

STAR 14/02/92

NEWS

ANC announces its language policy

By Thabo Leshilo
Political Staff

The ANC's language policy plan, unveiled yesterday, has been cautiously welcomed by the Public Servants Association (PSA).

The proposed policy would, among other things, strip English and Afrikaans of their status as South Africa's only official languages.

It would also require civil servants of the future to be competent in the indigenous

language spoken in their specific region — Sindebele, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Siswati, Afrikaans, English, Tsonga, Xhosa, Zulu or Venda.

The plan was unveiled at a media briefing by Qedusizi Buthelezi, of the ANC Language Commission and an applied linguistics lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Ms Buthelezi said none of the 11 languages the ANC regarded as South African would be regarded as "official".

The State would be empowered to designate any of these languages to be used for

defined purposes at the national, regional or local level where it was widely used.

"The State shall act positively to further the development of these 11 languages, especially in education, literature and the media," Ms Buthelezi said.

"Languages which have previously been denied the right to play their full part will have to be empowered."

In his reaction, PSA managing director Hans Olivier said the association had recognised the need to adapt to changing circumstances.

There were, he said, people

who could not speak either English or Afrikaans within the present public service.

"However, my problem is with the practical application of the plan in the public service — nothing political," he said.

"What happens if a qualified engineer who can't speak his superior's language has to make a submission to his boss?" Mr Olivier asked.

The ANC also proposed that:

- Official and legal business should be conducted in languages people understood.

- Contracts, instructions, negotiations, notices and rules relat-

ing to the workplace and places of residence should be in languages understood by the workers and residents.

- Court cases should be conducted in the language understood by the accused wherever possible; otherwise, translators must be used.

- Social, health and other community workers should understand and, where possible, speak the languages of the people they treat and work with.

- People should be free to take part in all democratic processes in the language in which they

are most confident.

Ms Buthelezi said the ANC recognised that, to be successful, any language policy needed the support of citizens, and it was undertaking a campaign to encourage further discussions of its policy within and outside its ranks.

She said that, subject to the availability of resources, and within limitations of reasonableness, primary and secondary education should, wherever possible, be offered in the languages preferred by the parents, teachers and students.

OPINION

Patrick Laurence interprets the twists and turns in ANC economic policy

Pragmatism versus idealism

THE African National Congress is involved in a reappraisal of its economic policy, including its controversial commitment to nationalise the mines, banks and "monopoly industry".

ANC president Nelson Mandela focused attention on the reassessment during his recent tour of Europe. On at least two occasions he acknowledged that the ANC's commitment to nationalisation was a deterrent to foreign investment and was in need of revision.

"Nationalisation is our policy but there is a shift in our thinking," he told businessmen in Copenhagen last week.

"We have observed the hostility and concern of businessmen towards nationalisation and we cannot ignore their perceptions. If we want to create a climate where investors will not fear losing their investments, we have to take a decision on the question of nationalisation."

Later, in London, Mr Mandela said: "Nationalisation is like a sword of Damocles hanging above those who want to invest. So long as it is our policy, we will not attract investors."

His statements in Europe contrast with the pronouncement he made in a message sent through

"the people's post" from prison shortly before his release just over two years ago.

"The nationalisation of the mines, banks and monopoly industries is the policy of the ANC and a change or modification of our views in this regard is unthinkable," he declared. "Black economic empowerment is a goal we fully support and encourage but in our situation state control of certain sectors of our economy is unavoidable."

Mr Mandela's prison message was a re-statement of ANC policy as defined in the Freedom Charter. He felt obliged then to reaffirm his commitment to the ANC's position because of reports that his thinking had shifted in a capitalist direction and that he had become a sybarite.

Adopted by the "Congress of the People" in June 1955, the Freedom Charter — with its pledge to transfer ownership of the mines, banks and monopoly industry to "the people as a whole" — is still official ANC policy.

But that commitment is certain to be revised at a special ANC conference in April, where economic policy will be reassessed fundamentally.

Mr Mandela's statements in Europe aside, the ANC's economic

policy has already begun to shift, judging from a draft discussion document prepared for debate within the ANC.

The document speaks not of wholesale nationalisation under a future ANC government but of a mixed economy "based on the principles of democracy, participation and development".

Signalling their awareness that time has moved on since 1955, and that mistakes have been made in the name of socialism, the drafters of the 12-page document state: "We are convinced that neither a communist central planning system nor an unfettered free market system can provide adequate solutions to the problems confronting us."

The fluidity in ANC economic thinking is manifest in the contradictory statements made by Mr Mandela in Europe and the ANC leadership at home on the question of foreign loans.

Thus, while he was in Switzerland, where he and President de Klerk were invited to address the World Economic Forum, Mr Mandela refuted the official ANC position of foreign loans.

The ANC's position, as reflected in two official statements, issued in January and last October, is clear: the lending of money by for-

eign banks to the De Klerk administration contravenes its sanctions policy and bankers who do so should note that a future ANC government may not feel bound to honour debts incurred by the white minority regime.

In Switzerland, however, Mr Mandela said: "We can get into serious problems if the loans we project is one of a country which is not prepared to honour its debts." He reportedly dismissed the ANC's official view as the opinion of individuals.

Within hours the ANC, responding to reports that the government-controlled Southern African Development Bank was on the brink of raising another loan with a German bank, reaffirmed its opposition to loans and, contradicting Mr Mandela, renewed its warning that a future ANC government might not feel obligated to honour loans raised by the De Klerk government.

"The ANC remains opposed to these international loans and once again wishes to remind the international banks and foreign capital markets that ... a future democratic government will be compelled to weigh with great care its obligations to service and take responsibility for the debts contracted by the present illegitimate

South African regime."

Later still, apparently embarrassed by reports on discrepancies between its position and that espoused by Mr Mandela, the ANC issued a statement in which it tried to reconcile its stand with that adopted by Mr Mandela.

The ANC, like Mr Mandela, was committed to honouring loans raised before the imposition of financial sanctions against South Africa; it stood, however, by its opposition to loans granted in contravention of its sanctions policy.

Financial sanctions, including a prohibition on new loans, should be maintained until the installation of an interim government of national unity, the ANC said. Mr Mandela made a similar statement to the Financial Times.

The ANC denied that there had been a divergence of views between Mr Mandela in Europe and its senior officials at home. It blamed the media for misinterpreting official statements.

What the media was doing, however, was reflecting different nuances and thinking in the ANC and Mr Mandela's spontaneous reaction to the clamour and concern which the official ANC positions has evoked in financial circles in Western (and Eastern) Europe.

The ANC, as the "Parliament of

the African People", — to quote Mr Mandela's description of it — embraces a wide range of different and even opposing ideological tendencies. They stretch from old-style communists through traditional black leaders to modern black nationalists. Another division separates pragmatists from idealists.

Mr Mandela, who has denied that he advocates socialism, appears to be at the conservative end of the spectrum; he is, it seems fair to conclude, wont to publicly express his views from time to time.

The major policy conference — at which the ANC's broader approach as well as its economic policy will be reconsidered — is now only weeks away. The different schools of thought are beginning to manoeuvre for position. Hence the seepage of contradictions.

They may be exacerbated by ANC speech writers who try to use Mr Mandela's voice to boost the positions they espouse. Thus while he was expressing reservations about nationalisation, the written speech that he took with him to the World Economic Forum reaffirmed that nationalisation of "key (monopoly) industries" was still on the agenda. □

The Star 14/2/92

Mandela's against black majority rule

THE African National Congress opposed black majority rule as much as it did white minority rule, although it stood for majority rule, ANC leader Nelson Mandela said yesterday.

Addressing a press conference at his Soweto home after a meeting of the ANC's national working committee last week, he said the NWC had discussed the necessity for allaying minorities' fears of majority rule, especially those of white, coloured and Indian groups.

Other items on the NWC agenda had included the right wing, a whites-only referendum, self-determination, and political alliances.

The Star 14-02-1992 (1)

What lies ahead for Winnie?

The Mandela marriage is over. Does this spell obscurity or independence for Winnie Mandela? JO-ANNE COLLINGE looks at this extraordinary woman's past and her prospects.

ANC PRESIDENT Nelson Mandela announced with immense tenderness yesterday that he and his wife of 34 years, Nomzamo Winnie, were to separate. But — whatever the residual love — the split remains a steep lurch down the political hierarchy for the spirited woman whom thousands were once proud to embrace as the Mother of the Nation.

Mrs Mandela may still hold her positions as head of the ANC welfare department and an elected member of the national executive committee, but the real fount of her political influence was the marriage which she sealed in 1958 with Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela.

At any time, the disintegration of this marriage would have been critical to Mrs Mandela's political career. Coming, as it does, amid fresh controversy regarding her role in the killing of 14-year-old activist Stompie Seipei and possible links to the assassination of Dr Abu-Baker Asvat, it looks like a crushing blow.

Displayed

But the extraordinary combination of brazenness and courage that Mrs Mandela has displayed over the years has to be reckoned with; she may be down and at the mercy of extreme emotions — but this does not necessarily mean that her political career is absolutely dead.

For, apart from the rich and regal bearing of Mrs Mandela, one characteristic stands out over the years: her lack of fear — either of physical danger or of social censure. She has forged ahead on ground many would fear to tread.

With the banning of the ANC and the sentencing of Mr Mandela and his comrades to life imprisonment in the Rivonia Trial of 1963, repression so permeated the townships that a whole generation grew up fearing to whisper the three-letter synonym for liberation, "ANC".

During much of this stifled period Winnie Mandela was subject to banning and house-arrest under the Suppression of Communism Act. ANC sources have hinted that while the country cowered, Mrs Mandela took risks to help the ANC in exile, operating under the most repressive of conditions. During the late '60s she was detained for a period of 17 months, but not convicted of any offence.

The Star 14-04-1992 (2)

When her banning order expired in 1975, she did not take the easy non-political option. Without forsaking her ANC allegiance, she threw herself back into the struggle for majority rule, associating herself with the burgeoning Black Consciousness Movement and backing the students of Soweto in their 1976 rising.

Detained in the aftermath of the 1978 rising, she was subsequently served with a new restriction order and then banished from Soweto to the tiny township of Phatakatle, near Brandfort, in the Free State.

Finally, astutely measuring the degree of latitude that the mass uprisings of the mid-80s might win her, Mrs Mandela defied her banishment and moved back to Soweto. There were skirmishes with the authorities, typified by a high-speed chase along the M2 highway near Johannesburg, with police cars cutting her off as she was about to enter the city and Mrs Mandela daring the police to lay so much as a hand on her.

She eventually won the right to return to her home in Orlando West. And there her political relationship with the militant

youth constituency — which had been given a practice-run in 1978 — came to fruition. If the street battles and tide of international censure of apartheid's armed forces gave her an opening to come home to Soweto, she more than repaid this obligation by becoming a symbol for this army of youth.

Never elected to any position within the United Democratic Front or any of its major affiliates, Mrs Mandela nevertheless became the symbol of the struggle. Where others cushioned their allegiance to the still-banned ANC, Mrs Mandela

threw caution to the wind.

As young men of the ANC army Umkhonto we Sizwe and other activists went to the gallows for their actions, Mrs Mandela was invariably outside Pretoria Central Prison at the chilling dawn hour when hangings take place, side-by-side with families of the condemned men.

Not surprisingly, the international media depicted this fiery and striking woman as the embodiment of the South African liberation struggle, the surrogate for her legendary husband, still behind bars in the Cape.

By the mid-80s Mrs Mandela had become associated with a very specific group of youth — the Mandela United Football Club. Whether they were simply alienated youths or cadres-in-the-making remains unclear. What is clear is that the football team came to be regarded as a fearsome and anti-social force by the people of Soweto.

Beyond Soweto it came as a shock when pupils of Dalwonga High set fire to the modest Mandela home in Orlando West. Locals saw the arson attack as revenge triggered by the football team's reign of terror in

the area.

The killing of Stompie Sepele at the start of 1989 was truly a watershed in the life of the football team. Its coach, Jerry Richardson, was convicted of murder.

In retrospect, it was also a critical moment in Mrs Mandela's life. Initially reviled and isolated by the Mass Democratic Movement because of the Stompie affair, Mrs Mandela was rescued by the ANC whose leaders directed that she should not be treated as a pariah in the liberation struggle.

Three years later, however, she found herself convicted with two others of the abduction and assault of Stompie and three other youths — and sentenced to six years. Her appeal in the case is likely to be heard within the next few months.

But it has been pre-empted by her co-accused Xoliswa Falati and John Morgan breaking ranks and indicating that they lied to save Mrs Mandela. Although Miss Falati has since retracted her accusations, it seems that the spectre of Stompie Sepele cannot be exorcised from Mrs Mandela's life.

Eroded

Furthermore, if she could be said to have her own support-base in the turbulent '80s, the power of that constituency — the youth — has been considerably eroded since the release of Nelson Mandela and the engagement of the ANC and the Government in central political negotiations.

The present ANC Youth League is simply not the force that the South African Youth Congress and the Congress of South African Students represented in the mid-to-late-80s. If Sayo and Cosas provided the foot soldiers of an age when insurrection seemed just around the corner, they do not provide the diplomats and negotiators in the chambers of constitutional settlement.

Likewise, Mrs Mandela has fewer talents to bring to the age of reconstruction than she brought to the battlefield. Her courage, her oratory, her ability to mobilise people in struggle are devalued currency in these times. And although much is made of her qualifications as a social worker, the fact remains that her qualifications are basic, her experience not great and her involvement in current social welfare developments slight.

In his announcement of their split, Mr Mandela stated that "circumstances beyond our control dictated" that the life he "tried to share (with) Comrade Nomzamo" could not be sustained. There is a strong sense that these impersonal forces, these crossings of the path of national destiny, were both the making and the undoing of Nomzamo Winnie Mandela. □

The Citizen 14-2-1992

NP believed to favour bicameral Parliament

NP AND government sources have given guarded support to a report suggesting the NP intends proposing a bicameral caretaker Parliament — with the upper House being formed without fresh elections by merging the three existing chambers.

The Paris-based Indian Ocean Newsletter reports that the NP intends putting the bicameral plan to Codesa.

The upper House would be an amalgamation of the three existing Houses.

The 300-member lower House would be elected on a one man, one vote basis, which would mean both Houses would have roughly the same number of seats.

The ANC was likely to win about two thirds of the seats in the lower House.

But each House would have the right of veto over the other House, the newsletter reports.

The caretaker Parliament's mandate would last five years.

This would force the postponement of general elections, which constitutionally have to take place in 1994.

The executive or Cabinet would consist of 36 people, 18 from the existing Parliament and 18 from parties currently outside Parliament.

JOHN COHEN

ly would include KwaZulu ar Mangosuthu Buthe and ana President Lucas Manali as ANC president Nelson's newsletter reports.

nt's Codesa spokesman Tertsterday declined to say what gestions were for an interim but approved of the approach the report.

sense, when moving from the r, to include aspects of the old of the new," he said.

tary-general Stoffel van der the party had various proposn arrangements which it could at Codesa.

speculation on its final postremature.

conceded that the plan complied two main principles which the NP posed, that the interim government e a constitutionally valid mechanism that it should be representative. proposal contained in the report was e "not impossible", he said. f cannot say that it is probable."

OPINION

Patrick Laurence interprets the twists and turns in ANC economic policy

Pragmatism versus idealism

THE African National Congress is involved in a reappraisal of its economic policy, including its controversial commitment to nationalise the mines, banks and "monopoly industry".

ANC president Nelson Mandela focused attention on the reassessment during his recent tour of Europe. On at least two occasions he acknowledged that the ANC's commitment to nationalisation was a deterrent to foreign investment and was in need of revision.

"Nationalisation is our policy but there is a shift in our thinking," he told businessmen in Copenhagen last week.

"We have observed the hostility and concern of businessmen towards nationalisation and we cannot ignore their perceptions. If we want to create a climate where investors will not fear losing their investments, we have to take a decision on the question of nationalisation."

Later, in London, Mr Mandela said: "Nationalisation is like a sword of Damocles hanging above those who want to invest. So long as it is our policy, we will not attract investors."

His statements in Europe contrast with the pronouncement he made in a message sent through

"the people's post" from prison shortly before his release just over two years ago.

"The nationalisation of the mines, banks and monopoly industries is the policy of the ANC and a change or modification of our views in this regard is unthinkable," he declared. "Black economic empowerment is a goal we fully support and encourage but in our situation state control of certain sectors of our economy is unavoidable."

Mr Mandela's prison message was a re-statement of ANC policy as defined in the Freedom Charter. He felt obliged then to reaffirm his commitment to the ANC's position because of reports that his thinking had shifted in a capitalist direction and that he had become a sybarite.

Adopted by the "Congress of the People" in June 1955, the Freedom Charter — with its pledge to transfer ownership of the mines, banks and monopoly industry to "the people as a whole" — is still official ANC policy.

But that commitment is certain to be revised at a special ANC conference in April, where economic policy will be reassessed fundamentally.

Mr Mandela's statements in Europe aside, the ANC's economic

policy has already begun to shift, judging from a draft discussion document prepared for debate within the ANC.

The document speaks not of wholesale nationalisation under a future ANC government but of a mixed economy "based on the principles of democracy, participation and development".

Signalling their awareness that time has moved on since 1955, and that mistakes have been made in the name of socialism, the drafters of the 12-page document state: "We are convinced that neither a commandist central planning system nor an unfettered free market system can provide adequate solutions to the problems confronting us."

The fluidity in ANC economic thinking is manifest in the contradictory statements made by Mr Mandela in Europe and the ANC leadership at home on the question of foreign loans.

Thus, while he was in Switzerland, where he and President de Klerk were invited to address the World Economic Forum, Mr Mandela refuted the official ANC position of foreign loans.

The ANC's position, as reflected in two official statements, issued in January and last October, is clear: the lending of money by for-

eign banks to the De Klerk administration contravenes its sanctions policy and bankers who do so should note that a future ANC government may not feel bound to honour debts incurred by the white-minority regime.

In Switzerland, however, Mr Mandela said: "We can get into serious problems if the loans we project is one of a country which is not prepared to honour its debts." He reportedly dismissed the ANC's official view as the opinion of individuals.

Within hours the ANC, responding to reports that the government-controlled Southern African Development Bank was on the brink of raising another loan with a German bank, reaffirmed its opposition to loans and, contradicting Mr Mandela, renewed its warning that a future ANC government might not feel obligated to honour loans raised by the De Klerk government.

"The ANC remains opposed to these international loans and once again wishes to remind the international banks and foreign capital markets that ... a future democratic government will be compelled to weigh with great care its obligations to service and take responsibility for the debts contracted by the present illegitimate

South African regime."

Later still, apparently embarrassed by reports on discrepancies between its position and that espoused by Mr Mandela, the ANC issued a statement in which it tried to reconcile its stand with that adopted by Mr Mandela.

The ANC, like Mr Mandela, was committed to honouring loans raised before the imposition of financial sanctions against South Africa; it stood, however, by its opposition to loans granted in contravention of its sanctions policy.

Financial sanctions, including a prohibition on new loans, should be maintained until the installation of an interim government of national unity, the ANC said. Mr Mandela made a similar statement to the Financial Times.

The ANC denied that there had been a divergence of views between Mr Mandela in Europe and its senior officials at home. It blamed the media for misinterpreting official statements.

What the media was doing, however, was reflecting different nuances and thinking in the ANC and Mr Mandela's spontaneous reaction to the dilemma and concern which the official ANC positions has evoked in financial circles in Western (and Eastern) Europe.

The ANC, as the "Parliament of

the African People", — to quote Mr Mandela's description of it — embraces a wide range of different and even opposing ideological tendencies. They stretch from old-style communists through traditional black leaders to modern black nationalists. Another division separates pragmatists from ideologues.

Mr Mandela, who has denied that he advocates socialism, appears to be at the conservative end of the spectrum; he is, it seems fair to conclude, wont to publicly express his views from time to time.

The major policy conference — at which the ANC's broader approach as well as its economic policy will be reconsidered — is now only weeks away. The different schools of thought are beginning to manoeuvre for position. Hence the seepage of contradictions.

They may be exacerbated by ANC speech writers who try to use Mr Mandela's voice to boost the positions they espouse. Thus while he was expressing reservations about nationalisation, the written speech that he took with him to the World Economic Forum reaffirmed that nationalisation of "key (monopoly) industries" was still on the agenda. □

The Star 14/2/92

Mandela's against black majority rule

THE African National Congress opposed black majority rule as much as it did white minority rule, although it stood for majority rule, ANC leader Nelson Mandela said yesterday.

Addressing a press conference at his Soweto home after a meeting of the ANC's national working committee last week, he said the NWC had discussed the necessity for allaying minorities' fears of majority rule, especially those of white, coloured and Indian groups.

Other items on the NWC agenda had included the right wing, a whites-only referendum, self-determination, and political alliances.

POTCH WILL GIVE SA HOPE, SAYS FW

By Cathy Thompson

POTCHERSTROOM would give the whole country hope when it elected the National Party candidate to Parliament in next week's by-election, which was regarded as a barometer of how the White voter in South Africa felt, the State President, Mr F W de Klerk, said last night.

He told an open-air meeting at the town's main rugby field, Olën-park, that by-elections were, as a rule, not pleasant and especially so when the Conservative Party's campaigns devolved into a "stream of misinformation, untruth-

ness at NP meetings and anonymous letters besmirching the National Party".

About 25 minutes of Mr De Klerk's address to about 2 500 people were characterised by heckling

TO PAGE 2

The Citizen 14-2-1992
(1)

Bo/Day 14-2-1992

Constitution will compel the next govt to pay up

A STATEMENT by the ANC that recent bond issues abroad are totally unacceptable has caused confusion and created doubt in the minds of investors regarding whether a future ANC government will honour these obligations. Nelson Mandela, at Davos, said it would honour external debts, but the ANC publicity department has said it might not honour loans made to the "present illegitimate SA regime and its agencies".

There is in fact no cause for confusion, and the ANC publicity department is wholly incorrect in attempting to give the impression that certain loans — specifically those recent loans ostensibly in conflict with "financial sanctions" — could be abrogated. For, simply, the obligation to honour all liabilities is a constitutional matter, and no government has the right to pick and choose its liabilities. Any move in

this direction would be acting unconstitutionally, and they would have a constitutional battle on their hands. In any case, it would be the death knell to future borrowings as the Bolsheviks discovered.

The Republic of South Africa Constitution Act of 1983 has a clause (76) relating to existing debts and liabilities of the state, in which it states that "nothing in this Act... shall affect any assets or rights belonging to the state or any debts or liabilities of the state as existing before the commencement of this Act, and all such assets, rights, debts and liabilities shall remain assets, rights, debts and liabilities of the Republic...".

Clearly, such a clause is essential in any constitution, in that there cannot be any uncertainty whatsoever with regard to the rights and obligations of the new state for normal commerce, business and finance to

EDWARD OSBORN

continue uninterrupted by the transition. It is thus inconceivable that a future constitution, whether interim or permanent, will be without such a binding clause on the state.

An ANC government would be bound by such a clause to honour all inherited liabilities, including all external debts.

ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa has also said the terms and conditions of foreign loans might be altered. This, of course, might be possible on a mutually agreed basis in the case of direct or syndicated loans. It certainly could not be done unilaterally. But it would be impossible to do this with market bond issues, where the terms and conditions of the issue have been laid down in

the prospectus. These are immutable until the expiry of the bonds.

Given this constitutional commitment, the ANC tactics should be to acknowledge the future liability of an ANC government. On this basis, it should make an appeal to the present government to formulate a borrowing policy in conjunction with the ANC, one that is cognisant of the preemptive nature of present action. Borrowing today is entering into a commitment to repay in the future, together with an ongoing liability to service the loans until redemption.

The ANC has a legitimate grouse about present and intended foreign borrowings by government, the Independent Development Trust and the Development Bank of Southern Africa — not so much in their breaking of financial sanctions, which do not exist in any law, but because of their costliness in a situation of

chronic exchange rate depreciation, and because alternative domestic funding is available. Foreign borrowing is unnecessary and costly.

In the case of Zimbabwe, all debts and liabilities were assumed, and honoured by the new Mugabe government at independence. The only interesting anomaly was in respect of the income tax levy of 12.5% specifically raised in 1977/78 by the Rhodesian government for the financing of the bush war, and for repayment in 1981.

This debt was anathema for the then finance minister, Enos Nkala, and he refused to honour the debt. However, the problem was resolved by raising a retrospective surcharge on the income tax of the 1977 assessment year, which effectively nullified the levy.

□ Osborn is chief economist at Nedbank.

IMAGINE that, on coming to power, a democratic government discovers plans to invest the equivalent of the annual national product in an electricity plant. Suppose the project's high interest and construction costs would ultimately double the price of electricity; that it would aggravate a regional oversupply of electricity, causing a reduction in trade; and that it would endanger the environment.

In short, imagine that this enormous project would serve, not to raise living standards on a broad scale, but essentially to enrich a coal supplier — one of the conglomerates that already owns much of the economy.

Finally, suppose the new government declared it would realise the project nonetheless, above all because of contractual obligations to foreign lenders that the previous regime had entered in its final days.

Does this scenario sound far-fetched? Does it underline the absurdity of the ANC's fears about the state's current quest for foreign loans? Alas, no. It merely describes the position of the Zimbabwe government, which inherited the debt for the Wankle power plant from the previous state at a disastrous cost to the economy and hoped-for social improvements.

The ANC's anxiety over foreign debt was learned in a hard school. For the past 15 years, ANC economists have watched the appalling deterioration of social and economic infrastructure throughout the Third World, and especially in southern Africa, as a result of the struggle to repay international loans. It is chilling, then, to watch the current government get unnecessary foreign credits at exorbitant effective interest rates — estimated by Nedbank's economists at more than 28% if devaluation keeps pace with inflation.

The ANC's position on foreign debt is hardly radical. It never said it would repudiate all SA's loans. Rather, it has warned lenders not to take advantage of state agencies that want a slice of international capital

ANC debt proposal will not hurt SA's future credit rating

NEVA SEIDMAN MAKGETLA

markets before a democratic government takes over. This warning is coupled with the reassurance that the ANC will respect all debts incurred before 1985, and renegotiate only specific loans made thereafter.

For any economist who has studied international credit markets, the ANC position is prudent and responsible. It means foreign creditors can easily assess their risks. If they will wait a few months or years, they can invest safely in the myriad development projects a democratic government will certainly pursue. If they find the high interest rates on loans to state agencies today offset the risks of renegotiation in future, that is their prerogative. They may not like the choice, of course, but it will not deter future lending.

Research shows low international creditworthiness typically results from inconsistency and poor export performance. Even if couched in radical rhetoric, stable policies in a relatively prosperous country rarely scare off lenders. Through the mid-'80s, Angola's avowedly Marxist regime enjoyed a higher credit rating with many international financial institutions than Malawi's true-blue capitalist semi-dictatorship.

From this perspective, the nature

of reporting on ANC proposals may prove a greater threat to future creditworthiness than the proposals themselves. All too many reporters and leader writers sensationalise open-minded discussion, even mere differences in phrasing, as inconsistencies in policies. Democratic debate, in their eyes, becomes a conflict that could even derail Codesa. These commentators seem oddly intent on pushing the democratic movement into the adoption of policies ahead of research and discussion — hardly the way to establish effective or durable programmes.

All too often, the tenor of replies to virtually any ANC proposal to change the status quo is oddly uncivil, more the reproach of a Victorian pater familias to unruly children than an input into a conversation between equals. The intolerance of SA's leader writers may sell newspapers, but it accords ill with civilised discourse. The need to learn the language of democracy obviously extends far beyond the people fighting in Soweto streets.

In this case, the ANC is damned whatever it does. If it proposes pol-

icies to improve services to blacks, it is criticised for potential fiscal imprudence; if it condemns government borrowing at recklessly high interest, it is blamed for scaring off investors.

Analysis of the agencies seeking foreign loans — the Independent Development Trust and the Development Bank of Southern Africa — underlines the dangers of allowing the current state to pile up debts. These institutions live off welfare and development functions normally assumed by the central government. If, thanks to foreign funds, they remain semi-autonomous in future, crucial aspects of national policy will fall outside democratic control.

Experience already shows that neither agency can respond adequately to community needs. They spend extraordinary amounts of time and money on bureaucrats, consultants and local politicians. (The Development Bank alone employs more than 800 people.) Flying a liberal flag abroad while failing to deliver the goods at home scarcely justifies an increase in foreign debt. It would make more sense to wait until a democratic government can establish agencies to transmit resources to communities in a respon-

sive and efficient manner.

Let us not forget, either, that money is fungible. If government agencies raise funds abroad they free up resources for the state. Yet that state has repeatedly demonstrated its unwillingness to spend as much on blacks as on whites — witness the failure to bring about an integrated educational system, substantially improve infrastructure in black areas, or even equalise pensions.

Moreover, the present state has already come under pressure to provide golden handshakes for constituents and employees. The generous retirement pay granted to white teachers unwilling to teach black pupils provides an early warning. Under these circumstances, this government must be tempted to raise foreign loans at any price — after all, it will not have to repay them.

If we are truly concerned about international creditworthiness, we should ask why SA has had such a poor rating in recent years. The answer, of course, lies in the system that disempowered and impoverished the majority to the point where, until recently, they saw open revolt as their only option.

Lenders at Chase Manhattan Bank say the bank withdrew its loans in 1985, causing a disastrous credit crunch, not because of political pressure or some abstract belief in democracy, and certainly not on expert advice. Rather, according to a senior Chase official, the vice-president responsible saw a television news report on unrest, decided it looked like pictures from Iran just before the Shah fell — and ordered an immediate end to loans to SA.

If the lack of democracy and prosperity for the majority causes a poor credit rating, no ANC statement can make SA attractive to foreign lenders. Only a rapid transition to a democratic state committed to a growth path that will benefit all South Africans can provide a solution.

□ Makgetla lectures in economics at Wits University and is a member of the ANC's economic policy department.

B/Day. 14-2-1992

SA should not have any official language — ANC

THE 11 languages spoken in SA, including English and Afrikaans, should enjoy full recognition, the ANC's art and culture department's language commission says.

Sapa reports the co-ordinator of the commission, Qudusizi Buthelezi, said in Johannesburg yesterday that no language should be declared the official language. The state should have the power to declare one or more languages for specific use at national level or in any region where a language was widely used, he said.

An ANC government would prevent any one language being used for the purposes of domination or division and would promote the development of all 11 languages in schools, literature and the media.

KATHRYN STRACHAN reports ANC spokesman Saki Macozoma said the majority of people did not speak English and it therefore did not make sense to have a

government that spoke only English. Blacks were tired of having their names spelt incorrectly. People speaking other languages did not make an effort, he said.

Wits University English professor Geoff Hughes last night said the ANC proposals were a "big mistake" as they meant that in effect there was no official, central language. The advantage of English was its international status.

The purpose of defining laws and agreements in an official language served to make them uniform.

Wits Afrikaans professor Edith Raidt said most people would not have expected Afrikaans to remain an official language if the ANC came into power. She believed Afrikaans could benefit by the move as it would lose its stigma as an official language.

B/Day 14-2-1992

We will not lead SA to chaos, says FWX

POTCHEFSTROOM — President F W de Klerk last night reassured white voters that government would not lead the country to chaos.

He told about 2 000 people: "We will govern and use the power at our disposal until, in terms of a new constitution, a new government comes into power and we intend to be part of that future government."

De Klerk, speaking in support of NP candidate Theuns Kruger, lashed out at CP policy and said that had the CP won the 1989 general election, SA would be cut off from the world and at war with itself. Instead, government was making real pro-

PATRICK BULGER

gress through Codesa. But he warned Codesa would fail if the ANC did not irrevocably commit itself to peace and become a political party.

The NP differed from the ANC on a number of issues, he said. The ANC's economic policy and its executive was dominated by the SA Communist Party. However, "they have substantial support. We cannot ignore them or wish them away".

Earlier, Kruger outlined a plan to establish a western Transvaal economic and political unit that would include Bophuthatswana and have English, Afrikaans and

Tswana as official languages.

De Klerk said regionalism would be the cornerstone of a new constitution.

Earlier yesterday De Klerk said the by-election result would have no impact on proceedings at Codesa. It was a relevant political event but not necessarily a barometer of white political thinking.

About 10 000 people have cast their votes for next week's election. Kruger said the NP had fared well among Potchefstroom's 4 000 students. But CP candidate Andries Beyers claimed his party was well ahead and was confident of victory.

Report by P Bulger, 11 Diagonal Street, Johannesburg.

B/D Day 11-2-1992

Farmers count on massive aid from govt

GERALD REILLY

PRETORIA — Agriculture Minister Kraai van Niekirk's obvious alarm over SA's summer crops has given agriculture leaders confidence that they will get a sympathetic response when they ask government today for massive and urgent aid.

A high-level SA Agricultural Union delegation meets Van Niekirk in Cape Town today to discuss the plight of the drought-ravaged maize industry.

The destruction in the summer grain areas has been catastrophic, agricultural authorities say, although it has not yet been measured in any detail. They note that all summer crops have been affected.

Another issue to be raised at today's meeting is the fear that food shortages could develop in the next two years if many of the farmers bordering on sequestration are forced off their farms.

Van Niekirk, after a brief helicopter tour of the damaged summer grain areas this week, was alarmed at the destruction, describing it as disastrous. He said thousands of farmers faced ruin unless aid programmes were instituted immediately.

PATRICK BULGER reports that President F W de Klerk expressed his shock at the state of agriculture at an NP meeting in Potchefstroom last night. He said government would meet its commitments to struggling farmers.

It was not clear whether Finance Minister Barend du Plessis would attend today's talks, but the situation would figure prominently at next week's Cabinet meeting.

Meanwhile, the worsening plight of farmers is highlighted by new Land Bank figures. A bank spokesman said farmers' mortgage debt to the bank was a record R3,2bn at the end of last year. This will be aggravated by the latest drought.

Sapa reports Land Bank GM H S Hattingh yesterday gave the assurance that it would try to ensure farmers could continue with their ventures.

Hattingh said the bank had noted Van Niekirk's appeal to all banks this week to avoid sequestering farmers.

The bank was prepared to consider sus-

□ To Page 2

Farmers

pending arrear capital instalments, consolidating arrear interest and extending loan periods as well as altering due dates of instalments to coincide with the period when farmers receive their main income.

SHARON WOOD reports that commercial banks — responding to Van Niekirk's appeal — will be sympathetic to their farming clients but that they have not yet

made plans to deal with the problem.

Volkskas Bank communications head Willie Roux said the bank's central strategy was to help keep farmers on their land.

Standard Bank agriculture senior manager Rudi Wilsnack said the agricultural sector was an important segment of the bank's business and there was no question of a change in its lending policies.

□ From Page 1

B/Day 11-2-1992

Cosatu warns of impending conflict

COSATU said yesterday that if government insisted on excluding major players in the economy from decision-making, it would plunge the country into confrontation and jeopardise the negotiating process.

The labour federation was responding to Manpower Minister Piet Marais' reported rejection of the proposed economic forum between organised labour and business.

The economic forum decided at its meeting last month to invite government. The forum so far has had no response, but Marais reportedly told an Institute for Personnel Manage-

DIRK HARTFORD

ment function an economic forum established for political reasons would fail. Yesterday Marais' office would or could not clarify what he meant.

A leading business source pointed out government had committed itself in the Laboria Minute to discussion of labour issues.

Cosatu said it found it "reprehensible" that Marais had rejected the forum without consulting labour or business. "Marais does not seem to have learnt anything from the VAT debacle. The time is long gone when

the government could unilaterally dictate changes."

The government held different positions for local and international audiences, according to Cosatu. It said the international positions taken by Finance Minister Barend du Plessis and President F W de Klerk contrasted with "retrogressive steps" in SA.

These included government's refusal to meet the VAT committee, its withdrawal from the housing forum and government's attempt to remove the right to pensions.

B/Day 14-2-1992

'Hit squad wants to kill Mayekiso'

A HIT squad was trying to assassinate Moses Mayekiso, Cosatu said yesterday.

Cosatu said Mayekiso — a Numsa, Cast, ANC and SACP leader — had been shadowed for the past three months by groups of up to six people who, according to Cosatu's intelligence, had "stepped up" attempts to kill him.

Cosatu said: "It's the government which created these sinister killers and it is to the government that these killers are ultimately accountable."

Cosatu warned that any attempt on the lives of Cosatu leaders would "spark off conflict between the state and Cosatu on an unprecedented level".

Cosatu yesterday demanded an immedi-

DIRK HARTFORD

ate independent investigation into all activities of military intelligence personnel, who were "orchestrating this violence".

A source in Cosatu said that in Mayekiso's latest encounter with the sinister grouping, who were in a black Opel Kadett near Mayekiso's home, they were seen to have a photograph of Mayekiso.

Cosatu said Mayekiso was under constant guard. His name was on a hit list that had been circulating since the assassination of Sam Ntuli last year and he had received countless threatening phone calls.

The police had been informed and had promised to "fully investigate" the issue.

The Citizen 14-2-1992

NP believed to favour bicameral Parliament

NP AND government sources have given guarded support to a report suggesting the NP intends proposing a bicameral caretaker Parliament — with the upper House being formed without fresh elections by merging the three existing chambers.

The Paris-based Indian Ocean Newsletter reports that the NP intends putting the bicameral plan to Codesa.

The upper House would be an amalgamation of the three existing Houses.

The 300-member lower House would be elected on a one man, one vote basis, which would mean both Houses would have roughly the same number of seats.

The ANC was likely to win about two thirds of the seats in the lower House.

But each House would have the right of veto over the other House, the newsletter reports.

The caretaker Parliament's mandate would last five years.

This would force the postponement of general elections, which constitutionally have to take place in 1994.

The executive or Cabinet would consist of 36 people, 18 from the existing Parliament and 18 from parties currently outside Parliament.

JIM COHEN

This Chief Minister Bophuthatsane Mande Gov us Del the NP govern suggest

"It is old to with a NP Merwals on pm fo

The tion Bu with had shou misu Ti ther "I

ly would include KwaZulu ar Mangosuthu Buthelezi and ana President Lucas Man all as ANC president Nelson newsletter reports.

nt's Codesa spokesman Tert- asterday declined to say what gestions were for an interim but approved of the approach the report.

sense, when moving from the x, to include aspects of the old of the new," he said.

tary-general Stoffel van der the party had various propos- n arrangements which it could at Codesa.

speculation on its final posi- remature.

conceded that the plan complied two main principles which the NP posed, that the interim government e a constitutionally valid mecha- d that it should be representative. oposal contained in the report was e "not impossible", he said. cannot say that it is probable."