. Phone: (012) 28-1771.

Whitehead Morris: Seminar — Leadership and the one-minute manager. Johannesburg. June 24-25. Phone: (011) 789-1574.

Aid to business

The Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and chartered accountants Aitken and Carter are publishing a series of informative booklets dedicated to the encouragement of entrepreneurs and small business in general.

The first two in the series cover financial planning and marketing, but other subjects include advertising, business legislation, financial systems, human resources, insurance, licensing and taxation.

A series of practical workshops to complement the booklets will begin in Johannesburg in June.

Cost: R6,72 for JCC members; R8,96 for non-members.

Phone: (011) 726-5300.

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Financial
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